

# Venn House, Tenterfield

## Great Dunmow

**BUILT HERITAGE ASSESSMENT | JANUARY 2021**

On behalf of Woolbro Group



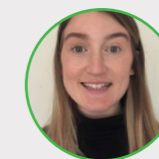


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Section 1

**Introduction.**

# 1 | Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement report is supplied to provide an assessment of the significance of Venn House (henceforth 'the Site'), and its surrounding heritage assets, and the impact a proposed development upon these. Venn House is not a designated heritage asset, nor is the Site recognised to be locally listed, however the Site is located only 25m outside the Great Dunmow Conservation Area.
- 1.2 This report will:
- Set out the relevant legislative and policy framework within which to understand the proposed redevelopment of the Site;
  - Provide a proportionate and robust analysis of the Site and surrounding area's historic development;
  - Describe the site and identify relevant designated heritage assets;
  - Appraise the heritage significance of the Site and identify its position in the setting of the Great Dunmow Conservation Area and other heritage assets; and,
  - Provide a detailed assessment of impact for the proposals on the Site and its setting, and on the character and appearance of the Great Dunmow Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The existing Site and surrounding area was appraised during a site visit (October 2020), and a desk-based study was also undertaken which included review of the Great Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal, Ordnance Survey map progression and consultation of other primary and secondary material.
- 1.4 The report is produced by Icen Projects. Specifically, it is authored by Georgina Mark, BA (Hons) MSt (Cantab), Consultant, with guidance and review by Genevieve Arblaster-Hulley, BA (Hons), MSt (Cantab), Senior Consultant.



Figure 1.1 Aerial view of Site, boundary marked in red  
Source: Edited from Google

Section 2

**Planning Legislation, Policy &  
Guidance.**

### Legislation

- 2.1 Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.
- 2.2 Primary legislation under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (PLBCAA) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or Secretary of State, as relevant, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.
- 2.3 Although the Conservation Area's setting will be assessed in this statement, as the Site is not within the Conservation Area Section 72 of the PLBCAA does not apply.

### National Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (As amended)

- 2.4 In July 2018, the government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), which was again updated in February and June 2019. This maintains the focus on sustainable development that was established as the core of the previous, 2012, NPPF.
- 2.5 This national policy framework encourages intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. Historic England has defined this approach, which is reflected in the NPPF, as 'constructive conservation': defined as 'a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, Historic England, 2009).
- 2.6 Section 12, 'Achieving well-designed places', reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. This section of the NPPF affirms, in paragraph 127, the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- 2.7 The guidance contained within Section 16, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', relates to the historic environment, and developments which may have an effect upon it.
- 2.8 Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).' Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are both designated heritage assets.
- 2.9 'Significance' is defined as 'The value of a heritage

asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.'

- 2.10 The 'Setting of a heritage asset' is defined as 'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'
- 2.11 Paragraph 187 requires local authorities to maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment.
- 2.12 Paragraph 189 states that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance. According to Paragraph 190, local planning authorities are also obliged to identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.
- 2.13 Paragraph 192 emphasises that local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 2.14 Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the

significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It emphasises that the weight given to an asset's conservation should be proportionate to its significance, and notes that this great weight should be given irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

- 2.15 Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 2.16 Paragraphs 195 and 196 address the balancing of harm against public benefits. If a balancing exercise is necessary (i.e. if there is any harm to the asset), considerable weight should be applied to the statutory duty where it arises. Proposals that would result in substantial harm or total loss of significance should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (as per Paragraph 195). Whereas, Paragraph 196 emphasises that where less than substantial harm will arise as a result of a proposed development, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 2.17 Paragraph 197 requires a balanced judgment for proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.18 Paragraph 200 encourages opportunities for new development within, and within the setting of, Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, to enhance or better reveal their significance. It requires favourable treatment for proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset or which better reveal its significance.
- 2.19 Paragraph 201 notes that not all elements of Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites will contribute to their significance, but that, if harm to their significance is caused, decisions should follow the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 195 or 196, as appropriate.

### National Design Guide (September 2019)

- 2.20 In September 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) produced a National Design Guide illustrating how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance, alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.
- 2.21 The Guide recognises that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical Character. It introduces 10 specific characteristics that would need to be considered when considering new development. These are:
- Context - An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments.
  - Identity - The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses.
  - Built form - Built form is the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics.
  - Movement - Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They include walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport. They contribute to making high quality places for people to enjoy. They also form a crucial component of urban character.
  - Nature - Nature contributes to the quality of a place, and to people's quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.

- Public spaces - The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are streets, squares, and other spaces that are open to all. They are the setting for most movement. The design of a public space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes as well as its various elements.
- Uses - Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play. They need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities.
- Homes and buildings - Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences.
- Resources - Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change. It identifies measures to achieve: mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy; and; adaptation to anticipated events, such as rising temperatures and the increasing risk of flooding.
- Lifespan - Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life of their users and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan. They have an emphasis on quality and simplicity.

