

# Feering Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Client:  
Braintree District Council

Date:  
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# Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>		
1.1 Summary	4		
1.2 Conserving Braintree's Heritage	4		
1.3 Purpose of Appraisal	5		
1.4 Planning Policy Context	5		
<b>2.0 Feering Conservation Area</b>	<b>7</b>		
2.1 Context and General Character	7		
2.2 Origin and Evolution	7		
2.3 Designation of the Conservation Area	10		
2.4 Setting of the Conservation Area	10		
2.5 Designated Heritage Assets	11		
2.6 Non-Designated Heritage Assets	11		
2.7 Heritage at Risk	11		
2.8 Archaeological Potential	11		
<b>3.0 Assessment of Significance</b>	<b>12</b>		
3.1 Summary	12		
3.2 Land Usage	13		
3.3 Character Analysis	14		
3.4 Views	18		
		3.5 Public Realm	20
		3.6 Landscaping and Open Spaces	20
		3.7 Contribution of Key Un-Listed Buildings	21
		<b>4.0 Opportunities for Enhancement</b>	<b>22</b>
		4.1 Car Parking	22
		4.2 Inappropriate Modern Development	22
		4.3 Public Realm	22
		<b>5.0 Management Proposals</b>	<b>24</b>
		5.1 Positive Management: Shorter Term	24
		5.2 Positive Management: Longer Term	26
		5.3 Funding Opportunities	26
		<b>6.0 Appendices</b>	<b>27</b>
		6.1 Bibliography	27
		6.2 Listed Buildings	28
		6.3 Legislation and Planning Policy	29
		6.4 Glossary (NPPF)	31



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Summary

The settlement of Feering, or as it is known locally, Feering village is located on the southern edge of Braintree district. Historically Feering was two separate areas, comprising the church and small village (which forms the Conservation Area) and the hamlet of Feering Hill on the main London Road (part of which falls within the Kelvedon Conservation Area). The two parts of Feering are separated by the nineteenth century railway line and an area of open space.

Feering village comprises the Parish Church of All Saints and a small collection of houses and cottages, concentrated on the road junction of The Street and Coggeshall Road and the village green. The buildings, many of which are listed, range in date from the twelfth century church to the twentieth century. The settlement is bounded by the railway to the south and the water-meadows of the Blackwater Valley to the west. To the east and north is open farmland. This rural setting is integral to the understanding of the origin and development of the settlement.

A key contributor to Feering Conservation Area's significance is its historic development and detachment from Kelvedon, which has led to the area retaining much of its historic appearance and form. This is enhanced by the vernacular form of many of the buildings within the Conservation Area and overall traditional appearance of the area. There are no proposed changes to the current Conservation Area boundary.

## 1.2 Conserving Braintree's Heritage

Braintree District Council appointed Place Services to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal for Feering. This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management document is provided as baseline information for applicants to consider when designing or planning new development in Feering.

This report provides an assessment of the historic development and character of Feering and outlines its special interest. The appraisal will also consider the significance of heritage assets within the Conservation Area and the contribution that these, along with their setting, make to the character of the area. The understanding of significance will be used to assess the susceptibility of the Conservation Area to new development, highlighting key assets of importance.

This assessment will consider how Feering village developed and how its character is reflected and influenced by the building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, alleys, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks and topography within the Conservation Area. These qualities can be used to assess the key characteristics of the area, highlighting the potential impact future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the character of Feering. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and analysis of the Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited. This assessment follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's revised Historic England Advice Note 1 for Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).



### 1.3 Purpose of Appraisal

This document should be used as a baseline to inform future development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the Historic Environment and its unique character. This includes the identification and assessment of Feering Conservation Area's special interest and significance.

It is expected that applications for planning permission will also consult and follow the best practice guidance, some of which is outlined in the bibliography.

Applications that demonstrate a genuine understanding of the character of a Conservation Area are more likely to produce good design and good outcomes for agents and their clients. This Appraisal will strengthen understanding of Feering and its development, informing future design.

### 1.4 Planning Policy Context

The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990). In particular Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Part 16 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG February 2019).

The Conservation Area, which is the subject of this appraisal, is located within the area covered by Braintree District Council. Local planning policy is set out in the Braintree Development Plan. The current adopted Braintree District Development Plan is made up of a number of documents, including the Local Plan Review 2005 and the Core Strategy 2011. Policies which are relevant to heritage assets are listed below.

