

Pledgdon Green Character Assessment



Client:
Broxted Parish Council and Henham Parish Council

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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope of the Report

Henham Parish Council has appointed Place Services to assess the suitability of Pledgdon Green for conservation area designation. The assessment has been focused on Brick End Lane and Pledgdon Green. Surrounding streets were also visited.

The following report provides a brief outline of the historic development of the Study Area and an assessment of its character by exploring different qualities that contribute to this, including building styles, materials, landscaping and open green spaces. A discussion on the suitability of conservation area designation, under the provisions set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, is included in this assessment. A definitive boundary for any potential future conservation area has not been outlined, although the assessment has focused on the buildings with a higher degree of surviving original features which could be considered of 'special interest'.

Documentary research has been carried out utilising a number of primary and secondary sources including local history books, maps, original plans and historic photographs within the Essex County Council Archives held at County Hall, Chelmsford. A site visit was carried out on 26th June 2024. The research has not been extensive but sufficient to inform this assessment.

1.2.Planning Policy Context

The relevant legislation, planning policy, national and local guidance, and background studies which have been taken into account include:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023);
- National Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (2019);
- Historic England (Second Edition 2019) Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management;
- Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets;
- Historic England (2019) Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets
- English Heritage (2008) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance;
- Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005
- Uttlesford Local Heritage List, Parts One and Two (2018 and 2021)

Legislation

The legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In particular, section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of special architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and to review existing conservation areas to determine whether further areas are of special interest. Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the

Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

National Planning Policy

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in chapter 16 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF) which is accompanied by the Planning Practice Guidance (revised 2018).

When reviewing the designation of conservation areas or amendments to existing conservation area boundaries, paragraph 197 of the NPPF should be considered:

When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Paragraphs 024 (Reference ID: 18a-024-20190723) and 025 (Reference ID: 18a-025-20190723) of the Planning Practice Guidance are also relevant:

Local planning authorities need to ensure that the area has sufficient special architectural or historic interest to justify its designation as a conservation area. Undertaking a conservation area appraisal may help a local planning authority to make this judgment.

Local planning authorities must review their conservation areas from time to time (section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

A conservation area appraisal can be used to help local planning authorities develop a management plan and plan-making bodies to develop appropriate policies for local and neighbourhood plans. A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

Local Planning Policy

Local policies relating to conservation areas are contained within the existing Uttlesford Local Plan (2005):

- ENV1: Design of development within conservation areas
- ENV2: Development affecting listed buildings
- ENV3: Open spaces and trees
- ENV9 Historic landscapes
- GEN2: Design

Historic England (Second Edition 2019) Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

The guidance contained within Advice Note 1 is intended to support the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas, through conservation area appraisal, designation and management. The 2019 edition updates the advice following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework in 2018 and gives more information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. The document provides advice on setting and views and describes how heritage assets can gain significance from their relationship with their setting, whilst views from within or outside an area form an important way in which its significance is experienced and appreciated. It also provides a framework for the assessment of significance and sets out what are likely to be the key elements in defining the special interest of a conservation area.