2.22 MHCLG further intend to publish a National Model Design Code, setting out detailed standards for key elements of successful design. This will intend to consider the findings of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission and recommendations to the Government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.

- 2.23 The Guide acknowledges that quality design does not look the same across different areas of the country, for instance, that by definition local vernacular differs. MHCLG, therefore, expects that local planning authorities develop their own design codes or guides, taking into consideration the National Model Design Code. These would be expected to set clear parameters for what good quality design looks like in their area, following appropriate local consultation.
- 2.24 In support of Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states requires local authorities to refuse "permission for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides"; MHCLG expects that in the absence of local design guidance, local planning authorities will defer to the illustrated National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.

### Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG") (Department for Communities and Local Government, last updated July 2019)

- 2.25 The guidance on Conserving and enhancing the historic environment in the PPG supports the NPPF. Paragraph 002 states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach, and that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.
- 2.26 Paragraph 006 sets out how heritage significance can be understood in the planning context as archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, defined as follows:
- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
  - architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
  - historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.
- 2.27 The PPG emphasises in paragraph 007 the importance of assessing the nature, extent and importance of a heritage asset in understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.
- 2.28 Paragraph 018 explains that, where potential harm



to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194-196) apply. It goes on to state that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest.

- 2.29 Harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 2.30 The PPG also provides clear guidance in paragraph 020 on the meaning of 'public benefits', particularly in relation to historic environment policy, including paragraphs 193 to 196 of the NPPF. The PPG makes clear that public benefits should be measured according to the delivery of the three key drivers of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental outcomes, all of which are reflected in the objectives of the planning system, as per Paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Public benefits include heritage benefits, and do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

### Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted January 2005)

- 2.31 This local plan was adopted before the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 and its subsequent reference within this report will take its contextual relevance into consideration.

#### Policy ENV1 - Design of Development within Conservation Areas

- 2.32 *Development will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a Conservation Area, including plan form, relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open areas and their enclosure, grain or significant natural or heritage features. Outline applications will not be considered. Development involving the demolition of a structure which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area will not be permitted.*

#### Policy ENV2- Development affecting Listed Buildings

- 2.33 *Development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Demolition of a listed building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, and alterations that impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted. In cases where planning permission might not normally be granted for the conversion of listed buildings to alternative uses, favourable consideration may be accorded to schemes which incorporate works that represent the most practical way of preserving the building and its architectural and historic characteristics and its setting*

### Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2032

#### Policy: LSC1: Landscape, Setting and Character

- 2.34 *Development proposals which are visually attractive and can demonstrate how they will contribute positively to the quality of the area throughout the lifetime of the development will be supported. This means:*

- *The design, setting and materials should be informed by the defining characteristics of its local character areas as described in The State of the Parish Today;*
- *The design, setting and materials should respect the key positive features of the approaches to Great Dunmow as described in The State of the Parish Today.*

- 2.35 *A green score against criteria 5 and 6 in a Building for Life (BfL 12) Assessment will help to demonstrate compliance with these aims.*

- 2.36 *Where a landscape character assessment is required, the assessment will consider the landscape, setting and character of the existing development in the vicinity and also of the town of Great Dunmow as a whole. It will carefully explain the impact of the proposed development on these factors.*

#### Policy: LSC2: Important Views

- 2.37 *The following views in Great Dunmow are designated for protection and planning permission will be refused for development proposals that adversely affect them unless the harm can be effectively mitigated or is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the development proposed:*

- *View 1: View of the Chelmer Valley North – a view of a rural landscape and the Chelmer Valley.*
- *View 2: View from Church End – a view of a rural landscape and the Chelmer Valley.*
- *View 3: View of Brick Kiln Farm from St. Edmunds Lane – a view of a rural landscape.*
- *View 4: View down Braintree Road – a sweeping view down the hill towards a rural landscape.*

- *View 5: View of Olives Wood – a view of woods, bluebells, and a rural buffer before the A120.*

- 2.38 *Development proposals falling within these views will be expected to be accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment.*

- 2.39 *The proposed development is situated close to, though is not included in, View 4. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will have no impact on this view and no further assessment will be made with relation to it.*