Local Plan Review 2005 policies:

- RLP 81 Trees, Woodland Grasslands and Hedgerows
- RLP 90 Layout and Design of Development
- RLP 95 Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- RLP 96 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- RLP 97 Changes of Use in Conservation Areas
- RLP 98 Environmental Improvements in Conservation Areas
- RLP 99 Demolition of Listed Buildings
- RLP 100 Alterations and Extensions and Changes of Use to Listed Buildings and their settings
- RLP 101 Listed Agricultural Buildings
- RLP 102 Enabling Development
- RLP 104 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance
- RLP 105 Archaeological Evaluation
- RLP 106 Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring
- RLP 107 Outdoor Advertisements
- RLP 108 Fascias and Signs in Conservation Areas
- RLP 109 Illuminated Signs in Conservation Areas

Core Strategy 2011 policies:

- CS 8 Natural Environment and Biodiversity
- CS 9 Built and Historic Environment



In 2014, Braintree District Council began on a new Local Plan which will set out the Council's strategy for future development and growth up to 2033. The document is in two parts:

Section 1 - Strategic Plan for North Essex - including the Garden Communities (This document is shared with Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council)

Section 2 - Policies, maps and sites for development, housing, employment, regeneration etc within Braintree District Council.

The New Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2017. Section 1 is currently under examination by a Planning Inspector. We are advised that Section 2 will follow. Once adopted, it will replace both the Core Strategy (2011) and the Local Plan Review (2005). Policies within the draft Braintree District Local Plan (2017) which are relevant to heritage assets include:

- SP 6 – Place Shaping Principles
- LPP 55 – Layout and design of development
- LPP 56 – Conservation Areas
- LPP 57 - Demolition in Conservation Areas
- LPP 58 – Shop fronts, fascias and signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 59 – Illuminated signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 60 – Heritage Assets and their setting
- LPP 61 – Demolition of Listed Buildings or structures
- LPP 62 – Enabling Development
- LPP 63 – Archaeological evaluations, excavation and recording
- LPP 66 – Cemeteries and churchyards
- LPP 69 – Tree protection

The latest policy position and Development Plan Documents can be found in the Planning Policy section of the Council's website.

## 2.0 Feering Conservation Area

### 2.1 Context and General Character

Feering is located on the southern side of Braintree District, on the east side of the River Blackwater. Historically Feering comprised two separate areas, encompassing the church and small village (which forms the Conservation Area) and the hamlet of Feering Hill on the main London Road (part of which falls within the Kelvedon Conservation Area). The two parts of Feering are separated by the railway line and an area of open space. Its setting is overwhelmingly rural in character.

### 2.2 Origin and Evolution

#### Early History of the Area

Evidence suggests that during the prehistoric period there was considerable occupation of the valley slopes above the Blackwater, close to the location of Feering Conservation Area. Part of this evidence includes the remains of a Neolithic long mortuary enclosure to the north west of Feering and adjacent round barrow. These features are visible as cropmarks and are protected as a Scheduled Monument, of probable Bronze Age date (list entry number: 1017230). In addition to the Scheduled area, the cropmark complex includes a second round barrow and sequence of linear features, including a track way. Further cropmarks are located to the south east and east of the Conservation Area, some of which are probably of a similar prehistoric date.

Whilst no direct evidence of Roman occupation has been found in the Conservation Area, or immediate surrounding landscape, the medieval church tower incorporates reused Roman tile as a building material. The main Roman Road from Colchester to London is close to the south east edge of the Conservation Area, on the opposite side of the existing railway.