2. Brick End Lane

2.1. Extent of the Study Area

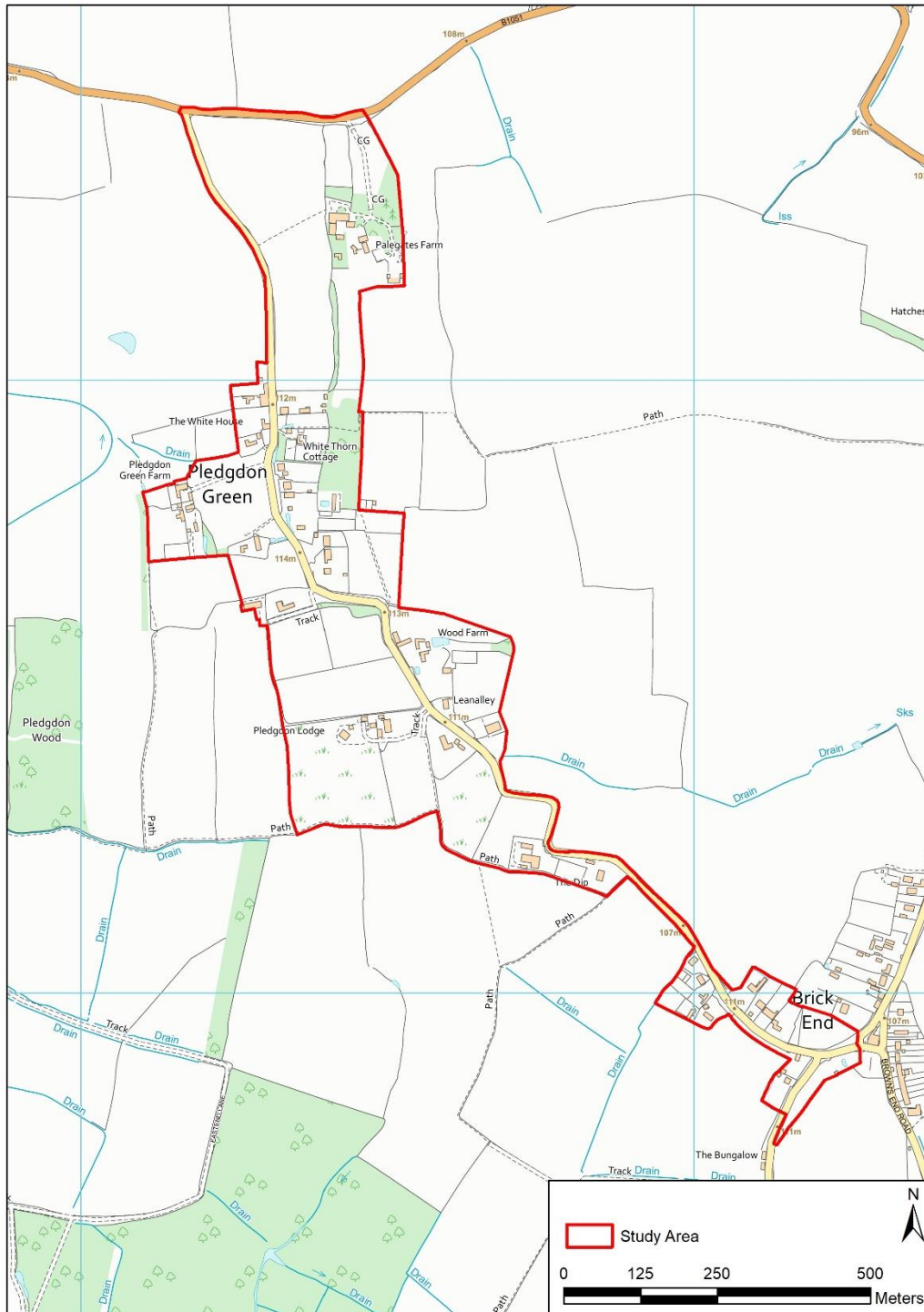


Figure 1 Map of the Study Area

The Study Area has focussed on Brick End Lane, which runs roughly northwest to southeast between the B105 to the road's junction with Woodgates End at Brick End, by the Prince of Wales Public House. Towards the middle of Brick End Lane is the settlement of Pledgdon Green.

Brick End Lane is approximately two miles east of Elsenham, the closest large settlement. Broxted is approximately one mile further east as the crow flies, just under two miles via the road.

The Study Area can be roughly split into two distinct areas, those dwellings in the northern section of the lane closest to Pledgdon Green and those in the southern section, at Brick End Broxted. A road sign on the lane just north of the dwelling Applegarth, clearly marks this distinction.

2.2.Historic Development

Pledgdon Green is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Plicedaba, indicating that this small area has a long history. Over time the name has had many spellings, with the current day Pledgdon first recorded in 1560 in the Feet of Fines.¹ The name is thought to originate from Old English and is a contraction of Plyccean-deanu, meaning Plycca's valley. Plycca is unknown, yet the name is derived from the old English word 'plycce' meaning to pluck, pull or snatch.²

Pledgdon Hall, to the north west of Pledgdon Green, is a medieval hall house, and was the manorial seat for this area, within a moated site. In the eighteenth century the Hall's name develops, with the Hall sometimes referred to as Prison Hall, as shown on the 1777 Chapman and Andre map [Figure 2].

The 1777 Chapman and Andre map is the earliest map available which clearly marks the Study Area, depicting the existing B1051 and the line of Brick End Lane. Comparison between this map and the current day Study Area shows very little change, with the route of the Brick End Lane very accurately depicted on the 1777 map.



