

Earls Colne Landscape Character Assessment

Prepared for: Earls Colne Parish Council

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Earls Colne Landscape Character Assessment

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Appendix 1 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Appendix 2 Landscape Value Assessment

Version Control

Version	Author	Changes from previous version	Checked by	Date checked
PL00	LD	None	BB	29/10/21
PL01	LD	Expand sections 4 and 5, attach appendices	BB	28/02/22
PL02	LD	Amend sections 2, 2.7, 4.8, 5	BB	31/03/22

1 Introduction

This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was commissioned by Earls Colne Parish Council and carried out by Wynne-Williams Associates, Chartered Landscape Architects. The aim of the assessment is to provide an evidence base as part of the preparation of the parish's Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The LCA seeks to define the essential landscape character features in the Parish of Earls Colne and assess how sensitive they are to changes, such as development.

The study is both a research and mapping investigation and a field study carried out to standards set down by Natural England and The Landscape Institute. Following the gathering of baseline information, the assessment considers the sensitivity of the landscape and its value.

To establish the capacity for development in the parish, the areas adjoining the settlement boundaries have been mapped and assessed and the broad capacity for small scale housing has been considered.

2 Landscape baseline information

To gather the baseline information about the landscape of the parish, a number of published sources and studies have been reviewed. The starting point was the Essex Landscape Character Assessment carried out in 2003 by Chris Blandford Associates, followed by the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment carried out in 2006.

These two assessments have split up the landscape within their study area slightly differently and therefore the two studies do not always align. However, in the case of Earls Colne parish they are largely in alignment with one another, as the areas and descriptions are generally concurrent across both reports. This does mean that the naming of the same areas are not consistent – in this case Gosfield Wooded Farmland and High Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland.

2.1 Essex Landscape Character Assessment 2003

The Essex LCA identified two broad landscape areas within the parish of Earls Colne **[Figure 1]**. These are the Colne Valley (C7) and the Gosfield Wooded Farmland (B4) character areas. Both these character areas extend beyond the parish itself but have key characteristics which are present within the parish.

2.1.1 Colne Valley (C7)

Key characteristics described in the Essex LCA and found in the parish:

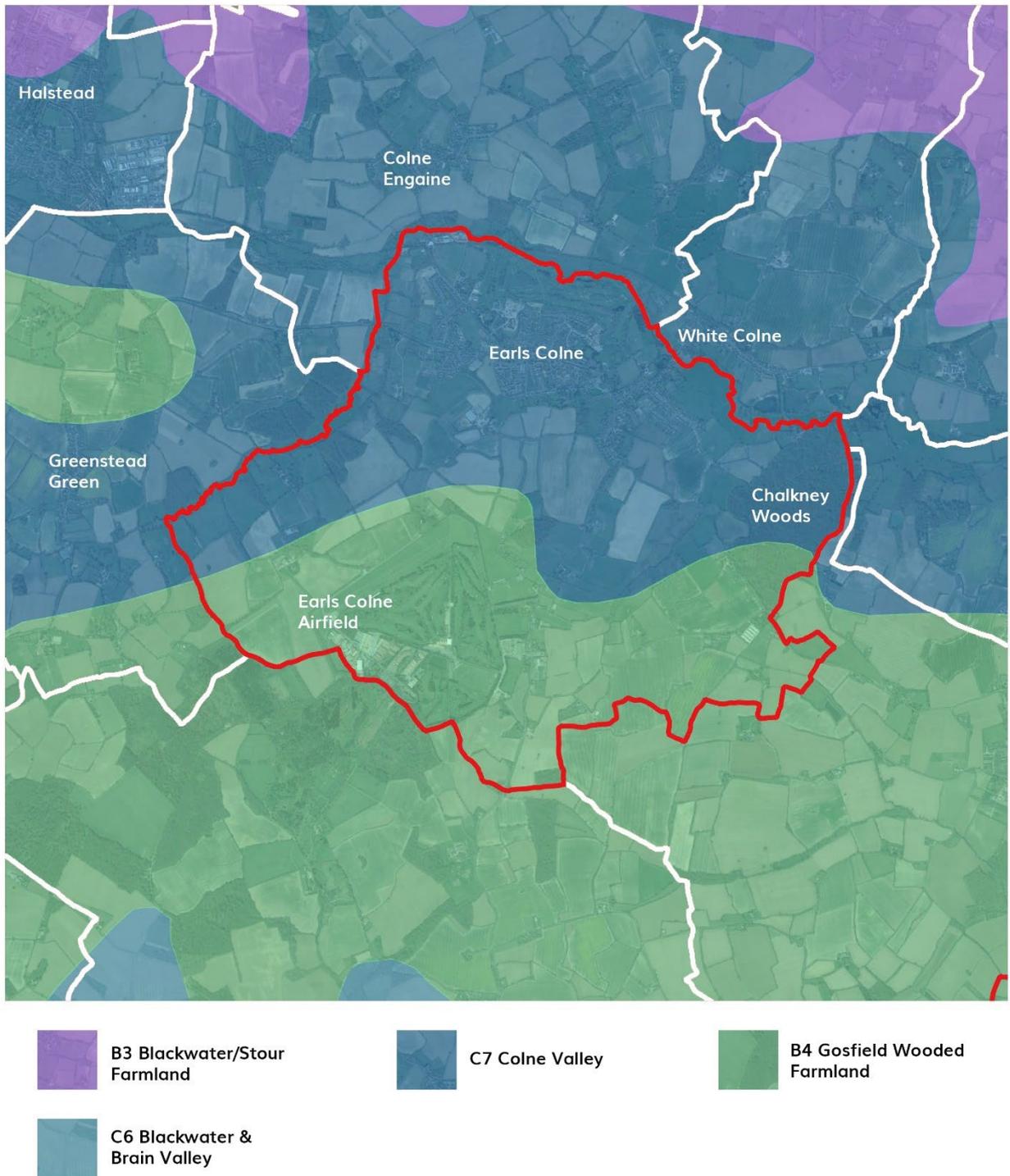
- Shallow valley of variable width with numerous small tributary valleys.
- Gently to moderately undulating valleysides.
- Narrow valley bottom, mainly pasture.
- Arable valleyside farmland with frequent small woodlands.
- A series of small towns and villages at bridging points.
- Historic mill buildings are distinctive features.

2.1.2 Gosfield Wooded Farmland (B4)

Key characteristics described in the Essex LCA and found in the parish:

- Flat to gently undulating landform.
- Strong pattern of large and small woods, including distinctive ancient limewoods.
- Irregular medium size arable fields, bounded by thick hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.
- Enclosed character.
- Many small farmsteads, occasional hamlets and villages.

Figure 1 – Essex Landscape Character Assessment Map



2.2 Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment 2006

Following production of the Essex LCA, the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2006) was carried out.

Findings were broadly in line with the Essex LCA with some minor differences and added details. The character areas identified within the parish of Earls Colne follow the outlines of those in the Essex LCA [Figure 2]. These are the Colne River Valley (A4) and the High Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland (F2) character areas. Both these character areas extend beyond the parish itself but have key characteristics which are present within the parish.

2.2.1 Colne River Valley Character Area (A4)

Key characteristics described in the District LCA and found in the parish:

- Shallow river valley with relatively steep valleysides, which varies in width throughout its length.
- The meandering River Colne and its tributaries are narrow in comparison with the broad spread of the floodplain across which the river flows.
- River Colne is bridged by roads and lanes, which connect the north, and south valley slopes and facilitates views along the river corridor.
- Land use adjacent to the river is predominantly pastoral
- The views are enclosed by trees and settlements.
- On the valley slopes the land use is predominantly arable.