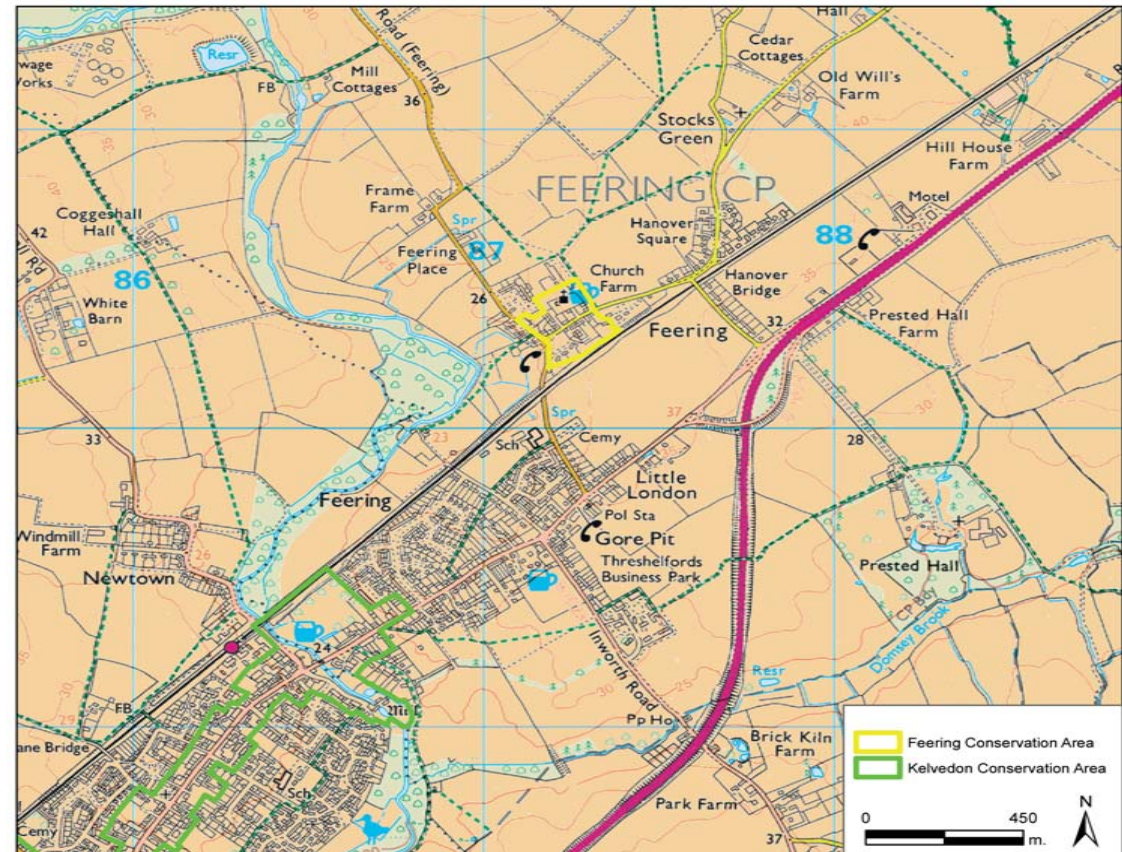


Figure 1 Feering Conservation Area within its wider context ©OS Maps

### Medieval period

Feering is referred to in the Domesday Book and the name is thought to derive from Feringas or Pheringas meaning 'Bulls Pasture' or 'Meadow', or from the Saxon Feringe, meaning 'dwellers by the road'. The earliest known evidence for occupation within the Conservation Area is All Saints Parish Church, which has its origins in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. It was subsequently remodelled and expanded; the chancel and north aisle are mainly early fourteenth century in date, and the tower is of fifteenth century derivation. The south wall of the nave and the south porch, which has an unidentified merchant's mark in the brick vaulting, are early sixteenth century.

There were two capital manors in the village, Feeringbury and Prested Hall and two lesser ones, Houchins (now in the parish of Coggeshall) and Chambers. Due to their locations and detachment from Feering village, none of these manors are located within the Conservation Area boundary.

Church Farmhouse dates to c.1400 and the neighbouring Church Farm Cottages and End Cottage are also fifteenth century in origin. Church Gate House has its origins as a sixteenth century guildhall and is located to the immediate south east of the church, although it may have been originally located within the churchyard.

Quantities of medieval pottery were recovered during the development of the Drummond Centre to the north of the church and it can be presumed that the medieval settlement area included this site.



Figure 2 Distribution of Listed medieval buildings within Feering



**Post-medieval period**

Development during the post-medieval period was concentrated along The Street to the south. The railway opened in 1843 and provided both a physical and a visual barrier between the Conservation Area and the expanding settlement at Feering Hill to the south. In the late nineteenth century, a National School was constructed on the Coggeshall Road at the entrance to the village; the school building was converted to residential use in the mid-1990s.

The artist John Constable stayed in Feering in 1814 at what was the Vicarage, to the north-east of the church; it is now part of the Drummonds Centre to the north of the church, outside the Conservation Area boundary. Constable completed several drawings while staying there, including one of the church porch and another depicting the Vicarage with the grass being rolled. Sir George Gilbert Scott restored the chancel arch in All Saints Church in 1845 and fragments of the old arch were incorporated into the altar of the Lady Chapel when it was built in 1961.

**Modern**

The settlement has developed slowly during the modern period. Its location, set back from the main road and away from Kelvedon, has left it essentially a small rural village in character and not subject to the extensive development which occurred elsewhere. In the post-War period retirement cottages were constructed to the south-west of the church and on the southern side of the Green. The Rectory site became the Drummond's Centre for adults with learning or physical disabilities in the 1950s. A small development of twentieth century council houses are located on the north western boundary of the settlement in the mid twentieth century, outside the Conservation Area. Similarly, there has been some development of land west of Coggeshall Road in recent decades.



Figure 3 1777 Chapman and Andre map of Feering area



Figure 4 (Above) 1st edition OS 6" map, 1881 showing the railway line and the rural setting of the village

### 2.3 Designation of the Conservation Area

The Feering Conservation Area was designated 27th May 1976. There has been no accompanying Character Appraisal or Management Plan.

As part of this assessment the Conservation Area boundary has been reviewed, there are however no proposed revisions to the existing boundary.

### 2.4 Setting of the Conservation Area

The setting of Feering is overwhelmingly rural and is integral to the experience, appreciation and understanding of the village and its history. It is sited on the eastern slope of the Blackwater Valley. There are significant views out from the Conservation Area into the wider landscape, particularly across the Blackwater Valley and northwards and eastwards into open countryside. There are also significant views towards the Conservation Area from the wider landscape and environs.

The land use today is predominantly arable but the numerous small areas of woodland, together with the trees in the hedgerows, give an impression of it being more wooded. The trees species are mainly oak, ash and hornbeam, with willows along the river. The river is bordered by areas of marsh, and Feering Marsh is a Local Wildlife Site (BRA234). The field pattern, together with the pattern of lanes, footpaths and isolated farmsteads is historic in origin and in many cases derive from the medieval period. There has been hedgerow loss, but the overall grain of the historic fieldscape is still legible.



