



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

RODING VALLEY

DISTRICT PLAN

STUDY REPORT 1980

SUPPLEMENT 3:

CHIGWELL CONSERVATION AREA

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CHIGWELL VILLAGE

CONSERVATION AREA

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1. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1. This Supplement has been published separately from the main Roding Valley District Plan Study Report, but forms background material to the preparation of the Roding Valley District Plan in the same way as the other research work outlined in the main report.
- 1.2. Four supplements have been published, each one dealing with a specific area, within the Plan area as a whole, where it is intended that proposals and policies will be shown at a smaller scale in the Draft Plan to be published in 1981. This supplement should, however, be read in conjunction with the main Study Report, since most of the issues referred to are analysed more thoroughly in the topic study chapters of that Report, and the various options and conclusions reached for the areas covered by the Supplements are only outlined in the main Report.

Conservation Areas

- 1.3. Conservation Areas were first introduced under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Under this act, local authorities were encouraged to determine which parts of their area were of specific architectural or historic interest, the character of which was worth preserving and enhancing, and to designate such areas as Conservation Areas. These provisions were later reenacted in the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act.
- 1.4. Prior to 1967, planning legislation had emphasised the conservation of individual buildings. Whilst the local authority could, under general planning powers, consider the effects of development proposals on the character of surrounding areas, no steps had been taken to give particular protection to areas of architectural or historic interest. Consequently, many important features were lost and the character of many areas changed completely because the local authority lacked the powers to resist such change.
- 1.5. The introduction of Conservation Area legislation therefore represented for the first time a formal recognition in law of the need to protect not only individual buildings, but also groups of buildings, the relationships of buildings to each other, the quality and character of the spaces between buildings and the relationship of buildings to their setting.
- 1.6. Conservation Areas may be centred on listed buildings, but are not always so, and they may include open spaces, trees, ancient monuments and other features of interest.
- 1.7. Since 1974, the protection given to Conservation Areas has been reinforced in two ways. Firstly anyone wishing to demolish a building in a Conservation Area (whether that building is listed or not) must apply for Listed Building consent. Secondly, anyone wishing to alter or cut down a tree in a Conservation Area, must give the local authority six weeks notice of their intentions, so that the authority may decide whether to make a Tree Preservation Order in selected cases, where the removal or alteration of such trees would erode the character of the area.
- 1.8. The designation of a Conservation Area is only a statement of intent and in preparing proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas, the local authority may wish to use other powers available to them, such as planning conditions, and the use of powers under the various highway acts.

2. Policies for Conservation Areas

- 2.1. Since 1974, the power to designate Conservation Areas has been the joint responsibility of the District and County Councils. Essex County Council, in addition to providing specialist advice on the protection of Conservation Areas, has made finance available for the preservation and maintenance of listed buildings and towards expenditure incurred in connection with Outstanding Conservation Areas of which there are two in Epping Forest District.
- 2.2. Present Essex County Council policy is detailed in the submitted County Structure Plan and seeks to ensure that within Conservation Areas, all these buildings, open spaces, trees, views and other aspects of the environment which go to make up the character of such places will be protected and enhanced.