Figure 2 Extract from the 1777 Chapman and Andre Map of Essex

Pale Gate Farm, Pledgdon Green, Wood Farm and Broxted Hall are marked on the Chapman and Andre map and still exist. The block plan depicted on this 1777 map is largely representative of the present day

¹ 'Pledgdon Hall, Pledgdon Green', *Survey of Place Names*, <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Essex/Henham/532858b8b47fc40a980004fe-Pledgdon+Hall%2C+Pledgdon+Green> [accessed 02/07/2024].

² Reaney, P.H., *The Place Names of Essex*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p529.

buildings on the site, with some additions. The paths shown on this map extending north and west from the green are no longer present.

The Chapman and Andrew map shows a small cluster of buildings at Pledgedon Green, arranged around a roughly square area of open land. This arrangement is largely comparable to the modern day arrangement of dwellings in this area, with the exception of the north west corner of the green, which the 1777 map shows as more built up than it is today. It is likely the green was Common Land, used by the occupants of surrounding houses, either for grazing livestock or growing crops. The tithe apportionment of 1840 supports this, with no landowner noted for this field.³

Further comparison between the 1887 Ordnance Survey Map [Figure 3] and the 1920 edition [Figure 4] show that built development in the north west corner of the green has been removed. Whether this is case or if the Chapman and Andre map is inaccurate would have to be subject to archaeological investigations. Nevertheless, these early Ordnance Survey maps show little further change comparative to the present day layout of the Study Area between 1777 and the early twentieth century.



Figure 3 Extract from the Saffron Waldon One Inch Ordnance Survey Map, 1887

³ Verify this: the genealogist website has no records marked on the green but need to check the map at the record office:
https://www.essexarchivesonline.co.uk/result_details.aspx?ThisRecordsOffset=6&id=203448



Figure 4 Extract from the Twenty Five Inch Ordnance Survey Map, 1920 edition

In more recent history, minor development has occurred along the length of Brick End Lane. This includes the construction of new dwellings on the eastern side of the green, and in the southern section of the lane, as the road bends below Wood End Farm. The allotment gardens marked on the 1920 Ordnance Survey map at Brick End are no longer present, with the area used for two detached dwellings.

To the west of Brick End Lane, separated by fields and an area of woodland, is a sand and gravel quarry which has operated since the granting of planning permission in 1989.⁴

⁴ Planning application reference UTT/2245/88.

2.3.Designated Heritage Assets

There are ten listed buildings on Brick End Lane, all are Grade II listed with the exception of Wood Farmhouse which is Grade II*. Five of these are in the northern section of the lane, with the other five clustered around the lower section of the lane at Brick End. One of the listed buildings is a barn (Barn at Woodhouse Farm, list entry number: 1112257), whilst the remainder are domestic buildings.

Pledgdon Hall, outside the Study Area, is Grade II listed with two individually listed barns within its curtilage.

A summary of the listed buildings is below. These are ordered according to their location, going north-south along Brick End Lane and separated between those in the northern section of the Study Area, closest to the green and those at Brick End.

Pledgedon Green

- Palegate Farmhouse, GII, 1322562

A sixteenth century or earlier house, timber framed and plastered. The building features a complex plan, including crosswing to southern end. Palegate Farm is accessed from the B1051 and located to the east of Brick End Lane. Glimpsed views of the farmhouse can be achieved from the lane; however, it has no discernible connection with it.

- Pledgdon Green Farmhouse, GII, 1231098

A sixteenth to seventeenth century house, timber framed and plastered. Two storeys in height, the building features a jettied element with exposed joists to the front. The building's setting has been subdivided, with barns that once formed its farmstead converted to dwellings. There are now four addresses at Pledgedon Green Farmhouse: The Barn, Pledgdon Green Farmhouse, The Old Coach House and The Old Stables. The buildings are set back from Brick End Lane to the west of Pledgedon Green.

- Elm Cottage, GII, 1230893

An eighteenth-century timber framed and plastered house. One and a half storeys in height with attic accommodation. The building features a tiled, half hipped roof and is set back from the lane, behind a grass verge.

- Wood Farmhouse, GII*, 1306916

An early sixteenth century building, possibly older. Timber framed and plastered with two gabled crosswings, the building is described as featuring lots of original framing and seventeenth century panelling internally. The building is south of Pledgdon Green, set back from the lane behind a brick boundary wall and area of garden.

- Barn at Wood Farmhouse, GII, 1112257

An early nineteenth century barn, five bays wide, timber framed and boarded. The barn is now a separate dwelling.