Figure 5 GoogleEarth image highlighting the wider rural setting of the Conservation Area



Figure 6 The Old School, Coggeshall Road

## 2.5 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 11 designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area (see Appendix 2). Of these the Parish Church of All Saints is Grade I listed. The remaining buildings and structures are Grade II; these include the K6 telephone kiosk, as well as a former late medieval guildhall, Church Farm, houses and cottages.

## 2.6 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

In 2017 Braintree District Council, in partnership with Place Services, began the process of compiling a Local Heritage List. Buildings within the Conservation Area which should be considered for inclusion are identified below. They have been identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival.

Local List candidate:

- The Old School, Coggeshall Road

## 2.7 Heritage at Risk

No structures within the Conservation Area are on the Heritage at Risk list.

## 2.8 Archaeological Potential

There has only been very small-scale archaeological fieldwork within the Conservation Area. In 1958, medieval sherds, including glazed and unglazed Hedingham ware, were recovered from a substantial ditch in the grounds of the Drummonds Centre. The settlement has been occupied since the medieval period and it can be anticipated that further below-ground archaeological remains survive within the Conservation Area. Waterlogged deposits can be anticipated in the immediate vicinity of the river and probably survive in deeper features such as wells and cess-pits. The buildings, both Listed and unlisted, represent an important resource for the history and character of the town. There is potential for below ground archaeological features to be present within the Conservation Area, associated with its long history of occupation and activity which is represented by the existing building stock.

## 3.0 Assessment of Significance

### 3.1 Summary

The key significance of the Feering Conservation Area is derived from its history as a small rural village, distinct from the larger settlement of Kelvedon and the secondary, London Road section of Feering. The historic core of the village comprises The Street and part of Coggeshall Road, with the village green located to the south-east of the road junction. Overall, the appearance of the Conservation Area reflects its detachment from the larger settlements to the south, with the church forming the ecclesiastical centre of the Conservation Area, around which the oldest properties in the village are located. The location of the railway line is a key factor in the Conservation Area's detachment from the secondary centre of Feering Hill and creates a key physical and visual distinction between the two focal points of Feering.

Within the Conservation Area, the late medieval and post-medieval housing stock is in good condition. These buildings contribute positively to the aesthetic experience of the Conservation Area, which is typical of rural villages across Essex and the South East. A variety of traditional building materials are found throughout the village, providing visual interest and reflecting the vernacular nature of much of the building stock. Buildings range in date from the 14th to the 19th centuries, with minimal infilling over the centuries adding to the richness of the built environment. The roofscape is varied in pitch but not height, with properties ranging in height from one and a half storey cottages to two storey houses. Where there has been some modern infill, this mostly comprises of retirement cottages which are modest in scale. These are concentrated on the southern side of The Green and to the west of the Church. Developments outside the Conservation Area boundary are also mostly small in scale and have not had a negative impact upon the core characteristics of the Conservation Area.



Figure 7 Feering Conservation Area showing significant buildings



Figure 8 View looking across the village green to The Street

The historic core of the Conservation Area is built on a gentle slope on the eastern side of the Blackwater Valley. The church stands on the highest point, and although this is not particularly noticeable within the village, it means that it forms a prominent local landmark when viewed from a distance, particularly from the western side of the Blackwater Valley. The street pattern, changes in levels and distribution of open spaces enables an interesting succession of views, both within the settlement and out into open countryside. These views contribute positively to the overall character of the Conservation Area, reinforcing its rural setting and traditional linear development.

### 3.2 Land Usage

The Conservation Area predominantly comprises residential buildings, as well as the Parish Church and part of the Drummond Centre care home. The Bell Inn is the only commercial property within the Conservation Area. The village green provides a significant area of open green space, which is recognised in Braintree District Council's Local Plan.

### 3.3 Character Analysis

Elements of the Conservation Area's defining character features are found outside the Conservation Area boundary, which contribute indirectly to the Conservation Area's setting and appearance. Overwhelmingly, the character of the area is defined by its variety in built form and traditional, rural appearance. The wide range of building materials used throughout the Conservation Area add to the richness and variety of the street scene.

#### Streetscape and Building Materials

Feering Conservation Area's streetscape is typical of many Essex rural villages, - most of the houses are either detached or semi-detached with gardens to both front and rear. Due to the staggered development of the village, there is no regularised plot formation; some of the oldest properties front the street, whilst later dwellings have front gardens, however this is not consistent. Throughout the Conservation Area there is a varied palette of materials traditional to Essex. For walls, red brick, rendered timber-framing, pargetting and weatherboarding are all present. Most of the buildings are rendered, although the church is of flint rubble, and the buildings that make up the Church Farm farmyard are largely black weather-boarded.