(SubUnit 4a)

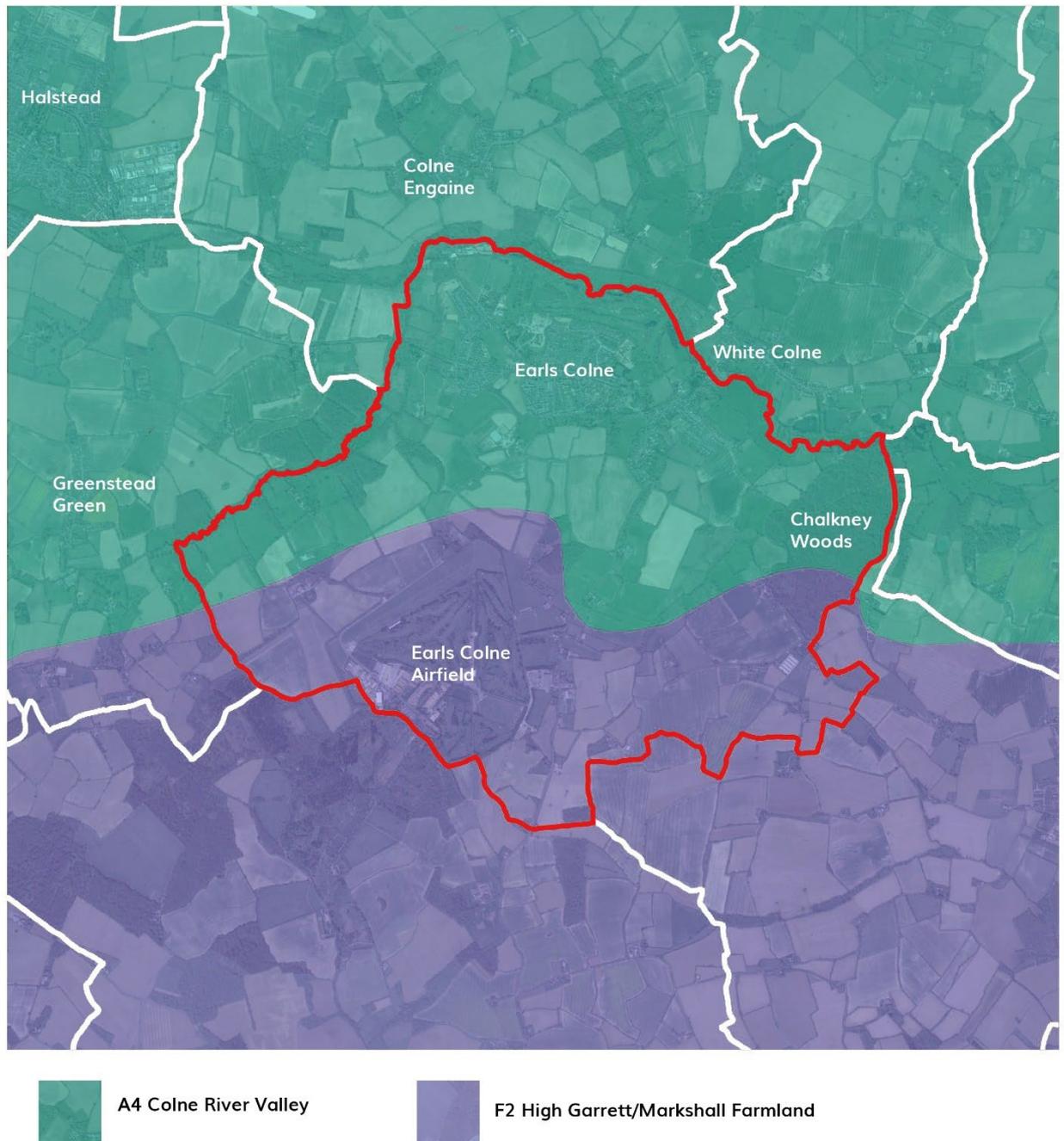
- Narrow river valley.
- Bourne Brook is small and meandering.
- Land use in the valley and up the valley sides comprises large arable fields with low hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

2.2.2 High Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland (F2)

Key characteristics described in the District LCA and found in the parish:

- Flat to gently undulating landform.
- Strong pattern of large and small woods, including distinctive ancient lime woods.
- Regular medium to large arable fields, bounded by low well trimmed thick hedgerows and some mature hedgerow trees.
- Open to enclosed character depending on density of woodlands.
- Many small farmsteads and occasional villages.
- Several Halls and estates.

Figure 2 – Braintree Landscape Character Assessment Map

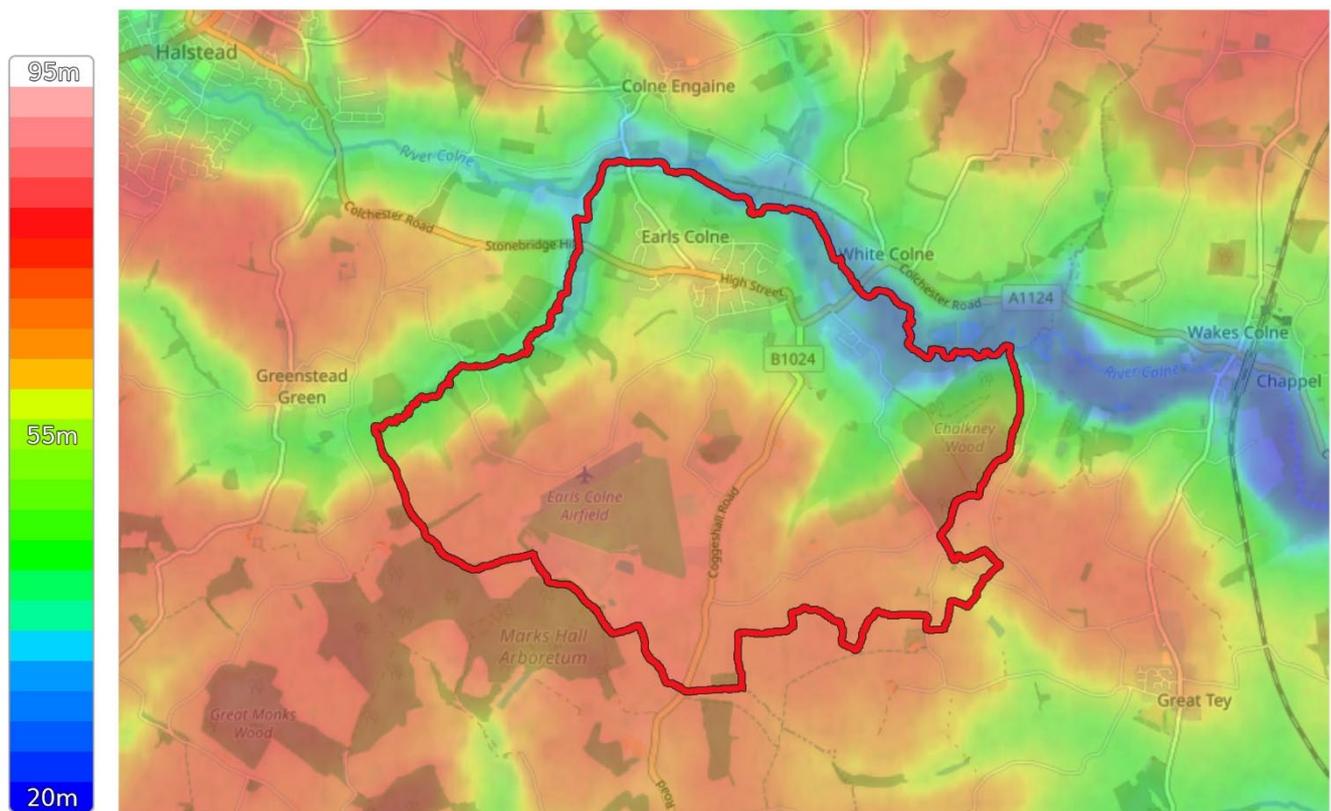


2.3 Underlying topography and soils

The character areas described in both landscape character assessments are closely related to the underlying landform and topography of the parish. The plan below shows the contours and changes in landform across the parish [Figure 3]. The river valley is clearly distinguishable from the wooded farmland which sits on higher, flatter land.