Brick End

- Oakmeads, GII, 1112256

An early seventeenth century building, timber framed and plastered, featuring exposed framing at first floor. Three bays wide, the dwelling has a thatched hipped roof, and is two storeys tall with a red brick chimney. The building appears to be partially moated on the 1839 Tithe Map, and this is still shown on the current OS map, to two sides only. The building is set back from the lane behind a large garden, with a garage to the rear.

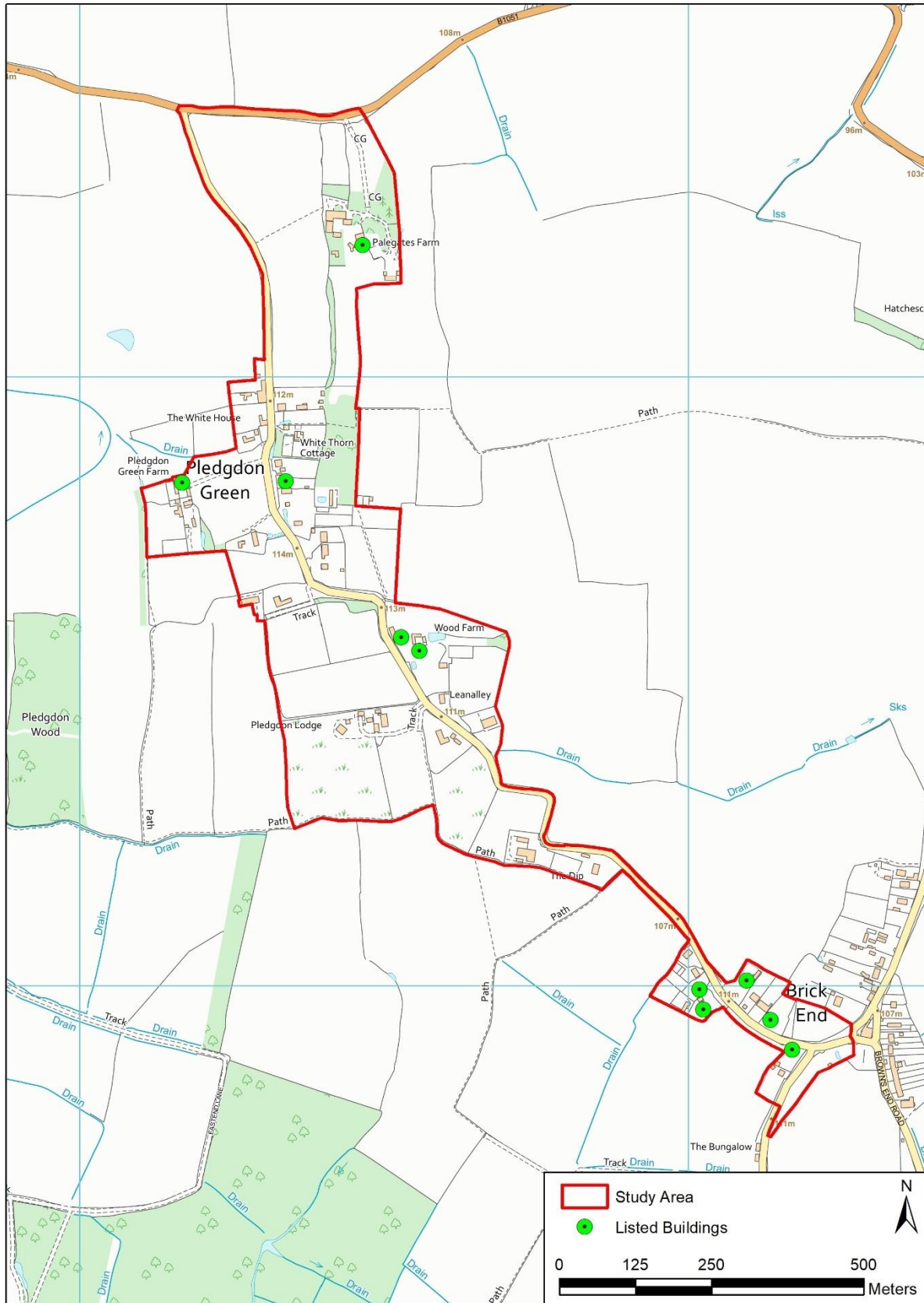


Figure 5 Listed Building Map

- Tudor Cottage, GII, 1322538

An early eighteenth-century house, timber framed and plastered with half hipped thatched roof. One storey and attics, three window range, with an original central red brick chimney. The building's plot has been subdivided to create The Coach House (planning approved in 2017), which is a detached former outbuilding/garage, close to the road. Tudor Cottage faces onto the front garden of Squirrels (listed as Pollyanna Cottage). Applegarth and The Coach House are positioned immediately to the north of the listed building, making a small group of four in this section of the lane.