There is also a wide variety in the style of doors and windows, all of which are important in maintaining the character of existing buildings. Despite the variety, windows and doors are predominantly traditional in appearance. uPVC windows are not a notable features of the Conservation Area, nor are they prominent where they are in place; the installation of modern uPVC windows would be considered inappropriate. There are a number of buildings with interesting architectural features, such as the entrance to Wallberswick House and the slate roofed veranda on Sunnyside, The Street.



Figure 9 The building materials used on the Barns at Church Farm and Church Farm cottages are typical of those found in most Essex villages



Figure 10 View looking west along The Street, showing differing roof forms and building materials

Half hipped and gambrel roofs, as well as traditional gables create a varied appearance to the roofscape throughout the Conservation Area, with gaps between allowing for views out into the surrounding landscape and toward the church. The buildings vary in height from single-storey with attics to two-storey with attics; All Saints Church is the tallest building within the village and a distinctive marker in the surrounding landscape. New development is low in height and does not obscure or dominate older buildings. Roofing materials include tile and slate, dependent on the relative age of the property. There are also a wide range of chimney styles; these add variety to the interesting roof-scape in the centre of the village.

### **Notable building groups**

An important group of buildings within the Conservation Area are All Saints Church, Church Gatehouse, Walberswick House, The Old Vicarage (now part of the Drummond Centre) and Church Farm at the eastern edge of the Conservation Area. This grouping of buildings provide an important link to the historic function and appearance of the village.

The post-medieval barns that form part of the Church Farm complex also contribute to the understanding of this group as an agricultural holding and mark the transition from village to rural character.



Figure 11 All Saints Parish Church

**Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the street scene**

The Old School, Coggeshall Road, has its origins as a National School for Boys and Girls in the late nineteenth century. It is a red brick structure with an interesting roofline, representing several phases of building on the site. It should be a candidate for Local Listing following further research. The Old Vicarage in the Drummond Centre, although much altered, also contributes to the overall understanding of the Conservation Area and is associated with the artist John Constable who stayed there. It is a Victorian building, with a polychrome plaque on its southern elevation and is distinctive against the utilitarian twentieth century style of the rest of the Drummond Centre.



Figure 12 The former guildhall of Church Gate House as seen from the graveyard



Figure 13 The Old Vicarage, though heavily altered, provides an interesting link to the historic usage of the land to the north of All Saints Church, now occupied by the Drummond Centre





Figure 14 Example of intrusive modern boundary treatment

### Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments are largely soft throughout the Conservation Area, most properties are set slightly back from the pavement with small front gardens bordered by hedges, low brick walls or low ornamental wooden fences. The relatively low height of boundary walls contribute positively to the open, rural character of the Conservation Area, whilst the material differences between boundary treatments provide visual interest. Gardens are typically well maintained and make a positive contribution to the character of the of the Conservation Area. The use of modern materials, including breeze blocks and machined fencing is observed in some sections of boundary treatments and is intrusive to the character of the area. The gradual removal and replacement of these elements would be encouraged and this would enhance the overall appearance of the Conservation Area.

The boundary treatment of The Old School is distinctive and marked by a red brick castellated wall backed by a hedge. This provides an important link to the original function of the building and creates a clear visual barrier along the Conservation Area boundary.

### 3.4 Views

Key views are identified on Figure 15. Please note that this character appraisal does not attempt to identify and analyse all views which may contribute to significance and therefore the absence of a view mentioned here does not infer it is not important.

The village is built on the eastern side of the Blackwater Valley. The church stands on the highest point and can be seen as part of incidental views throughout the village, however the most striking views are from outside the Conservation Area. There are significant views within the Conservation Area along The Street and into the Churchyard. The view from the railway arch entrance into the Conservation Area is also significant as from this constricted viewpoint the village opens out around the green with its historic buildings and church behind it. From this location there are also views to the west into the Blackwater Valley, these together with the views from Coggeshall Road and the western end of The Street, emphasise the links between the village and its wider rural setting.