The topography is a fundamental influence on the character of the parish – it has provided the site of the main settlement – adjacent to the river though on higher land than the floodplains, and determined which areas are more suitable for farming on the plateau.

Figure 3 – Parish Topography Map

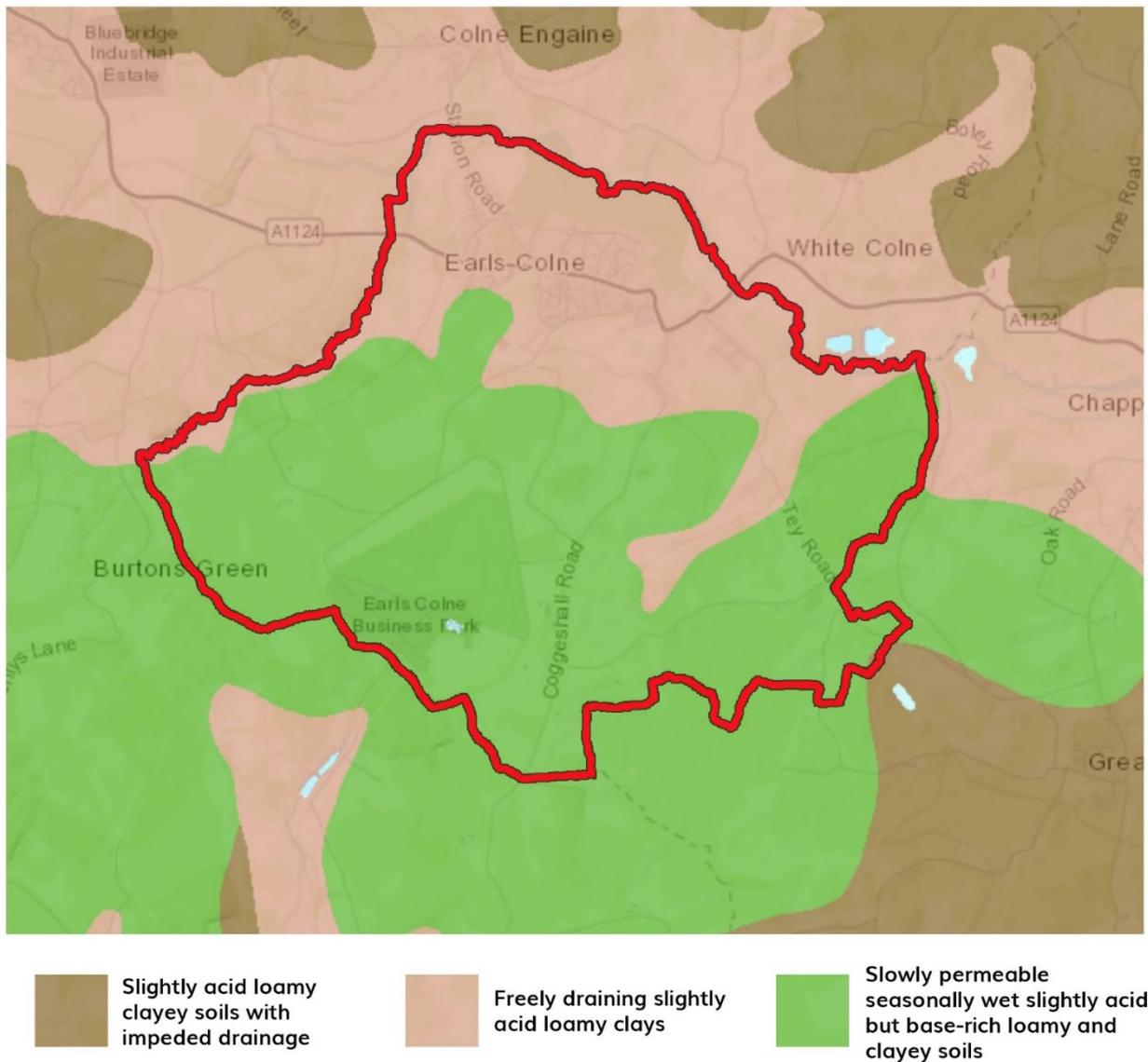


The soils on the wooded farmland are slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils with moderate fertility. These soils have some impeded drainage but nevertheless support the grassland, arable cultivation and pockets of woodland.

The soils along the valley floors are freely draining, slightly acid, loamy soils with low fertility. Much of the settled land is in this area. Farmland in this area is a mix of pastoral and arable, the soil also supports pockets of woodland.

Refer Figure 4, source: soilscape.

Figure 4 – Parish Soil Map



2.4 Historical development

2.4.1 Origins

Until the late 11th century the parish of Earls Colne was part of a large estate which belonged to the Ealdorman of Essex, after which the estate was broken up. From 1086 the Earls of Oxford held a manor here from which, along with the River Colne which forms the parish's northern boundary, the parish gets its name.

2.4.2 Settlement

A market was founded in the village in 1250 and by 1377 the parish had the largest number of tax payers in the Lexden Hundred. The main settlement of Earls Colne likely developed at this time from several foci along the roads which now form the A1124. As the market declined in the 15th century so did the population. Populations rose again in 16th and 17th centuries, but fell again in the later 18th century as cloth-making and brick-making industries ceased. In the 19th century Robert Hunt set up a millwrighting and wheelwrighting shop which went on to become Atlas Works and again the population rose. From the late 20th century the parish has seen further and rapid population increase due to emigration from towns and cities.

2.4.3 Land Use

In addition to the manor, the Earls of Oxford also had a park in the southwest of the parish, however this had been largely converted to arable use by the end of the 16th century. Most of the parish was early enclosed into small fields with hedges, typical of central Essex.

Five woods were named in the 12th century, two of which survive today – Chalkney Wood and Richards Grove. Chalkney Wood is more significant in size within the parish. It is a medieval woodland whose boundaries have remained unchanged and its eastern edge forms the eastern boundary of the parish. The wood is designated as ancient woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), coppicing was reintroduced in 1974.

Earls Colne Priory was constructed in the 12th century to the northeast of the parish. It was demolished in the 16th century and is now a scheduled ancient monument.

A Second World War airfield was created to the south of the parish in 1942, diverting the roads to Markshall and Greenstead Green, with the road to Markshall later being closed. Some area remains as an airfield but much is now used as a golf club and business park.

The main village settlement, roads and other features, including scattered houses and farmsteads, are largely recognisable in the Earls Colne and Colne Priory Manors Map 1598 [Figure 5], and the Chapman and Andre Map of Essex which was drawn up in 1777 [Figure 6].

The oldest surviving buildings in the parish are along the high street where remnants of houses built from the late-14th to mid-16th century can be identified. These, as well as many of the scattered houses and farmsteads are listed [Figure 7].