Section 3

# **Historic Development of the Site and Surroundings.**

### 3 | Historic Development of the Site and Surroundings

#### History of the Area

- 3.1 Great Dunmow sits on a spur located southwest of the valley of the River Chelmer in Uttlesford, Essex. A small town on the site of Great Dunmow was settled by Romans on Stane Street, at the junction linking roads from Sudbury to London and from Cambridge to Chelmsford. Archaeological remains of a Roman temple discovered at Church End suggest that a second settlement was also located in the valley north of the present town.
- 3.2 During the Saxon occupation of the area, the town was named 'Dunmowe', meaning 'meadow on the hill'. In 1086, the Domesday book identified 10 manors and 131 households in the hundred of Dunmow.<sup>1</sup> Records of an earlier church, dated c.1045, on the site of the existing one in Church End substantiate a common belief that present-day Great Dunmow developed out of this northern settlement.
- 3.3 It is likely that the granting of a Royal Charter for a market in 1227 stimulated the expansion of Dunmow to the south where an independent and thriving commercial centre evolved around a high street.<sup>2</sup> This high street developed atop a ridge leading along the river, away from the market place [Figure 3.1].
- 3.4 Great Dunmow continued to sustain itself as a market town for the next five hundred years. On his visit to the area in 1610, William Camden merely commented on the pleasantness of the town.<sup>3</sup> A road map produced by John Ogilby in 1675 [Figure 3.2] presents Great Dunmow as a principal settlement on the journey's route and this illustration is corroborated by Celia Fiennes, who noted a lack of houses beside the road on her travel between Great Dunmow and Colchester in 1698.<sup>4</sup> Both Fiennes and Daniel Defoe - the latter writing in the 1720s - observed the primary industry of the town to be cloth making.
- 3.5 According to the Great Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal, around 19% of buildings in Great Dunmow date from the sixteenth century and around 28% date

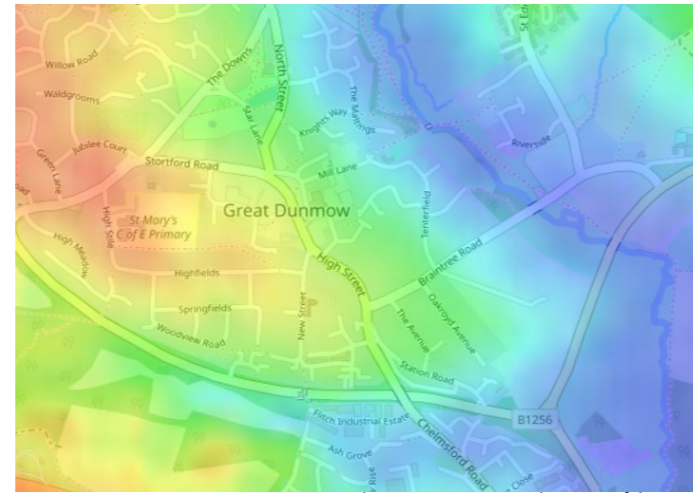


Figure 3.1 Topographic Maps, Topography Map of the Area



Figure 3.2 John Ogilby Road Map, 1675

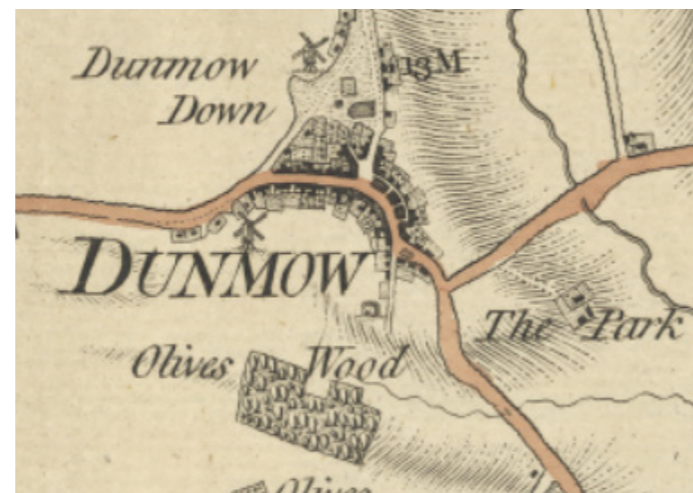


Figure 3.3 John Chapman & Peter Andre Road Map, 1777

from the seventeenth century. The majority of these buildings comprise two-storey, timber framed houses which have been almost unanimously plastered at a later date and commonly had their ground floors redeveloped as retail space.

- 3.6 In 1869, Dunmow railway station was opened, connecting the town to the Bishop's Stortford-Baintree branch line. This connection ended in 1952. Prior to 1869, the rural areas of central and west Essex had been excluded from railway developments in the eastern counties. Although passenger use of the new railway was light, the service facilitated the transportation of agricultural produce to London.
- 3.7 At this time, the arable lands surrounding Great Dunmow supported profitable industries such as the bacon factory and a brewery. These buildings were demolished in the late twentieth century after the industries had moved out of the area.
- 3.8 Great Dunmow remained independent and relatively self-contained into the early twentieth century. A description of the town produced by Kelly's Directory in 1874 identifies National and British schools, a County Court, numerous shops, a post office and chapels for Roman Catholics, Congregationalists, Baptists and other amenities. Between 1875 [Figure 3.4] and 1920 [Figure 3.5], the town expanded southwards along the natural curve of the road leading from High Street to Parc Corner.
- 3.9 During the Second World War, Great Dunmow was located on the GHQ line of defence and a number of concrete pill boxes built to hinder a German invasion survive along the Chelmer Valley.
- 3.10 Until the 1970s, the A120 road (following the Roman road of Stane Street) passed directly through Great Dunmow at an adjacent axis to the High Street. Between 1963 and 1973, houses at Tenterfield were developed along this road, resulting in the near-total envelopment of the eastern border to the historic town centre. These houses comprise standard detached and semi-detached designs.
- 3.11 The Great Dunmow Conservation Area was created in 1970 with the intention of encompassing the settlements as it shown by the 1877 Ordnance Survey Map, known to have existed in the late nineteenth century.