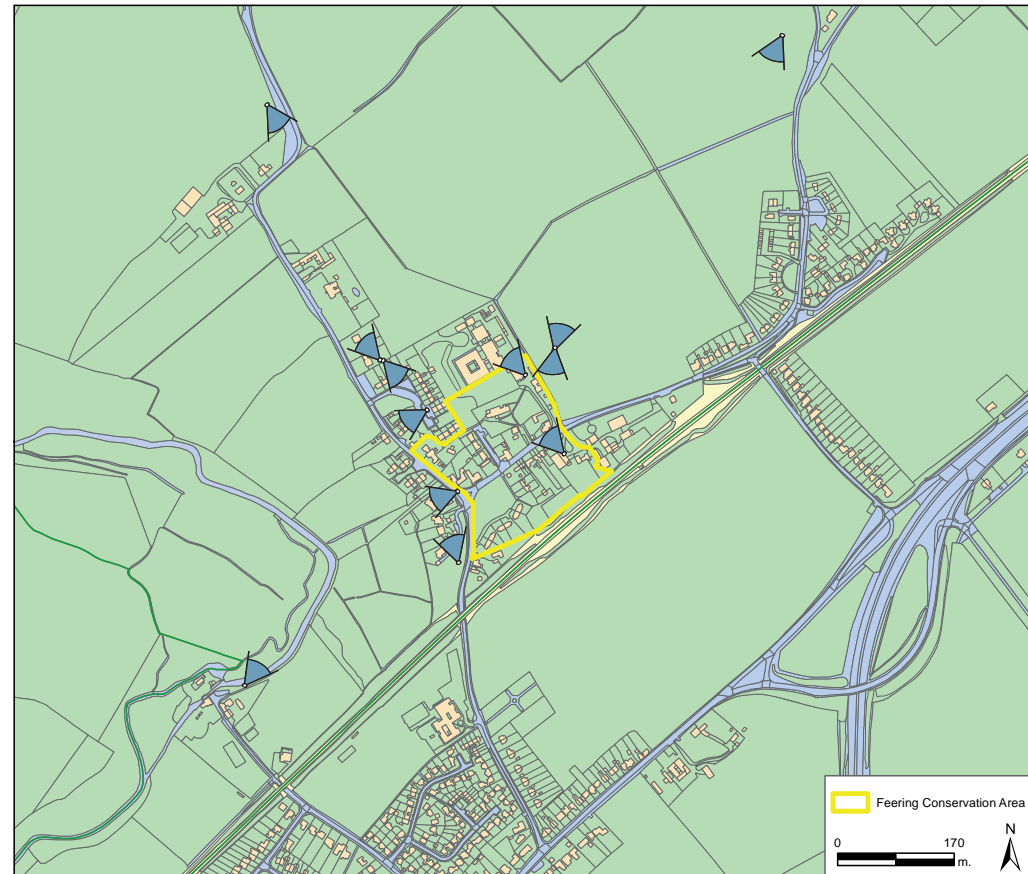


Figure 15 Key views associated with the Conservation Area



Figure 16 View through the railway bridge



Figure 17 View from the railway bridge into the Conservation Area



Figure 18 View from southern corner of Feering Conservation Area into the Blackwater Valley



Figure 19 View from Kelvedon and Feering Cricket Club to Feering Conservation Area

The positioning of the village on the edge of the Blackwater Valley has also enabled significant views towards the settlement from the wider landscape, these include the view from the Kelvedon and Feering cricket-club across the Blackwater to the church and the surrounding collection of trees and cottages, as well as from the bridge over the railway to the east of the Conservation Area.

It is important that these views are considered in proposals for new development or extensions to existing properties. Any proposed development located behind other buildings and cannot be seen from the main roads should still be carefully considered as it may have a detrimental effect from other viewpoints.



Figure 20 View from eastern edge of Feering Conservation Area into wider rural landscape

### 3.5 Public Realm

Generally, the buildings follow the line of the road with most properties separated from the road or pavement by a small front garden and some form of boundary treatment (wall, railing or hedge).

The public realm is largely confined to pavements, a painted-on pedestrian walkway and street signs. There are a few issues with parking, particularly on The Street, and with speeding on the Coggeshall Road. Parking is demarked on the road in sections of the Conservation Area, which particularly narrows the overall appearance of The Street and creates a more urban appearance, detracting from the rural appearance of the Conservation Area.

A group of structures on the green, comprising the Listed K6 telephone box, letter box, bin and telecoms cabinet contribute positively to the amenity space, although consolidation of some elements, including signage, would minimise their appearance within the setting.

### 3.6 Landscaping and Open Spaces

The village green forms an important area of open space within the village. Its influence on Feering is particularly noticeable when viewed from the railway arch entrance into the Conservation Area. Here the village opens out to form the green with its historic buildings and church behind it and open views to the west into the Blackwater Valley (see Figures 15 and 17). In addition, many of the residential buildings have small front gardens that can be easily viewed from the road, and these combined with the open space of the graveyard and its mature trees contribute to the rural, well-vegetated appearance and character of the village.



Figure 21 The garden space to the rear of The Bell Inn positively contributes to the open appearance of the Conservation Area and enables views into the Church



Incidental views out of the conservation area and differences in building heights further contribute to the open appearance of the village, which has light grain and is not densely developed. There is little backland development, and the pub garden to the rear of The Bell Inn provides an important view point of All Saints Church.

The rural setting of the village also contributes to the understanding and significance of the Conservation Area. In particular, the valley of the Blackwater is a Local Wildlife Site and there is a substantial network of footpaths and bridleways within the parish which are walked frequently.

### **3.7 Beyond the Conservation Area Boundary**

The setting of the Conservation Area is overwhelmingly rural in nature, with open agricultural landscapes to the north and east. To the west, bordering the River Blackwater, are significant areas of marsh and woodland, these are a Local Wildlife Site. To the south, where modern Feering is located, the railway forms a visual barrier, with a field beyond that providing a small but significant visual gap between the old and new settlement.