Sources:

- A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10, Lexden Hundred by Janet Cooper
- A Study by Alan Macfarlane and University of Cambridge
https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/earls_colne/intro/index.htm

Figure 5 – Earls Colne and Colne Priory Manors Maps 1598



Figure 6 – Extract from Chapman & Andre Map of Essex 1777

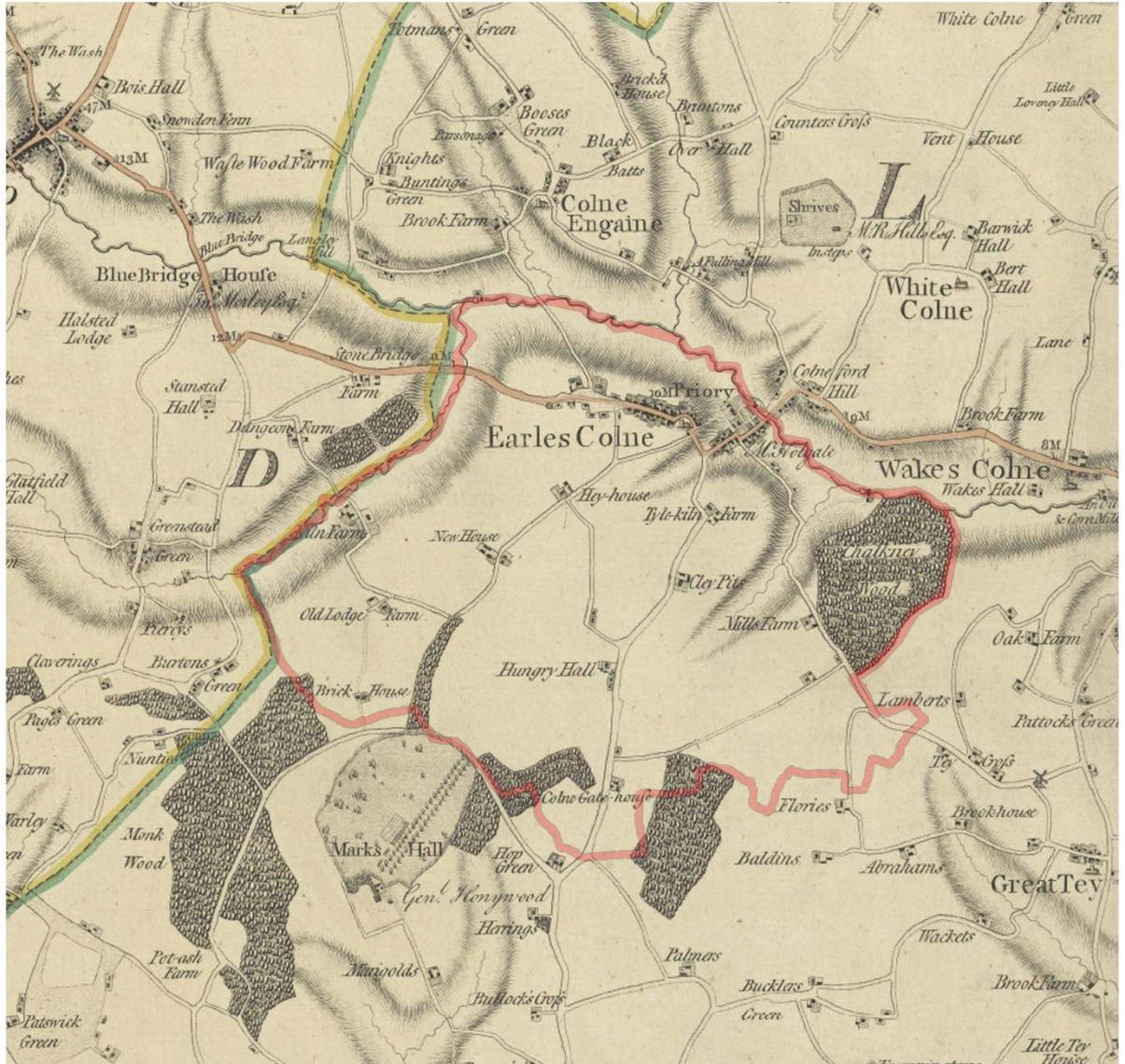
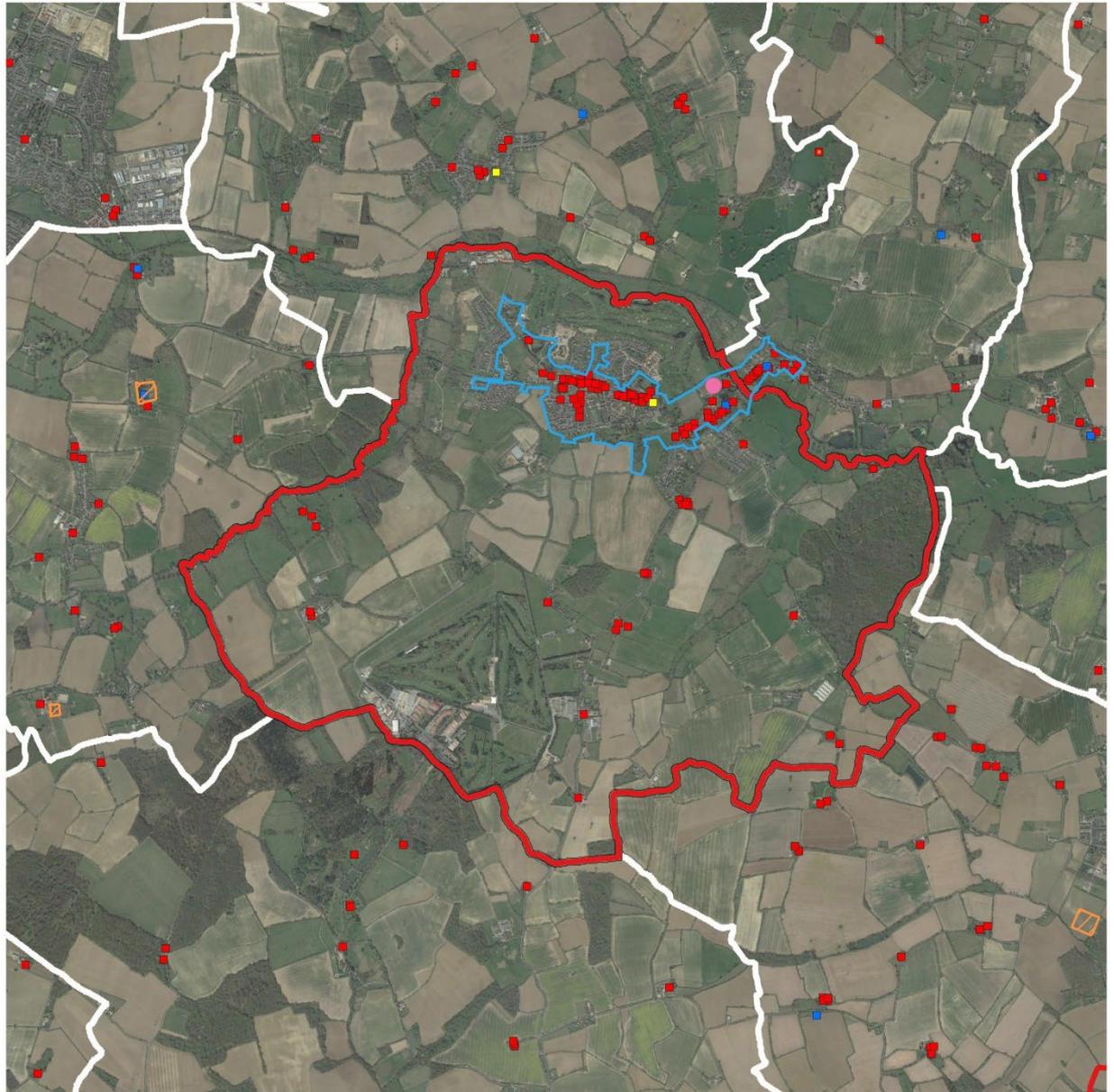


Figure 7 – Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Map



- Grade I listed
- Grade II* listed
- Grade II listed

● Earls Colne Priory
scheduled ancient
monument

— Earls Colne
conservation area

2.5 Transport Links and Accessibility

The main road within the parish is the A1124 (Halstead Road), this is to the north and dissects the parish west to east through the settlement of Earls Colne. The B1024 (Coggeshall Road) leads off this road travelling south. These, along with many of the subsidiary rural roads and lanes are in much the same configuration as shown in the 1598 map [Figure 5].