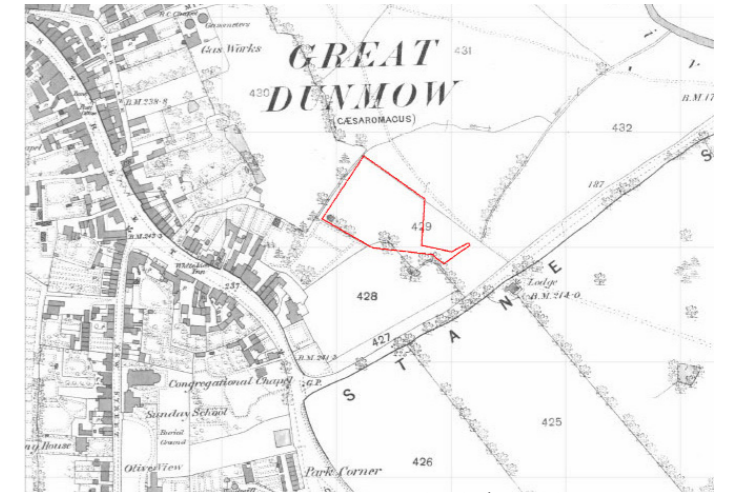


Figure 3.4 Ordnance Survey Map, 1875



Figure 3.5 Ordnance Survey Map, 1920

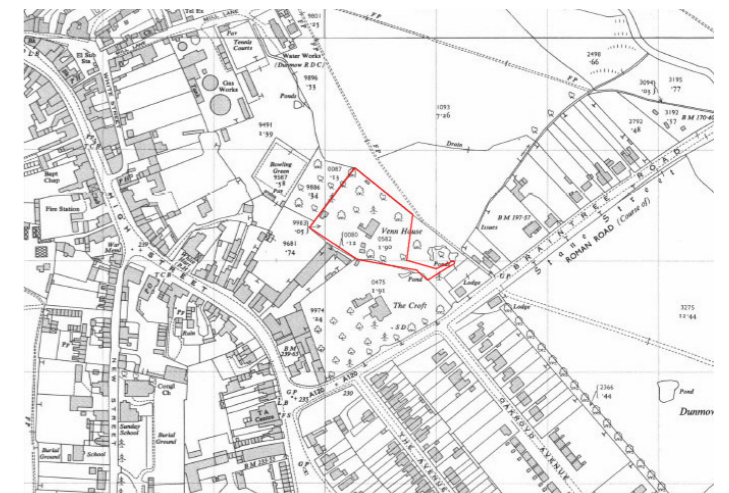


Figure 3.6 Ordnance Survey Map, 1952

1 Open Domesday, '[Great and Little] Dunmow'.  
 2 Calendar of Charter Rolls: Henry III, 1226-1256, Vol.1 (London: Mackie & Co. Ltd, 1908), p.56.  
 3 William Camden, Britain, or a Chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610).  
 4 Celia Fiennes, Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary (London: Field and Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, 1888).

### 3 | Historic Development of the Site and Surroundings

#### History of the Site

- 3.12 The Site of Venn House lies to the east of Great Dunmow High Street and borders Braintree Road (also named Stane Street). An Ordnance Survey Map dated 1875 (Figure 3.4) shows the Site as a rectangular field extending parallel to the High Street with trees lining its boundary edges. The Site is labelled with the field number 429 and is one of many large fields located between the town and the River Chelmer. The land use and ownership of this Site at this time is unknown.
- 3.13 The earliest cartographic illustration of Venn House is on an Ordnance Survey Map dated 1920 under the name, 'Venmore'. Three ancillary buildings are included on the Site, the most notable of which is a lodge positioned at the Site entrance. 'Venmore' is presented as a relatively large building with its principle south and west elevations being visible upon approach from the 300ft drive. The rear of the building comprises recessed and projecting ranges to form an irregular L-shape plan.
- 3.14 According to a newspaper report published in 1916, 'Venmore' was occupied Henry Rumsey Esq. and his wife. Mr. Rumsey was a Justice of the Peace and the Treasurer for the Essex Congregational Union and it is likely that he commissioned the construction of the house. Numerous newspaper reports published between 1916 and 1938 reveal that 'Venmore' was frequently used to host charity events.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.15 A sale description of the Site, dated 1931, describes it as measuring two acres in total and situated, 'well back and completely screened from the road'.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the house is shown to be surrounded by numerous trees in an Ordnance Survey Map dated 1952. It is likely that Venn House has never been visible from the High Street or Braintree Street and its design was not intended to coexist with the limited architectural character of its immediate surroundings.
- 3.16 From c.1934 until 1945, 'Venmore' was owned by the retired foundry manager, Daniel Wilkinson and his wife. Upon its sale in 1945, the house was again