There are significant views both from the village out into its agricultural hinterland and its associated historic manorial holdings and in reverse, towards the village, where the church tower and its accompanying mature trees forms a significant local landmark (see Figures 18, 19 and 20).

## 4.0 Opportunities for Enhancement



Figure 22 Over proliferation of street furniture in this section of the village green detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area

The following key issues have been identified and are summarised below in brief. The list is in no way exhaustive and neither are the issues identified unique to Feering, with many being shared with other Conservation Areas.

### 4.1 Car Parking

Car parking in the Conservation Area, particularly along The Street, detracts from the character of the area, adding a more urban appearance. Similarly, parked cars in this area narrow the appearance of The Street, creating a denser appearance to the street scene. Minimising the amount of parking within the area would have a positive impact.

Nonetheless, the high proportion of currently retained front gardens is positive. Any applications for additional hardstanding or parking within the Conservation Area should be resisted.

### 4.2 Inappropriate Modern Development

Existing modern development is largely neutral, due to the low height and relatively small mass of the twentieth century buildings within the Conservation Area. However, the dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character. The addition of further neutral contributors would cumulatively cause harm to the Conservation Area.

Demolition of any positive feature within the conservation area is likely to be unacceptable as it will detract from the character of the area. Planning Permission would be needed for any demolition, including the demolition of brick boundary walls, chimneys and ancillary structures, where appropriate. This also includes the replacement of character defining features, such as doors and windows.



Extensions or alterations to the existing properties should be sensitive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, respecting the traditional materials and appearance of the host and surrounding buildings. The introduction of uPVC windows or other incongruous modern materials should be strongly resisted.

Any proposals for the development of back-land plots would not be appropriate, as it would distort the linear form of the village. Similarly, development which encroaches upon the Conservation Area boundary would be considered harmful to the setting of the Conservation Area.

### **4.3 Public Realm**

Within the public realm, maintenance of existing features is key to preserving the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. In some areas of the public realm, removal or consolidation of some features would be beneficial and these are outlined below.

#### **Street Furniture (Lamp-posts, benches, signage, bins, bike stands, bollards etc.)**

Overall the presence of street furniture within the Conservation Area is minimal, which adds to the rural character. Any additional street furniture would have to be fully justified and beneficial to residents. Consolidation or removal of street furniture around the green, including signage, would be beneficial in maintaining the open appearance of this section of the Conservation Area.

### **Boundary Treatments and Hard Standing**

The addition of further hard standing will be detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area, detracting from its rural character and creating a more urban appearance. In some areas of the Conservation Area, boundary treatments can be improved and the gradual removal of incongruous modern materials and fencing, replacing them with more appropriate materials is encouraged.

### **Open Spaces**

Retention of open spaces is important as it creates amenity space, as well as adding to the rural character of the village. Any reduction in the open spaces, including incidental views out of the conservation area caused by the variety in roof form, would be considered harmful to the Conservation Area's character.

### **Trees and Planting**

Any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the Conservation Area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. This will preserve the green and rural character of the area. Any tree that makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.



## 5.0 Management Proposals

As outlined in the previous chapter, there are a range of issues considered for the Feering Conservation Area, many of which share common themes. This Chapter seeks to recommend management proposals which address these issues in both the short and long term.

### 5.1 Positive Management

The first set of proposals relates to Positive Management and focus on good practice and improved ways of working within the local planning authority. These are generally low cost and can be implemented within a short time-frame, typically within one or two years.

#### Local Heritage List

Braintree District Council, in August 2015, launched its Local Heritage List looking to identify and recognise heritage assets that have not been listed nationally.

Further assessment should be conducted relating to the proposal for the inclusion of The Old Schoolhouse within this Local List.

#### General Maintenance and Interpretation

Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved public awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of Feering: features such as street furniture, signage, planting and boundary treatments are also recommended for consideration.

At present there is no interpretation (for example, information boards or signage) within the Conservation Area aimed at improving understanding and awareness for residents and visitors to the area. This would be an effective way to improve the awareness and re-establish the identity of this section of Feering as a historic settlement, distinct from Kelvedon and the Feering Hill section of the village.

The Local Authority should ensure they are maintaining the public realm and different agencies and departments are aware of their responsibilities. This is especially relevant in relation to landscaping and highways.

Braintree District Council should liaise with utility companies to minimise the impact of works upon hard landscaping.

#### Public Realm and Highways: Short-term

Whilst replacing all inappropriate street furniture is an optimum solution it is acknowledged that this is an expensive project to undertake. There are numerous other short-term solutions to this problem.

A positive working interdepartmental relationship is key to improving the public realm and highways. Planning and Highways should work together to agree standard good practice within a Conservation Area such as avoiding excessive road markings and where necessary using narrow road markings. Planning and Highways should work together to agree standard street furniture to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced.





### **Heritage Statements**

In accordance with the NPPF (Para.189), applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

All applications within the Conservation Area and immediate setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated by the district's planning team.

The key views analysed within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, tree's or highways on key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the Conservation Area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017). Applications which fail to have assessed any impact upon views and setting should not be validated.