Footpaths provide public rights of way in the parish. These offer access to the local countryside including Chalkney Wood and river valleys. They also connect scattered settlements. The footpaths within the parish also provide links to the wider footpath network and countryside outside of the parish.

2.6 Tranquillity

Tranquillity varies in the district. Roads, pylons and air traffic present intrusive elements. Footpaths are intercepted by the road network, in the case of the airfield footpaths run directly alongside the road network itself which is well-used by HGVs. Roads around industrial/business parks, and especially the main road through the village are busy, disrupting tranquillity. A line of electricity pylons also stretches south to northeast, running alongside and oversailing footpaths to the east of the parish. These are visually dominant and sometimes audible.

In contrast the river valleys and Chalkney Wood offer good tranquillity.

2.7 Land use

The majority of the land use in the parish is enclosed agriculture with a mixture of ancient, pre-modern, and modern form. Between the two golf courses, the recreation club, and the airfield, recreational land use also makes up a significant portion of the parish.

Chalkney Wood makes up a large area of woodland. Other pockets of woodland, including Richards Grove, are scattered throughout the parish.

Settlement land use is mainly contained to the village of Earls Colne except for some scattered settlements. Earls Colne is one of the smaller key service villages in the Braintree District with a church, primary school, some shops, three public houses and a few take away food outlets. There are several business parks and industrial areas within the parish.

The parish is bisected by overhead power lines running south to northeast across the landscape.

(Source: magic.defra.gov.uk).

2.8 Flood risk

The Environment Agency prepare flood maps for the UK. Land is classified as being in one of three zones:

Flood Zone 1 is land assessed as having less than a 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

Flood Zone 2 is land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding (1% – 0.1%), or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.

Flood Zone 3 is land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%), or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

The flood map for the parish indicates that Bourne Brook along the west boundary and the River Colne along the north boundary are classified as main rivers. For both, areas of their immediate valleys are within flood zone 3, with some narrower margins in flood zone 2 further away from the rivers. There are no specific flood defences in the parish.

In the main, settlements occupy higher ground outside flood zones 2 and 3, and are identified as being in flood zone 1 with a low risk of flooding **[Figure 8]**.

Figure 8 – Parish Flood Risk Map



 Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding

 Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding

2.9 Biodiveristy

Biodiversity in the parish is provided by:

- The Bourne Brook and River Colne which form the west and north boundaries of the parish
- Chalkney Wood and Richard's Grove – both are ancient woodland and have provided woodland cover since the 12th century.
- A network of hedgerows and other scattered pockets of woodland
- The two golf courses which provide significant treed areas.

The district is identified as providing a suitable habitat for farmland birds including turtle doves, yellow wagtail, lapwing, corn bunting. The district is a priority area for countryside stewardship measures addressing lapwing habitat issues. Great crested newts have been surveyed.

(Source; magic.defra.gov.uk)

2.10 Combining the baseline information

Review of the baseline information shows how the character of the parish is a product of the rivers and resulting topography. This in turn has affected land use, patterns of settlement, and tranquillity. The historic settlement of Earls Colne, enduring land use patterns and ancient woodlands provide a strong historic integrity and sense of time depth which is an important part of the landscape character.

The Braintree Landscape Character Assessment summarises the character as follows:

- Shallow river valley with relatively steep valleysides, which varies in width throughout its length.
- The meandering River Colne and its tributaries are narrow in comparison with the broad spread of the floodplain across which the river flows.
- River Colne is bridged by roads and lanes, which connect the north, and south valley slopes and facilitates views along the river corridor.
- Land use adjacent to the river is predominantly pastoral
- The views are enclosed by trees and settlements.
- On the valley slopes the land use is predominantly arable.
- Narrow river valley at Bourne Brook
- Land use in the valley and up the valley sides comprises large arable fields with low hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Flat to gently undulating landform.
- Strong pattern of large and small woods, including distinctive ancient lime woods.
- Regular medium to large arable fields, bounded by low well-trimmed thick hedgerows and some mature hedgerow trees.
- Open to enclosed character depending on density of woodlands.
- Many small farmsteads and occasional villages.
- Several Halls and estates.

3 Local Landscape Character Assessment

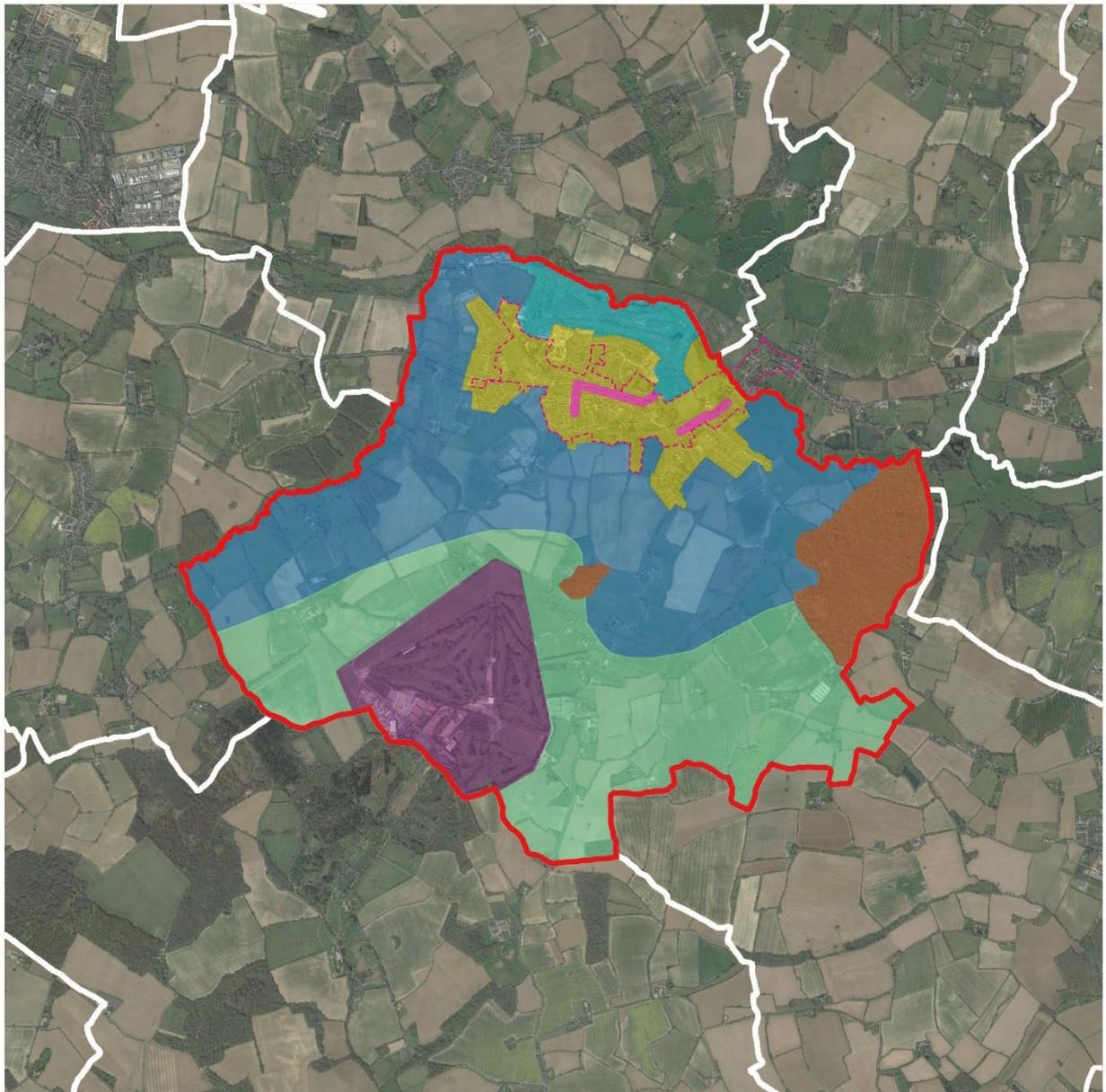
Field work was carried out between August and October 2021 to establish and record the local parish characteristics.