- Pollyanna Cottage, GII, 1306915

A seventeenth century or earlier, timber framed and plastered house with half hip thatch roof, one storey and attics. C17 red brick chimneys. Now called Squirrels, the building is positioned very close to Tudor Cottage, with large outbuildings/garages to the rear.

- Peartrees, GII, 1322537

A late sixteenth, early seventeenth century house with gabled crosswings. Timber framed and plastered, two storeys in height. The house features two ground floor bay windows, red plain tile roof to house and bay windows. Original red chimney stack with diagonal shafts which has been partially rebuilt.

- The Flying Rat, GII 1112255

An early seventeenth century, timber framed and plastered house with a half-hip thatch roof. One storey with attics, extended to the rear. Renamed, the house is now called Walnut Tree Cottage.

2.4. Non designated Heritage Assets

Brick Lane is a Protected Lane. When assessed as part of the Uttlesford Protected Lanes Report 2012, the lane score 18 – 14 was the threshold for designation. The lane was scored as:

Lane ID	Location	Diversity	Integrity	Potential	Aesthetic	Biodiversity	Group Value	Archaeological Association	Total
UTTLAN E98	Broxted, Pledgdon Green Road	3	3	3	1	3	2	3	18

A search of the Essex Historic Environment Record provided no records of known archaeological features within the lane. There are some examples of cropmarks in the surround field network.

3. Character Analysis

3.1. Layout and Land Usage

The layout of the Study Area is focussed on Brick End Lane, a winding narrow lane which is largely enclosed by tree cover in its middle section and surrounded by either small pockets of built form or agricultural fields. The character of the lane varies from very enclosed to open, with sections of tree cover giving way to open agricultural fields or sections of built development. This is particularly apparent in the southern section of the lane, after the lane's z shaped kink.

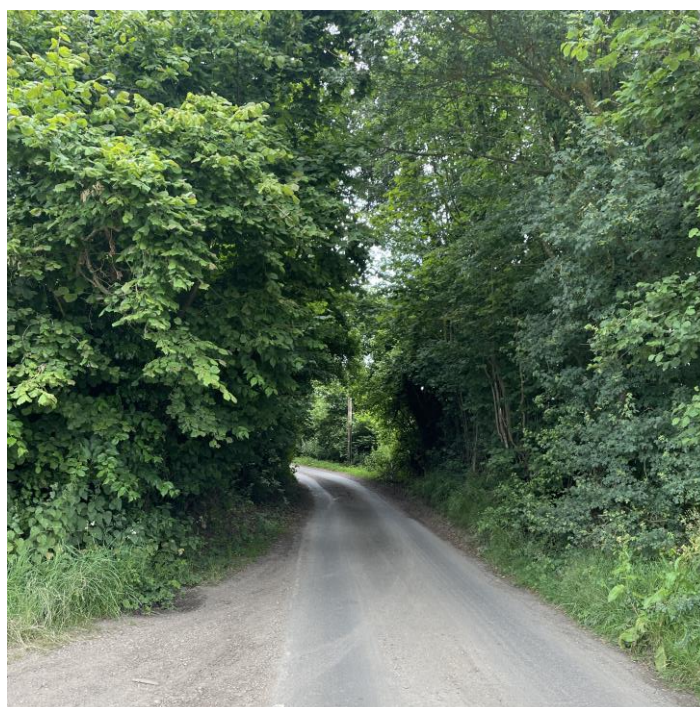


Figure 6 The central section of Brick End Lane, characterised by heavy tree cover



Figure 7 An area of the lane where tree cover gives way to open landscape to the south

On Brick End Lane houses and buildings largely positioned so to face the lane. The exception of this is the dwellings at Pledgdon Green. The green is positioned to the west of Brick End Lane, approximately one third of way down the lane, in its northern section. Dwellings are positioned on three of the green's sides, with the northern edge of the green partially undeveloped; buildings are instead positioned on the green's north eastern corner, relating closer to the lane than the green.