### **Tree Management**

Trees form an important part of the character of the area. Conservation Area designation affords some degree of protection to trees. A tree strategy could be undertaken to identify the most significant trees in the Conservation Area. This could lead to further Tree Preservation Orders and could also identify general tree management issues. A replacement strategy should also be considered in order to manage the impact of loss of trees through over maturity.

### **Neutral Elements**

As discussed, the dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character.

Braintree District Council should not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment. Officers should where possible seek schemes which enhance the built environment and not allow previous poor-quality schemes to become precedents.

### **Public Facing Resources**

The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform and guide members of the public. An introductory summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of living in a conservation area. In addition, a maintenance guide would assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. A Good Practice Design Guidance on standard alterations such as windows, doors, rainwater goods, boundaries and roof extensions will ensure inappropriate development does become the accepted norm.



## 5.2 Positive Management: Longer Term

### New Development

There are opportunities within Feering for development which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. To date there has been a lack of high quality modern architecture which respects the local character. To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the Conservation Area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land,
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths)
- Respect important views,
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings,
- Use materials and building methods which as high in quality of those used in existing buildings,
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting,

Braintree District Council should guide development in a positive manner by:

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application Process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail and materials.
- Considering referring medium-large scale development (15+ units) schemes to a Design Review Panel to ensure that new buildings, additions and alterations are designed to be in sympathy with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure it's appropriate to a conservation area.
- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements.

## 5.3 Funding Opportunities

There are four main funding opportunities which would assist in the execution of these plans:

### National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the single largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and therefore is the most obvious potential source of funding. Funding is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding. Grant opportunities and requirements change overtime, for up-to-date information on HLF schemes Braintree District Council should consult their appointed Heritage Specialist.

### Section 106 Agreements

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon Feering. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site specific improvements.

### Historic England

Funding from Historic England may be accessible for Conservation Area development, as well as for house holders and owners of listed buildings. The local authority and residents are encouraged to approach Historic England directly regarding any potential financial support.

## 6.0 Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix 1 Bibliography

Bettley, J. and Pevsner, N.	2007	The Buildings of England: Essex, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 388-92
Historic England	2017	The Setting of Heritage Assets (Dec 2017).
Historic England	2019	Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Advice Note 1)
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	2019	National Planning and Policy Framework
Rumble, A.	1983	Domesday Book: Essex, Phillimore, Chichester

## 6.2 Appendix 2 Listed Buildings

DESIGNATION NO.	NAME	GRADE
1123841	PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS	I
1123840	WALBERSWICK HOUSE	II
1123842	CHURCH FARM COTTAGES	II
1169508	CHURCH COTTAGE	II
1169574	CHURCH GATE HOUSE	II
1169872	APPLE TREE COTTAGE	II
1169878	CHURCH FARMHOUSE	II
1306468	K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK, THE GREEN, FEERING	II
1337604	MOOR COTTAGE	II
1337610	THE BELL INN	II
1337611	END COTTAGE	II

### 6.3 Legislation and Planning Policy

LEGISLATION/POLICY/ GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (2019) DCLG	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) DCLG	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets	
National Guidance	English Heritage (2019) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.	

Local Policy	Braintree Local Plan Review (2005)	<p>           RLP 81 Trees, Woodland Grasslands and Hedgerows            RLP 90 Layout and Design of Development            RLP 95 Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas            RLP 96 Demolition in Conservation Areas            RLP 97 Changes of Use in Conservation Areas            RLP 98 Environmental Improvements in Conservation Areas            RLP 99 Demolition of Listed Buildings            RLP 100 Alterations and Extensions and Changes of Use to Listed Buildings and their settings            RLP 101 Listed Agricultural Buildings            RLP 102 Enabling Development            RLP 104 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance            RLP 105 Archaeological Evaluation            RLP 106 Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring            RLP 107 Outdoor Advertisements            RLP 108 Fascias and Signs in Conservation Areas            RLP 109 Illuminated Signs in Conservation Areas         </p>
Local Policy	Braintree Core Strategy (2011)	<p>           CS 8 Natural Environment and Biodiversity            CS 9 Built and Historic Environment         </p>
Local Policy	Draft Braintree Local Plan (2017 - unadopted)	<p>           SP 6 – Place Shaping Principles            LPP 55 – Layout and design of development            LPP 56 – Conservation Areas            LPP 57 - Demolition in Conservation Areas            LPP 58 – Shop fronts, fascias and signs in Conservation Areas            LPP 59 – Illuminated signs in Conservation Areas            LPP 60 – Heritage Assets and their setting            LPP 61 – Demolition of Listed Buildings or structures            LPP 62 – Enabling Development            LPP 63 – Archaeological evaluations, excavation and recording            LPP 66 – Cemeteries and churchyards            LPP 69 – Tree protection         </p>

## 6.4 Glossary (National Planning Policy Framework)

Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Heritage asset	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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic environment record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
Setting of a heritage asset	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.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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