A photographic survey was carried out to support the field work and provide examples of the most characteristic local features.

The map below illustrates the finer grain of the local landscape character **[Figure 9]**. The broad character types are roughly the same as the Braintree LCA but detail has been added to identify:

- The village settlement area including conservation area and historic core
- Chalkney ancient woodland which is distinct in character from the valley and farmland
- Both the airfield and valley golf course which, as recent man-made landscapes, appear separate from the wider character areas.

Figure 9 – Earls Colne Parish Landscape Character Area Map



3.1 Photographic Survey

The photographic survey captured key views which are typical of the character of the parish and which highlight specific landscape character features.

Industrial Buildings on B1024 in the Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland



Plateau farmland in the Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland



Pylons in the Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland



Roadway and footpaths at Earls Colne Airfield



Business Park at Earls Colne Airfield



Landing strip at Earls Colne Airfield



Scattered settlements in the Colne River Valley character area



Single-track roads in the Colne River Valley character area



Enclosed views in the Colne River Valley character area



Cross-valley views from higher ground in the Colne River Valley character area



Colne Valley Golf Club



Colne River Valley character area at the settlement edge



Chalkney Wood ancient woodland



Pastoral farmland and pylons in the Colne River Valley



Atlas Works in Earls Colne Conservation Area



4 Landscape sensitivity and value

Landscape sensitivity and value are terms which are used in landscape studies to assist in informing planning for change. By assessing the sensitivity and value of an existing landscape its capacity to absorb change can be measured.

Using guidance: 'Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management' (Natural England, 2019), GLVIA, and LI TGN 02/21, the sensitivity and value of the parish has been assessed.

4.1 Definitions

Landscape sensitivity is defined as; the sensitivity of the *landscape resource* (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to its characteristics) and the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impacts to its character.

Visual sensitivity of the landscape is assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape and the particular nature of the type of change in question, (Source Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity).

Landscape Value is the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. Landscapes may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons (GLVIA3)

Landscape value can be assessed by looking at a number of criteria – does the landscape have any national or local designations? Does it have other indicators of value such as tranquillity, remoteness, wildness, scenic beauty, cultural associations, conservation interests and consensus on value?

'Small-scale development' referred to in this section is likely to mean residential developments of no more than 10 dwellings. Although each potential site would need to be appraised individually, there is not likely to be capacity for larger developments.

4.2 Assessment of the parish – Landscape sensitivity

A full sensitivity assessment of the six identified landscape character types can be found in Appendix 1. Each area was assessed for its sensitivity to potential future small-scale residential development, with varying levels of sensitivity identified. Each character area is summarised below.

Natural England's guidance 'Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management' (2019) was used.

4.3 The Colne River Valley

The landscape character of the Colne River Valley is discernibly intact with relatively few intrusions.

The tranquillity and open nature of the valley give the character area a high sensitivity to future development. To integrate with existing settlement character, any proposed development would need to be limited to single farmstead-style dwellings. Even with

this in mind, there are limited locations suitable for such a development without causing unacceptable visual effects.

Sensitivity: High

4.4 Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland

The landscape character of the Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland within the parish is regularly interrupted by intrusive elements. These include Earls Colne Airfield, electricity pylons, and the B1024 which is well-used by HGVs.

There are nevertheless strong existing patterns of land use, vegetation and settlement.

There may be scope for limited small-scale housing or individual farmstead development. The location and appearance of such development would need very careful consideration.

Sensitivity: Medium

4.5 Earls Colne Conservation Area

A large portion of Earls Colne village is within the Earls Colne conservation area illustrating the quality of the settlement. Within this there is a strong historical core based around the longest-established buildings.

Traffic and congestion within the historic core, specifically through-traffic using the A1124, detracts from historic character. Consideration should be given to measures which will alleviate the vehicle-dominance in the historic village core.

The conservation area and more specifically the historic core are highly sensitive to proposed development. Proposals are likely to be limited to internal renovations or conversions of existing buildings.

Sensitivity: High

4.6 Earls Colne Outer Village

Areas within the village but outside the conservation area are less sensitive to proposed development. Within this character area there are limited locations for small-scale housing or individual plot developments.

Locations for development are restricted due to proximity to the conservation area and therefore the potential for adverse visual and character effects. Opportunities to extend this character area on the settlement edge should occur only if a change in land use (often small paddocks) would not detract from character. This includes the character of the Colne Valley River Valley which as established has a high sensitivity. There is therefore minimal scope for this type of development.

Any proposed development would need to maintain the established pattern of building and scale of properties, with careful consideration given to views in and out of the village. Material selection would need to be appropriate to the local vernacular in terms of finish, colour, and quality.

Sensitivity: Medium/High

4.7 Earls Colne Airfield

Earls Colne Airfield has a distinct and specific character which feels entirely man-made although it has a green and naturalistic backdrop. Land use here is a mixture of recreation and business.

Although the character is strong, it is not particularly sensitive. Therefore development in line with the current land uses should be acceptable where appropriate in scale and location.

Sensitivity: Medium/Low

4.8 Colne Valley Golf Club

In the Braintree District LCA the Colne Valley Golf Club is within the Colne River Valley character area. At the finer scale however, this has been separated out as a recognisably distinct area with a different character. This is largely due to its land use. The golf course is a private, members only club, however there is some public access via public footpaths at the perimeter and also leading across the valley to the wider countryside outside the parish boundary.

The character is strong and provides a pleasant and open setting for the River Colne both within the parish and in the wider context of the valley itself. It is therefore sensitive and any changes to land use should be carefully considered so as not to degrade the setting for the river, the valley, and the settlement edge.

Sensitivity: Medium/High

4.9 Ancient Woodland

Development within the Chalkney Wood and Richards Grove ancient woodland would cause irreversible visual and character harm. It is the most sensitive landscape within the parish and should be conserved and enhanced. It is also important to consider the potential detrimental effects that development within the vicinity of the woodland would cause.

Sensitivity: High

4.10 Landscape Value

Landscape value of the parish has been assessed using the method described in GLVIA and LI Technical Guidance Note 02/21. A full assessment can be found in Appendix 2 and is summarised below.

The parish holds landscape value. Specific designations include a conservation area, scheduled ancient monument, ancient woodland, as well as a range of listed buildings and features.

Aside from designations, much of the value is experiential within the more tranquil areas with scenic beauty. A network of public rights of way and cycle routes allow access to the landscape although these are not always well linked up.

Long-standing land use patterns, ancient woodlands and historic buildings offer strong continuity with the past and deepen the sense of historic character. This is something that should be conserved.