described as privately situated and the Site was filled with fish ponds, tennis and croquet lawns, a bathing pool, a kitchen garden and ancillary buildings including stables, a garage and a gardener's cottage.<sup>3</sup> Alterations to the house were first made in 1966 and took the form of single and double storey additions to the north and south elevations, respectively.

- 3.17 Sometime between 1963 and 1973, as much as half of the Site to the south was incorporated into the large Tenterfields housing estate. It likely that the sale of this portion of the Site was acknowledged by the naming of Venmore Drive within this estate.
- 3.18 Where the Site had historically been located at the eastern periphery of the town, it was now enclosed by modern housing developments and the entrance was redirected to fit through a narrow gap in between dwellings along Tenterfields. As a result of this truncation of the Site, the fish ponds and gardener's cottage were removed. At this time, garden sheds and conservatories were built along the northwest boundary of the Site. These buildings survive today.
- 3.19 The Site has been little altered since the development of Tenterfields. In 2012, planning permission was granted for the necessary removal of trees on the Site.

<sup>3</sup> 'With Vacant Possession, Dunmow', Chelmsford Chronicle, 27 July 1945, p. 2.

<sup>1</sup> 'Dunmow', Essex Newsman, 16 September 1916, p. 7.

'Dunmow', Essex Newsman, 10 August 1918, p. 4.

'Dunmow Congregational Fete', Chelmsford Chronicle, 20 July 1928, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dunmow Saleyard', Chelmsford Chronicle, 28 August 1931, p. 4.



Figure 3.7 Ordnance Survey Map, 1963



Figure 3.8 Ordnance Survey Map, 1973



Figure 3.9 Ordnance Survey Map, 2003

Section 4

**Site Description, Identification  
of Assets and Assessment of  
Significance.**

## 4 | Site Description, Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

### Site Description

- 4.1 The Site has a predominantly rectangular footprint that extends southeast to envelop a meandering driveway which is bordered by foliage. Access to the Site is provided exclusively by this driveway and its entrance is situated between Nos. 1 and 3 Tenterfield. The Site is enclosed by later twentieth-century building developments along Tenterfield, Weaver's Close and Croft House Care Home.
- 4.2 The primary building on the Site, Venn House, presents itself as a purpose-built domestic dwelling, comprising an irregular composition resulting from multiple historic additions to the building's exterior. Evidence of developmental phasing is made obvious by the striking asymmetry between the designs of these phases. This visual character fails to be concealed by the universal application of roughcast render to the exterior of the building.
- 4.3 The original building has two storeys and is constructed from brick to a rectangular plan on an east-west axis. This building is covered by a slate-tiled hipped roof which is made irregular by projecting bays on the north and east elevations. Four chimneys line the flat ridge of the roof; these are rendered and retain most of their original ceramic flue caps. Solar panelling has been fitted to the west slope of the roof.
- 4.4 The south elevation of the building faces the driveway. This elevation presents a gabled range to the left which is fenestrated with two eight-light casement windows with timber frames and glazing bars, positioned centrally on the first and second floors. The windows are fitted flush to the wall and are supported by timber lintels and sills. Unless otherwise stated by this description, all windows inserted into this building are composed in this manner. A pattern of applied vertical timbers and plain timber bargeboards decorate the gable of this range.
- 4.5 A two-storey addition to the right side of the south elevation projects along a square plan. This addition is also fenestrated with a central window at each floor, however that which is positioned at ground floor height is possibly an original window which has been removed and reinstalled during the construction of this range. The other window is modern. This range is covered by a flat roof.
- 4.6 The west elevation of the original building is fenestrated by two timber-framed casement windows



Figure 4.1 Driveway leading to Tenterfield



Figure 4.2 South and west elevation



Figure 4.3 North and east elevations

in the right corner of the first floor. The window positioned farthest to the right comprises twelve lights and its neighbour has five.