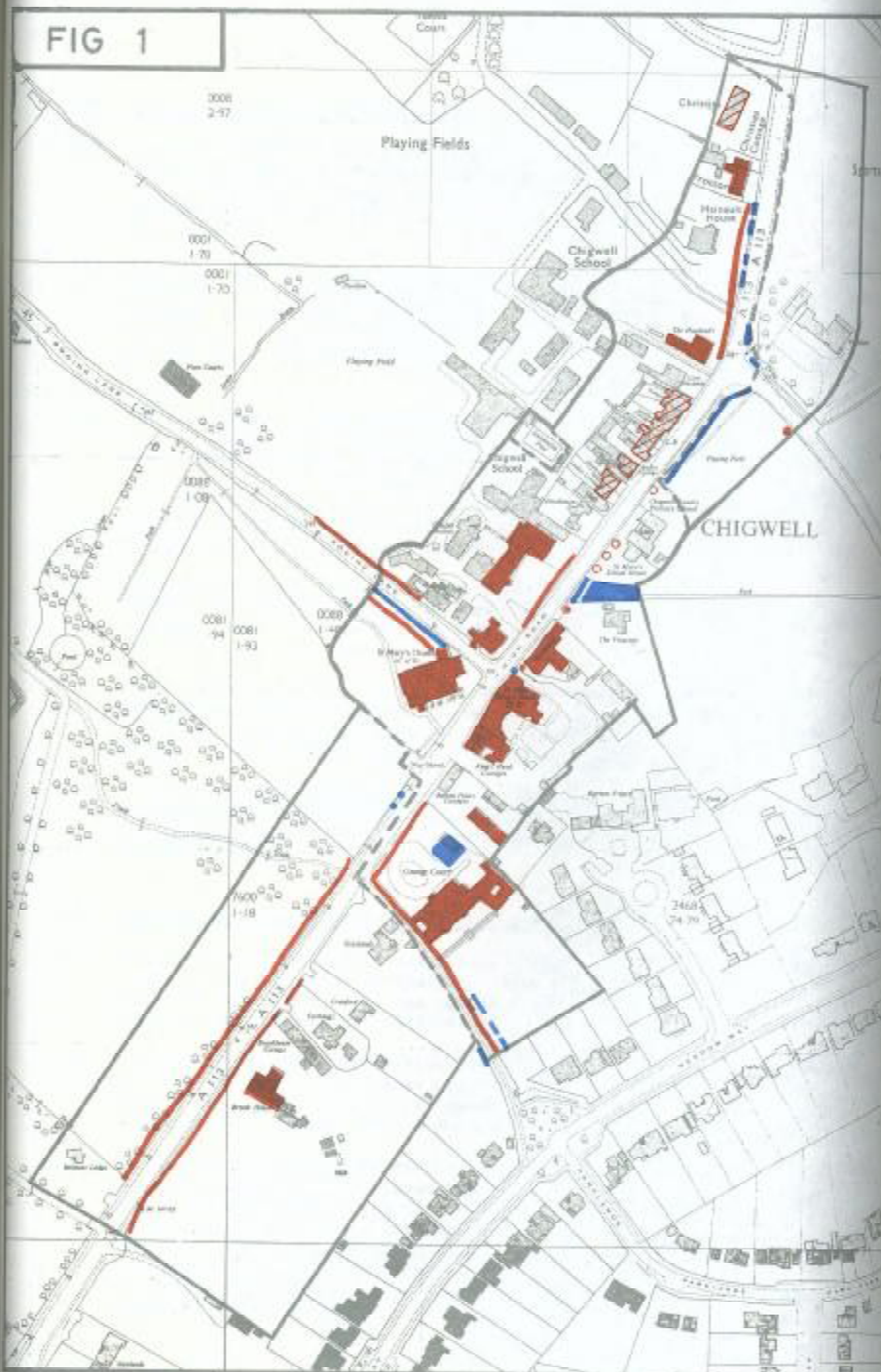
2.3. In addition the Structure Plan sets out policies for the design, position, size, scale and the use of materials in new development proposals within Conservation Areas and specific reference is made to the particularly sensitive nature of timber framed buildings. The County Council has also produced a series of leaflets on different aspects of conservation, including one which gives guidance on Conservation Areas, their purpose, designation, and details of financial assistance that is available.

2.4. Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council have been very active in the designation and promotion of Conservation Areas. There are now a total of fourteen such areas within the District of which two, Chigwell Village, and York Hill are within the Roding Valley District Plan area. Epping Forest District Council has provided financial assistance towards buildings in both of these Conservation Areas.

2.5. In addition to the finance that is available from local authorities, assistance is sometimes given for particular aspects of conservation from other bodies, such as the Civic Trust, the Historic Buildings Council for England and the Department of the Environment.

2.6. Although a general statement on Conservation Area policy was made by the District Council in its document 'Looking to the Future' published in 1977 the Council has not so far provided detailed guidance for the Conservation Areas as a whole, in respect of development control policies and policies for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. However, the preparation of the Roding Valley District Plan provides an opportunity to look in detail at the problems and possibilities of both Chigwell Village and York Hill Conservation areas, to produce land uses allocations and to provide firm guidance.