5 Landscape Development Capacity

Earls Colne has received many applications and developments in recent years, summarised below and in Figure 10:

- 106 houses – construction completed (yellow)
- 113 houses – under construction at time of writing (blue)
- 100 houses – with planning approval pending detailed application (green)

Figure 10 – Earls Colne Developments



Therefore, the ability for the landscape to accept further development is minimal. This aligns with the Emerging Braintree Local Plan which has allocated no residential development sites within Earls Colne for the coming 5-year period. Looking further forward to 2033, at time of writing, Braintree District Council provided indicative figures suggesting that the current level of permissions for major applications in the parish is an appropriate target. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there is a need for further large developments in Earls Colne parish for the lifetime of the Emerging Local Plan (to 2033).

Nevertheless, this report considers what remaining capacity there is for development within the parish:

- Opportunities for small-scale (5 units or less) infill developments within the village envelope should be considered if appropriate.

- Single dwellings in the wider parish may be considered if appropriate in location and scale.
- There would also be consideration given to community-led developments which may have the ability to meet needs not met by other developers, for example smaller homes for elderly residents and affordable homes, the need for which was identified in the Housing Needs Survey recently commissioned as part of the Neighbourhood Plan project.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The Colne River Valley (within parish boundary)

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	Shallow river valley with relatively steep valley sides. Valley narrower and river smaller along the Bourne Brook. The stream banks are well defined by linear scrub and trees. Arable fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	Land use remains unchanged from historic maps and is a mixture of arable and grassland. Settlement is limited to very few individual farmsteads.
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	Landscape is representative of river valley character area identified by Braintree LCA. Many features intact with some incursions such as electricity pylons.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	Valley topography restricts views to some extent, creating intimate to medium-scale landscapes. The scale opens up on higher land as longer views across the valley are possible.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	The landscape is frequently interrupted by field boundaries and tree groups. This along with the steep valley slopes make the landscape generally constrained and enclosed.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Strong pattern reinforced by field boundaries and adjacent vegetated stream edge.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Valley sides are smoothly curved with a flat valley floor which varies in width.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	Meandering rivers articulated by bankside vegetation and sinuous field edges. Only occasionally are angular features present.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Sloping land – sometimes steep sometimes gentle
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Strong pattern of linear hedgerows, tree lines and woodland
Population	Numbers / types of residents	Dispersed, low number of residents
	Numbers / types of visitors	Limited number
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	<p>Appropriate sites would not interrupt open or long-distance views. Appropriate sites are limited due to visibility across the valley.</p> <p>Linear and clustered, tree and hedge screening planting would reduce visual disturbance to skylines and reflect existing vegetation patterns.</p> <p>Material selection should be appropriate to the local vernacular in terms of finish, colour, and quality.</p> <p>Any proposed development should be limited to individual plots to be in keeping with the existing character.</p>

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Garrett/Markshall Wooded Farmland (within parish boundary)

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	Fields defined by hedgerows, tree groups and woodland.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	Historic field patterns are still present in much of the character area.
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	The character area is fragmented by intrusive elements such as the airfield, roads, industrial developments and pylons.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	Generally flat landform and open skies create the impression of a large-scale landscape.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	Enclosure is provided by boundary hedgerows and trees, however the level landform means there is less enclosure than in the adjacent river valley
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Strong pattern reinforced field boundaries. This pattern is disrupted adjacent to the airfield where it is interrupted by the imposed form.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Flat to gently undulating
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	The airfield edge represents an imposed linear feature at the edge of this character area. Some linear settlements have developed along main roads.

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Flat to gently undulating landform can bring about open views.
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Strong pattern of linear boundary tree lines as well as pockets of woodland.
Population	Numbers / types of residents	Dispersed, low number of residents

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

	Numbers / types of visitors	Limited number
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	Appropriate sites will be those that do not interrupt open or long-distance views. Development should be accompanied by tree and hedge planting to reflect and reinforce the existing patterns of vegetation. Material selection should be appropriate to the local vernacular in terms of finish, colour, and quality. Small-scale linear developments along the road may be appropriate if they are in keeping with the existing pattern of development.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Earls Colne Conservation Area

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	High quality trees are present in public spaces, private gardens, and the churchyard. These provide a green infrastructure within the built environment.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	The central settlement itself has built up since the 13 th century and the core of this is believed to have remained in the same location. The site of Earls Colne Priory is also within this conservation area. Atlas Works introduces an industrial element into the historic core
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	Much of Earls Colne village is within the character area, this is a testament to the quality of the built condition of the village. The historic core has remained intact over many centuries, however vehicle dominance in the core has degraded the condition somewhat.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	The scale is generally small, however in the core the busyness of the main road gives an impression of a larger settlement.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	Visual enclosure is varied. To the north of the village there are more opportunities to enjoy cross valley views and look into the wider landscape, whereas to the south views are generally more enclosed by compact building and the landform.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Building has historically built up on higher ground away from the floodplains and along the main road. As the settlement has grown the built landscape has expanded outwards from main roads. The historic patterns are discernible by the differences in age of buildings.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Although not always discernible within the built landscape, the settlement is

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

		situated on a plateau of land above the floodplains.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	Roads are a strong linear feature.

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Landform is apparent to the north of the conservation area where the land falls away and there are views across the Colne River Valley.
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Trees occasionally appear in the built environment and break the skyline behind rooftops.
Population	Numbers / types of residents	The village is the focus for settlement in the parish and therefore there is a high population density in the village centre compared with the wider parish.
	Numbers / types of visitors	The village is used by those in the wider countryside and neighbouring villages for its amenities.
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	There are unlikely to be many opportunities for appropriate development within the conservation area. There may be opportunities for single dwellings, however these would need to be very carefully considered to ensure that there were no negative effects to the historic core. Quality and materials would be crucial to mitigate effects.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Earls Colne Outer Village

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	Street trees and trees in residential gardens provide green infrastructure.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	Settlement outside of the conservation is largely post 1950s residences and these tend to follow the road network in pattern
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	Condition is generally good.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	Scale is larger than in the historic core as houses are in larger plots and have greater views into the wider landscape.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	Generally a low sense of enclosure due to level topography and views to the wider landscape.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Patterns are of designed residential streets.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Generally flat.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	Roads are a strong linear feature.

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	As these areas are at the settlement edge the landform varies depending on location. Built landscape is generally flat with the surrounding landscape sloping away.
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Trees regularly appear in the built environment and break the skyline behind rooftops.
Population	Numbers / types of residents	The village is the focus for settlement in the parish and therefore there is a high

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

		population density in the village compared with the wider parish.
	Numbers / types of visitors	Limited number
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	There may be opportunities for small-scale residential development within the character area. Selection of appropriate sites so as not to interrupt long distance or open views, and selection of appropriate materials will be important to mitigation. Vegetation should be used to integrate developments into existing buildings and provide a continuity in green infrastructure. Proposed development should be limited to small groups of houses or individual plots in keeping with the existing character.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Earls Colne Airfield

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	A designed semi-natural environment. Tall, deep hedges to the perimeter road. Grass cover and tree groups within the golf club and airfield.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	Formerly an air base, one landing strip remains while the rest has been converted to recreation and business uses.
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	Natural and built features are generally in a good condition.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	This character area has the perception of a large-scale landscape. This is as a result of the generally flat nature of the airfield, the very long roads, tall hedges, and open skies.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	Dense vegetation encloses the entire airfield.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	The dominant pattern is regular form of the designed landscape.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Generally flat.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	There are strong linear edges formed by vegetation and the perimeter road.