- 4.7 A single-storey addition to this elevation is covered by a shed-roof, tiled with slate and fitted with solar panels. A large timber-framed picture window envelopes the south and west elevations of this addition and is disrupted by three two-light windows with upper casements, positioned at the corners. Two timber doors providing entrance to the building are positioned side-by-side.
- 4.8 The east elevation of the building is dominated by a two-storey octagonal bay which is covered by an engaged octagonal turret. This bay is fenestrated at the ground and first floors by a sixteen-light, timber-framed casement windows. The ground floor window is slightly longer than that at the first floor. To the right of this bay, two four-light timber-framed casement windows are positioned at each floor. A modern picture window with margin casements is inserted at first floor height on the east elevation of the south addition.
- 4.9 The north elevation of the building is similarly dominated by a projecting bay which is situated off-centre and extends to eaves height. A door with a glass window is inserted into this bay and also positioned off-centre. The entrance is approached by two stone steps and framed by a modestly moulded rain hood. Above the door, positioned central within the bay, is a long four-light window.
- 4.10 A modern square picture window is inserted at ground floor height to the left of the bay. On the other side, five timber-framed windows of differing, but simple compositions are fitted closely to one another.
- 4.11 Two consecutive single storey ranges have been added to the north elevation of the original building. The addition abutting the original building was built first to a rectangular plan on a north-south axis. It is covered by an engaged hipped roof, covered with slate and has an exposed brick chimney on the west side. A ceramic flue has likely been borrowed from a chimney on the original building. The second



Figure 4.4 North elevation and north addition



Figure 4.5 Ancillary buildings and yard to the west of the Site

## 4 | Site Description, Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

addition extends northward from the first and envelopes its eastern elevation. This addition has a flat roof.

4.12 On the west elevation of the first addition, a timber-framed porch surrounds the primary front entrance to the building. The porch is not enclosed but is covered by a sloped roof, covered with slate. A four-light window is positioned to the left of the porch. Three irregular windows and a door with six window panels are inserted into the east elevation. A fourth window to the right has a timber mullion and half-transom; two duplicate windows are inserted into the north elevation of this range.

4.13 To the west of Venn House are two green houses, constructed from glass and brick. To the south of these buildings lies a brick shed with garage door openings. Overgrown plants cover much of these buildings.

4.14 A two-storey utility building is situated in the northwest corner of the Site. This building has a rectangular footprint and a projecting gabled bay on the right side of the principle south elevation. A central barn door is inserted into this bay and a loading door is positioned above it. An opening is also inserted into a single-storey addition to the east elevation. This addition has a shed roof.

4.15 Hardstanding covers the area west of Venn House, extending north to the utility building. The rest of the land within Site is grass. Trees encompass much of the Site's border and contribute to the visual shielding of the Site from outside.

### Identification of Assets

#### Conservation Areas

- Great Dunmow Conservation Area

#### Listed Buildings

##### Grade II

- H. Stokes Family Butchers
- Blowers



Figure 4.6 Map of the Site and Surrounding Heritage Assets

## 4 | Site Description, Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

### Assessment of Significance

#### Methodology

- 4.16 The assessment methodology used here for assessing the significance of the identified heritage assets and their settings is the framework set out in the November 2017 consultation draft of Historic England’s best-practice guidance document Conservation Principles. This proposes the use of three heritage interests – historical, archaeological, and architectural and artistic - in assessing what makes a place and its wider context special. These are broadly in line with the values – evidential [now archaeological], historical, aesthetic [now architectural and artistic], and communal [now part of historical] – set out in the previous, 2008 version, but are consistent with the heritage interests in the NPPF, the definitions for which are now included in the updated Planning Practice Guidance:
- 4.17 archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 4.18 architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- 4.19 historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

#### The Site

- 4.20 The Site is not listed and has not been identified as an unlisted building of significance within the Uttlesford Council Local Heritage List, published in October 2018.
- 4.21 The Site is not located within the Great Dunmow Conservation Area, however it is situated, at its closest, approximately 25 metres from the character areas of High Street and the Central Area, New Street, North Street and Threader’s Green.
- 4.22 Although the Site is situated in close proximity to Braintree Road, it is not included in the protected view to the southeast down Braintree Road which has been designated by the Uttlesford District Council

#### Archaeological Interest

- 4.23 Mapping evidence would indicate that there is no built archaeology on the Site. This report does not consider below ground archaeological potential.

#### Architectural and Artistic Interest

- 4.24 The Site presents differing measurements of architectural interest relating to the multiple phases of its alteration, although all of which are very limited. Venn House can be identified as the most significant building on the Site due to its more complex architecture and greater historical interest in comparison to other buildings on the Site, however this significance is small. The house is a typical example of an early twentieth-century middle-class residence and its materiality is of low interest.
- 4.25 The principal elevation of the house is difficult to define; the south elevation is visible upon an approach from the drive, yet the primary entrance to the building is located at the west elevation. Furthermore, these elevations have both been much altered by the addition of single and double-storey modern ranges. These additions, and those at the north elevation, were built to conventional designs unsympathetic in proportion and artistic finish to the original building and are of no architectural interest.