FIG 1



RODING VALLEY
DISTRICT PLAN

CHIGWELL VILLAGE
CONSERVATION AREA

KEY

-  Existing Boundary
-  Possible Boundary Revision
-  Statutory Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Other features of interest including trees, hedges, walls railings, fences.
-  Registered Trees
-  Features detracting from the Environment including walls, fences, railings, signs, semi-derelict plots and temporary buildings.

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3.0 Chigwell Village Conservation Area

- 3.1 Chigwell Village Conservation Area, the boundaries of which are shown on Fig. 1, was designated by Essex County Council in 1969. The Area has as its axis the Chigwell High Road (A113) and extends from Belmont Lodge in the south, as far as the entrance to Chigwell Lodge in the north.
- 3.2 Well over half of the buildings within the Conservation Area are listed, either as individual buildings, or in groups as in the case of the cottages to the north of the Church on the west side of the High Road. The Church is listed as Grade B ecclesiastical, and there are a further ten statutory listed buildings and six locally listed buildings in the Area.
- 3.3 The focal point of the Conservation Area is undoubtedly the King's Head Inn, standing in the centre of the area, and famed for its connection with Charles Dickens. Originally constructed in the Seventeenth Century the Inn, which has since undergone extensive renovation and restoration, consists of a three storey timber frame, each storey overhanging, and contains a number of interesting internal architectural features, including a first floor panelled room with a good chimney piece.
- 3.4 Opposite the Kings Head is St. Mary's Church. Built in the Twelfth Century the original fabric now forms the south aisle, the chancel and the west tower. The south door dates from this time, and the south aisle has a fine medieval timbered roof.
- 3.5 Other listed buildings within the Conservation Area include the Seventeenth Century Chigwell Grammar School, and to the north a group of dwellings which have been locally listed, mainly from the Eighteenth Century, some of brick and others of painted weatherboarding.
- 3.6 It is the architectural and historic quality of the buildings and the landscape that these buildings create that give the Chigwell Village Conservation Area its character, a character which is now suffering from damage and decay.

4.0 Problems and Opportunities within the Conservation Area

- 4.1 In recent years the Conservation Area has suffered considerably as a result of the intensity of traffic, especially heavy vehicles which pass along the High Road. This has caused dirt, damage, noise and a general lowering of environmental quality.
- 4.2 The solution to the problem lies in some form of traffic restriction on the A113. It is hoped that when the M25 link is completed in the mid 1980s then much of the regional orbital traffic will use this route, relieving the area of much of the heavy vehicle flow.
- 4.3 In the meantime, the District Council and the County Council have decided to make a thorough investigation of the heavy vehicle problem across the whole district with a view to seeing what measures can be taken to restrict these vehicles, with the use of weight or width restrictions or the possible re-routing of traffic. The A113 has been identified as a number one priority case by this Council and the District Engineer and Surveyor is currently looking into feasible solutions to the problem.

- 4.4 Situated close to the Grange Farm Centre the Conservation Area is both seen and used by many tourists. The general damage done by traffic has left the area in need of improvement. Fig. 1 indicates some of the features which are in disrepair, and these include walls, fences, hedgerows, and plots of land. It is unlikely that any financial assistance will be available for improvement schemes by the District Council in the next few years, and until the traffic flows are reduced through the area there is little to encourage voluntary improvements. The Roding Valley District Plan could, however, include information on the Conservation Area, try and encourage voluntary action to improve the Area, and co-ordinate the efforts of other agencies such as the County Council, the Department of the Environment, and the Civic Trust.
- 4.5 Furthermore, the Plan will be able to make specific allocations for the use of land to ensure that vulnerable sites do not suffer from unsympathetic change. This could be backed up by firm development central policies on siting, design and use of materials, were development to be allowed on specific sites.
- 4.6 The southern and northern boundaries of the Conservation Area as they now stand do not follow any identifiable feature on the ground, and in its present form the Area includes some recent development which does not merit inclusion within a Conservation Area. Fig. 1 indicates amendments which could be made to the Conservation Area boundaries to make the Area more easily identifiable.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The main problem in the area is the intensity of traffic along the A113 and the decline in environmental quality that this traffic creates. Allied with this is the need for improvement of several features in the Area. Though finance is unlikely to be forthcoming from Local Authority sources in the immediate future, the District Council could promote the improvement of the area through voluntary action and co-ordinate the efforts of and finance from other interested bodies.