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Flat
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Strong hedge and treed boundaries to airfield. Large tree groups within the golf club and no trees in the remaining airfield area.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Population	Numbers / types of residents	None/negligible residents.
	Numbers / types of visitors	Regular daily visitors for work and/or leisure
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	Area is very well screened by existing vegetation. Any development should be in keeping with the existing land uses, be in keeping with the scale and location of existing buildings, and reinforce the vegetated setting in keeping with the current situation.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Colne Valley Golf Club

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	Shallow river valley. The stream banks are well defined by linear groups of trees. Trees and water features are designed in drifts throughout the landscape
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	The golf club is a modern, designed landscape.
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	Landscape is somewhat representative of river valley character area identified by Braintree LCA. The landscape diverges in that it is used for recreation however it does have a naturalistic design in keeping with the overall character. It is in a good condition offering visual and recreational amenity.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	The shallow valley, expanses of grassland and large swaths of tree groups create a large-scale landscape. Cross-valley views are often apparent.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	The landscape is captured within the lower valley and views are restricted to within this area.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Strong designed naturalistic pattern echoing the landform of the valley and course of the river.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Valley sides are smoothly curved with a flat valley floor.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	Meandering rivers articulated by tree-lined banks and sinuous tree groups and water features.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Gently sloping land
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Strong naturalistic pattern of tree groups, trees line the river and also enclose the boundaries.
Population	Numbers / types of residents	None/negligible residents.
	Numbers / types of visitors	Regular daily visitors for leisure
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	This landscape area is sensitive as the setting for the river valley and the village edge. Developments here would need to be minimal so as not to cause detriment to this. Mitigation would need to reinforce the naturalistic landscape, maintain and respond to the gently sloping landform, and be suitable in scale so as not to detract from the scale and openness experienced in the river valley. Appropriate sites would not interrupt open or long-distance views, including cross-valley views.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Ancient Woodland

Landscape Character (Resource) Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
Natural Factors	Extent and pattern of semi natural habitat	Broadleaf ancient woodland surrounded by arable land.
Cultural factors	Land use and enclosure pattern	In existence since the 12 th century, shape of woodland largely unchanged since 16 th century.
Quality / condition	Representative of a particular character type	The shape and density of the woodland appear intact from visual survey. Further detailed survey would be required for additional comment on quality and condition.
Aesthetic factors	Identifiable visual features of the landscape	
Scale	Overall scale of the landscape as it is perceived by people	Medium-scale landscape.
Enclosure	Degree to which the landscape is captured by features which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure	Dense woodland offers natural enclosure. Views are generally captured to a relatively small area.
Pattern	Degree to which patterns of topography, land use and vegetation can be appreciated in the landscape	Woodland follows historic patterns shown in the 16 th century, landform is at times sloping in the valley. This is generally not appreciated within the landscape due to its enclosed nature.
Form	Physical attributes of the landscape	Flat to undulating form.
Line	Perception of linear features in the landscape	Linear features are apparent at the boundaries. Pathways also offer linear view through the woodland.

Visual Sensitivity

Factors	Description	Assessment of the parish
General visibility	Landform	Sloping landform restricts views rather than opens them due to tree cover
	Tree and Woodland Cover	Dense woodland dominates the character area. There are variations in tree cover throughout the woodland caused by e.g.

Appendix 1 Earls Colne - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

		management regimes, age, ground conditions etc.
Population	Numbers / types of residents	No residents within the woodland.
	Numbers / types of visitors	Well used by visitors – walkers including dogwalkers.
Mitigation potential	Scope for mitigating potential visual impacts	Development within the ancient woodland character area would be highly inappropriate. It would not be possible to mitigate the visual and character effects caused by such a development.

Appendix 2 Earls Colne Parish – Assessment of Landscape Value

Value criteria	Assessment of the parish landscape
Local/ national designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earls Colne conservation area • Chalkney Wood and Richards Grove are ancient woodlands • Chalkney Wood is a SSSI • Earls Colne Priory is a scheduled ancient monument • There are listed buildings and features across the parish
Conservation interests	<p>There are many listed buildings and features within the parish, including the Grade I listed St Andrew's Parish Church, Grade II* listed boundary walls, Grade II listed buildings in the historic core, associated with Atlas works, and scattered farmsteads in the countryside.</p> <p>There is a conservation area in Earls Colne which makes up much of the built envelope, demonstrating the conservation value within the village. Earls Colne Priory is a scheduled ancient monument.</p> <p>Chalkney Wood is an ancient woodland, it has existed in its current form since the 16th century and should continue to be conserved.</p> <p>Field patterns should also be conserved to retain their character typical of early enclosure.</p>
Natural heritage	<p>The field patterns in the parish are typical of early enclosure and are largely unchanged since this took place.</p> <p>Chalkney Wood and Richards Grove are classified as ancient woodland. Both woods are largely unchanged in area since the 16th century.</p> <p>Watercourses which run through the parish largely dictate the local geology, landform, and ecology.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>The parish and village take their name from the Earls of Oxford which once owned this land, and the River Colne which defines the landscape. Earls Colne Airfield has an association with both the RAF and USAAF.</p> <p>The historic management practice of coppicing is used to manage the ancient woodland Chalkney Wood.</p> <p>Earls Colne's history is linked with Earls Colne Priory.</p> <p>The main settlement developed from several foci along what is now the A1124. Some of the oldest buildings in the parish are along this road including the Grade I listed church.</p> <p>In recent history Atlas works became a prominent industrial element in the village centre.</p>
Landscape condition	<p>The landscape overall has a good level of intactness, with structural elements, such as ancient woodland, hedgerows and road networks being retained. The landscape is somewhat fragmented by some elements, such as pylons and the Airfield, which are incongruous in the landscape, detracting from its condition.</p>

Appendix 2 Earls Colne Parish – Assessment of Landscape Value

Distinctiveness	<p>The parish is made distinctive by its variety and combination of character areas – valley, woodland, airfield, historic buildings, field patterns – these are related to the local history and resulting local identity.</p> <p>The parish does represent many of the characteristics which have been identified as part of larger character studies (Essex LCA 2003, Braintree District LCA 2006)</p>
Recreational	<p>The public rights of way network across the parish allows good access to enjoy the countryside. Some footpaths are intercepted by the road network which could diminish their safety.</p> <p>Earls Colne recreation club provides a space for sports and events.</p> <p>There are two golf clubs – Colne Valley Golf Club and The Essex – within the parish.</p>
Perceptual	
Scenic beauty	<p>The rolling countryside associated with the river valleys has scenic value. The valleys create enclosed views as well as cross-valley rural views. The plateau farmland offers more open views and large skies, however due to their openness these are more often compromised by intrusive visual elements which can also be scenic.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and industrial land-uses are a detractor from the scenic beauty of the countryside. In the historic core the dominance of vehicles is a visual detractor.</p>
Wildness	<p>The countryside of the parish is mainly cultivated as arable farmland, grazed, or used for recreation i.e. golf. The parish therefore is not characterised as a wild place. Chalkney Wood is relatively wild in comparison, but even so the woods have broad paths and are well-utilised by the visiting public.</p>
Tranquillity	<p>The airfield detracts from tranquillity as aircraft are often visible and audible in the local area.</p> <p>Road traffic detracts from tranquillity, specifically to the south of the parish where HGVs frequent the roads en route to Industrial areas.</p> <p>The pylons which cut across the southeast of the parish also reduce the tranquillity in the countryside.</p> <p>As an ancient woodland, Chalkney Wood provides a sense of seclusion and tranquillity.</p> <p>The river valleys are generally tranquil.</p>
Remoteness	<p>The countryside does not feel remote. From most viewpoints there is visibility to built elements e.g. houses, village edge, industrial units and pylons.</p>
Functional	<p>The river valleys function as floodplains and ecological corridors.</p> <p>Chalkney Wood is a SSSI with important functions for wildlife conservation. Much of the landscape is functional for: farming, settlement and recreation.</p>