#### Historic Interest

- 4.26 Although the unsympathetic and relatively crude alterations to the Site reduce its architectural and artistic interest, they enable an easy observation of the Site’s historic development and therefore contribute some interest via the expression of its phasing. The Site sits outside of the town, with low to nil visibility, and its original physical connection to the historic settlement of Great Dunmow – the drive approach from Braintree Street – has been lost. The location of the Site in between the town and the modern housing at Tentersfield adds to its historic form as a marker to the beginning of the twentieth century expansion of the town, this provides a significant cleft between the old town and its twentieth century expansion (including the Site). The documented use of the Site to host charity events, attended by members of the community is of some minor general interest, but there is no evidence to support the Site’s importance within the wider town.



## 4 | Site Description, Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

### Great Dunmow Conservation Area

- 4.27 The Great Dunmow Conservation Area was first designated by Essex County Council in 1970. The borders of the Conservation Area identify the town as it existed in the late nineteenth century and was portrayed in an Ordnance Survey map dated 1877. It has not been expanded. An exception to this encompassment is the area of Church End which is separated in its valley situation northeast of the town but included in the designation.
- 4.28 The Conservation Area is divided into three distinct character areas; the High Street and central area of the town, Parsonage Downs, including the Causeway and Church End. These areas are implied by the Conservation Area Appraisal to capture the historic essence of the community as a small market town surrounded by rural hinterlands before its enclosure by twentieth-century housing.
- 4.29 The Site is located outside of the Conservation Area, therefore it can be assumed that it is considered by the Uttlesford District Council to make no contribution to this historic essence.
- 4.30 As set out in the Appraisal, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area relate to the gradual, consistent development of the town from the Roman period onwards. A variety of building types populate the area, the most common of which are domestic and commercial buildings, constructed in the seventeenth century. Many of these were altered in the nineteenth century. There are 170 individually listed buildings within the Conservation Area.
- 4.31 In the twentieth century, expansive residential developments largely enveloped the existing town. According to the Appraisal, modern housing developments are unsympathetic to the town and overcrowd many historic areas. They compromise the quality and character of the town centre which are derived from its curving streets, open spaces, mature trees and a juxtaposition of materials and roofscapes.
- 4.32 It is unlikely that the Site is included in this commentary on modern developments due to its isolated experience from both the town and Tenterfields. It is our judgement that the Site is a neutral building which, due to its maintained historic invisibility and physical separation from the town, neither contributes nor detracts from the setting of the Conservation Area.

- 4.33 The Site is not located within the Great Dunmow Conservation Area, however it is situated, at its closest, approximately 25 metres from the character area of High Street and the Central Area, New Street, North Street and Threader's Green. The Site is not at all visible from any of these locations which comprise the character area as it is completely concealed by trees. This lack of intervisibility or the lack of historical connection between the Site and the historic high street result in no contribution to the setting and the significance of the Conservation Area.

### H. Stokes Family Butchers (Grade II)



- 4.34 This two-storey semi-detached building is a former dwelling house, constructed in eighteenth or nineteenth century. It is connected to Blowers (Grade II) at its south elevation and its principal west elevation faces the High Street. A nineteenth-century butcher shop currently occupies the ground floor, however given its prominent position at the later developed southern end of the High Street, it is likely that the building served an historic commercial purpose.
- 4.35 The building possesses a timber framed structure which has been externally concealed with plaster and white weatherboarding. Peg tiles cover the roof and the first floor principle elevation fenestrated by a tripartite double hung sash window with central vertical glazing bar and an ordinary double sash with moulded surround. The nineteenth-century butcher shop front at ground level is fitted with modern plate glass windows and doors.
- 4.36 The Site makes no contribution to the setting of this building. Its situation to the building's rear is not visible and its physical separation from the High Street, and therefore the listed building, has been historically established by its set back location and concealment behind mature trees.

### Blowers (Grade II)



- 4.37 This building comprises a shop and flat and was constructed c. 1500. It is presently attached to H. Stokes Family Butchers at its north elevation and is gabled to the south. Its timber framed structure has been plastered and it has a slate pitched roof with nineteenth century stack positioned off-centre.
- 4.38 The building is located at the southern end of the High Street and its primary west elevation faces the road, suggesting that the building's historic commercial use was reliant upon its prominent situation along this principle thoroughfare.
- 4.39 A nineteenth-century carriageway to the left of the building alludes to its high status within the locality and internal evidence of a single bay hall with cross-wing suggests that this status was established at its construction date.
- 4.40 The Site is considered to make no historic or visual contribution to the setting of this building.