Figure 8 View of the green, from the south eastern corner toward Pledgdon Green Farm

There is a distinct separation between the northern and southern sections of Brick End Lane which is emphasised by the traffic sign just north of Applegarth, demarking Brick End Broxted. The central section of the lane, between the green and brick end, features two areas of industrial storage/ commercial enterprise at The Rise and south of Wood End Farm. Otherwise, land use is either residential or agricultural.



Figure 9 Traffic sign demarking Brick End from Pledgdon Green

3.2. Building Styles and Materials

Along Brick End Lane the buildings are primarily rendered, with some featuring areas of exposed timber framing. The listed buildings along the lane are similar in age to each other and timber framed structures. Nineteenth century infill buildings are primarily rendered or brick, with later twentieth century buildings often brick. Where present, these later infill dwellings are often positioned back from the lane up secluded driveways, meaning they are not visible from the lane and therefore do not make a notable contribution to the overall character of the Study Area. There are examples of timber clad, weather-boarded buildings, which are primarily outbuildings or converted barns; some modern dwellings have been retrofitted with cladding and white cladding is used on one of the dwellings currently under construction at the edge of the green [Figures 11 and 13].

As is typical with historic properties in Essex, many are roofed with plain clay tiles, but there are examples of thatch and slate roofs. Properties are typically one or two storeys in height, with many featuring accommodation in converted roof spaces. There are various roof forms present, with many houses featuring gables to the street. Hipped or half-hipped roof forms are also present, with examples of dormer windows throughout the lane, in a variety of styles.

Overall, the palette of building materials is limited, which creates a cohesive feel to the buildings within the lane and giving them a visual group value, linked in part to the comparable age of many dwellings.



Figure 10 Tudor Hall, with exposed framing, red plain tiles roof and rendered panels



Figure 11 Wood Farm, featuring areas of exposed framing, render, a red tile roof and rubble boundary wall



Figure 12 New dwellings currently under construction on the north eastern edge of the green



Figure 13 Example of an early twentieth century infill dwelling on the lane



Figure 14 Example of retro-fitted cladding on a modern infill dwelling



Figure 15 Rough Apple, an unlisted dwelling at the north eastern corner of the green



Figure 16 Oakmeads, thatched with exposed framing, Brick End

3.3.Landscaping and Open Spaces

The green at Pledgdon Green is a notable area of open space which contrasts with the prevailing pattern of development on Brick End Lane. Other areas of open space include sections of grass verge along the lane edge and private gardens. The green is not formally landscaped, instead laid to wild grass and meadow.

3.4.Negative Elements

On the bend of Brick End Lane there are two commercial properties which have a negative visual appearance, contrasting to domestic appearance and quality of the remainder of the lane.



Figure 17 The Rise, Brick End Lane

Sections of the road surface on the lane are poor and due to the narrowness of the lane, traffic is single file with few passing places. Luckily, on the site visit traffic did appear to be minimal, which adds to the overall tranquil character of the area, enhanced by the tree cover on the lane, which creates a sense of seclusion and enhances the rural character of the area.

4. Assessment

4.1. Levels of Special Interest

An area must be of *special* architectural or historic interest to warrant designation as a conservation area.

Comparison between the historic maps of the lane and its present-day arrangement show that there has been limited change in the past three hundred years. This suggests the area has historic value, which is reinforced by the high number of listed buildings within the lane. Whilst not all buildings are listed, comparison between the first edition Ordnance Survey map and the present-day map shows that many properties date from the nineteenth century or older, with the field boundaries also largely unchanged.

Architecturally, buildings along the lane are typically built in a vernacular style, indicative of their age and construction method. Many of the listed buildings are timber framed and the external appearance of other, unlisted dwellings suggest they are too, such as Rough Apple, on the north eastern corner of the green which is rendered with a thatch roof. Further investigation into the history of each dwelling is necessary, however initial survey suggests many properties have some historic and architectural value and could be considered non-designated heritage assets in their own right.

The character of Brick End Lane changes throughout the Study Area, which can be easily divided into two separate areas: Pledgdon Green and Brick End Broxted. The visual and planted quality of the lane enforces this sense of distinction, with sections of dense planting along the lane visually separating the area around the green from Brick End Broxted to the south. This is particularly apparent due to the openness of the field scape in the southern section of the lane; in the northern section development along the eastern edge of the lane blocks views toward the countryside, whereas at Brick End Broxted development is less dense with more visual connection to the countryside beyond.

4.2. Suitability for Conservation Area Designation

The entirety of Brick End Lane has some historic interest, and this is reflected in its designation as a Protected Lane. The Study Area benefits from a unified character and appearance due to the limited material palette and style of dwellings present, although this is not continuous throughout the entirety of the lane as development is focussed on two distinct areas, Pledgdon Green and Brick End Broxted. Historic maps do indicate that these two areas developed separately and are not a single settlement. This suggests that conservation area status is unlikely to be suitable for the entirety of the Study Area. There is potential, however for the creation of either one or two distinct conservation areas, focussed on either Pledgdon Green or Brick End Broxted.

Reviewing the historic maps, the area at Pledgdon Green appears more intact than that at Brick End Broxted, with greater correlation to the 1777 Chapman and Andre map. Both areas, however, feature listed buildings and a historic character, emphasised by the relationship to the surrounding countryside and sense of isolation of the overall area.

Greater research is required, however initial review suggests Pledgdon Green has an important historic and architectural interest which is considered to be worthy of preservation. The character of the area, its appearance and visual quality contributes to the understanding of the development of the local area, with development focussed around a central open area of Common Land, pre the enclosure acts and indicative of past ways of living. This type of development, separate from the manor (Pledgdon Hall, to the northwest) and around a central area of land which could be farmed without rent or tithes, is indicative of an important

part of agricultural history from the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, prior to the enclosure acts of the nineteenth century which dramatically altered the English countryside, how it was used and how it appeared.

In comparison, the area at Brick End Broxted is less demonstrative of past land use and building techniques, instead featuring a few dwellings positioned close to an established lane and close to the junction and the remainder of the hamlet. Buildings here also have a closer relationship with the remainder of the hamlet, to the east of the Study Area, forming part of a continuous pattern of ribbon development within the Brick End Broxted hamlet.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that a further study in the form of a Conservation Area Appraisal is conducted which looks at the Pledgedon Green area of Brick End Lane specifically, with a defined boundary drawn around the green and surrounding dwellings, forming a specific appraisal which could be used as a basis for conservation area designation. Palegate Farm, to the north east should likely be excluded from this, due its detachment from the green, separated by fields and not featuring an access point from Brick End Lane. Additional research into the historic ownership of surrounding fields may be beneficial, however from the 1840 Tithe apportionments, many of these fields appear to have been in the same ownership as Pledgedon Hall.

It is not recommended that the southern section of Brick End Lane, at Brick End Broxted, is considered further for conservation area designation in conjunction with Pledgdon Green. The areas have developed separately and to a different function, meaning they lack a cohesive development pattern and history. Assessment of the wider Brick End Area, to the south of the Study Area may be beneficial to understand whether the wider hamlet has architectural and historic interest.

The production of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be prepared to set out the special interest of the area. The Management Plan would identify any threats to its special interest which would support Development Management in their decision making, as it would allow for the enhancement and preservation of the area, as dictated by national planning policy and legislation.

6. Appendices

6.1. Bibliography

1777 Chapman Andre Map of Essex
 1840 Tithe Map and Apportionment (viewed online)
 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (viewed online)
 1887 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map
 1923 Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map

Pledgdon Hall, Pledgdon Green', *Survey of Place Names*,
<https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Essex/Henham/532858b8b47fc40a980004fe-Pledgdon+Hall%2C+Pledgdon+Green> [accessed 02/07/2024].

Reaney, P.H., *The Place Names of Essex*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p529.

6.2. Designated Heritage Assets

LOCATION	NAME	GRADE	LIST ENTRY
Pledgdon Green	Palegate Farmhouse	II	1322562
	Pledgdon Green Farmhouse	II	1231098
	Elm Cottage	II	1230893
	Wood Farmhouse	II*	1306916
	Five Bay Barn at Wood Farmhouse	II	1112257
Brick End	Oakmeads	II	1112256
	Tudor Cottage	II	1322538
	Pollyanna Cottage	II	1306915
	Peartrees	II	1322537
	The Flying Rat	II	1112255

6.3.Legislation, Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	69: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (December, 2023) DCLG	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) DCLG	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets	
National Guidance	English Heritage (2019) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance	
Local Plan		

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