Section 5

# **Assessment of Impact.**

### Overview of the Proposals

- 5.1 The proposal for the redevelopment of the Site involves the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of 12 dwellings comprising a housing mix of 3, 4 & 5 bed dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.
- 5.2 bed dwellings, with associated parking and landscaping.
- 5.3 The proposal is described in full in the architects' Design and Access Statement, which should be read in parallel with this report. The architects' document establishes key design objectives which include ensuring the design compliments the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.4 Several design moves have been undertaken to achieve this:
- The retention of the existing access drive and existing trees around the Site will maintain the current visual and physical relationship between the Site and its surrounding townscape.
  - The proposed buildings have been oriented appropriately based on their size in relation to the surrounding properties in order to maintain the existing local character of building heights, taking into account the elevated topography of the Site in comparison to that of Tenterfield. Furthermore, proposed buildings will only be positioned along areas of the Site boundary which are not currently bounded by neighbouring buildings in an attempt to reduce the visual and physical impact of the proposed development on its surroundings.
  - The materiality of the proposed development is based on that of the local vernacular. This approach will ensure the proposed buildings respect their natural environment and sensitively reflect the built character of the surrounding area.
  - The proposed landscaping scheme responds positively to the existing landscaping of the Site and enhances its contribution to the locality as a green boundary between the town and the development of Tenerfields..



Figure 5.1 Proposed Site. Omega Architects

## Assessment of Impact

### The Assessment Methodology

5.5 The impact assessment utilises the guidance as set out in Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (July 2015); The NPPF is applied with particular regard to the internal methodology set out in paragraphs 192 to 197 as its basis and with the interpretation established by current case law.

### Principle of Demolition

5.6 As set out in the Assessment of Significance above, although Venn House does hold some elements of interest, these are not to the degree where the building can be considered a non-designated heritage asset which it is desirable to preserve. This is not least due to the building’s rather awkward architectural form and substantial loss of original setting. The building is regarded as a fairly typical house of its period and size and not of unusual or special character. Its demolition for the purposes of providing many more houses in an already suburban location is, in our view, judged in principle to be possible without heritage harm arising.

### Assessment of Impact on Identified Heritage Assets

#### *Great Dunmow Conservation Area*

5.7 The proposed development is considered to remain sensitive to the character and appearance of the Great Dunmow Conservation Area.

5.8 The proposal strikes a positive balance between expanding the Site’s existing and historic residential function and maintaining its neutral contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area which is derived from its lack of visibility and physical separation from the town. The proposed buildings will be of lesser or equal height to Venn House and will continue to be concealed from views along the High Street by the existing green west Site boundary which will be retained.

5.9 At present, Venn House neither contributes nor detracts in its entirety from the setting of the Conservation Area. It exists as part of the wider and general context to the area, being physically isolated within its Site from the historic core of the town and excluded from important views around Great

Dunmow. The proposed development will maintain this physical division between the Site and the Conservation Area.

5.10 Whilst the Great Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal notes the overcrowding of modern developments on this historic core, the proposal takes care to reflect the local character in its choice of materials, despite its lack of visibility from the Conservation Area. A combined use of red brick, timber weather boarding and slate and clay tiled roofing appropriates the characteristic variation of materials displayed within the Conservation Area.

5.11 Although the Site sits firmly outside of the Conservation Area and the proposed development will be extensively concealed from it, the selective materiality of buildings within the proposal creates a visually interesting street scene which is both sensitive to and complimentary of the architectural diversity of the Conservation Area. For example, the incorporation of architectural detailing such as door pilasters and entablature, dormer windows and gabled ranges, reflects those which are commonly displayed throughout the town.

#### *H. Stokes Family Butchers and Blowers*

5.12 The proposed development is unlikely to be visible from both of these heritage assets due to the retention of the existing green boundary and the marginally increased, or equal height of the proposed buildings in comparison to the two-storey height of the assets. It is possible that the roofs of the proposed developments will be visible behind H. Stokes Family Butchers and Blowers, however their pitched form and covering of slate and clay tiles is considered to be a sensitive introduction into the general townscape of the assets. The existing setting and significance of these two designated heritage assets is therefore judged to be wholly maintained.

Section 6

**Conclusion.**

## 6 | Conclusion

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Icen Built Heritage and Townscape, on behalf of Woolbro Group, to support a full planning application for the proposed development at Venn House, Tenterfield.
- 6.2 The Statement sets out the relative legislative and policy framework to understand the current Site, other nearby listed buildings, and Harley Street Conservation Area, both in terms of historic development and heritage significance.
- 6.3 From a review of the historic development of the Site it is clear that the building has existed as an independent entity since its twentieth-century construction date, kept physically separated from the historic expansion of Great Dunmow. Venn House is not of unusual or special character due to its existence as a typical twentieth-century house and the detracting quality of its many subsequent alterations. This assessment is supported by the exclusion of the Site from the Uttlesford Council Local Heritage List, published in 2018.
- 6.4 The demolition of Venn House and its ancillary buildings is judged to be possible without heritage harm arising and the proposed erection of 12 dwellings on the Site is considered to expand upon the existing residential function of the Site, whilst enhancing its contribution to the local community.
- 6.5 We consider the Site to meet national and local policy requirements as they pertain to designated and non-designated heritage assets, including the policies of the Uttlesford District Council Local Plan.'



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