

Uttlesford District Council



Appendix A

Uttlesford Places

March 2026

DRAFT





▲ Picture of St Mary's Church by Eleanor, age 8

A



Uttlesford Places

Version 03
Revised March 2026

A.1 Uttlesford's Heritage Context

The district contains three historically important towns – Saffron Walden, Thaxted and Great Dunmow – but one of the main characteristics is the predominance of scattered villages. Many examples of these have an isolated church and manor house with other houses sometimes centred on a crossroads or other features (for example, 'greens') around which the modern village has developed.

More focussed 'traditional' village forms are also found with the church and houses clustered around a green which often developed in the C12 and C13. Historic roads and green lanes throughout the district are twisting and often partially sunken, and mostly date to the medieval period.

The first definite settlements in the area date to the Middle to Late Bronze Age with evidence found at Stansted, but it is during the Iron Age that remains of buildings become more prolific. Evidence of hill forts at Audley End are protected as scheduled monuments. Roman Uttlesford is preserved in strategic forts such as at Great Chesterford (the second largest walled Roman town in Essex) and in towns such as Great Dunmow.



▲ In Audley End, the historic house still sits within its formal parkland and the associated village is now discretely tucked away to the south.

Much of the present settlement pattern however originates from the middle ages. Saxon settlements include those that were founded as 'burhs' by Edward the Elder Newport (although this did not grow into a town until after the Norman Conquest) and those that have monastic foundations, e.g., Hatfield Broad Oak, Saffron Walden and Berden.

Standing buildings surviving from this time period are rare and limited largely to monastic, abbey and priory churches, but early medieval occupation is also evidenced by a number of motte and bailey castles. Fine examples are found at Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet, with smaller examples at Great Canfield and Great Easton; these are all protected as scheduled monuments.



▲ The Bury in Clavering, built in 1304, is a strong local example of a medieval hall house.

Timber-framed buildings, commonly plastered, are the secular building type most typically associated with Uttlesford and indeed Essex. They reflect the wealth and relatively dense population of the area in the later Middle Ages.

Medieval rural settlement in the district was however dispersed in nature with church/hall complexes, isolated farms, moated sites and small hamlets strung out along linear greens. The oldest known timber-framed buildings are aisled halls and barns, usually associated with manors, such as Clavering Bury (14th Century).

In the towns and villages, properties were originally built as hall houses, standing parallel to the street and occupying wide frontages. Pressure for development in the C14 and C15 in towns and villages resulted in these wide plot frontages being subdivided and new building forms developed in reaction to this. This led to the variety that is seen today, including: gable end on buildings with a shop to the front; smaller houses in terraced rows; double-pile plan forms; or, buildings over three storeys.



▲ The Bell in Great Easton, a former public house dating back to the 15th century, comprises of a timber framed building with plastered and pargeetting facades.

A common medieval feature of town and village centres in the district is the gabled cross wing, e.g. Great Chesterford and Radwinter. Shops from this period are also recognisable from their wide arched headed windows adjacent to doors and large numbers survive in Saffron Walden, but also in Thaxted and Felsted for example.

From the C17 onwards, timber-framed buildings were pargeetted - a decorative plastering technique that is common throughout district. Brick had started to become widespread in buildings of higher status from about the middle of the C15, but remained confined to the plinth wall and chimneys in most dwellings until the end of the C17 and into the C18. From this point on, many properties were refronted in brick.

The arrival of the railways in the mid-C19 opened up the ready availability of a wider range of affordable building materials and influenced the location of development. National architectural styles from beyond the region resulted in buildings with a more urban character. The development of new materials and building technologies in the C20 has changed the built environment as traditional constraints to scale and building form have disappeared.



▲ The railway opening in the area meant a range of materials could be used for simple, yet-high quality house building in the 19th and 20th century. Picture above Bentfield End Causeway.

A.2 Uttlesford's Built Character

The following chapter will explore many of the placemaking features that give Uttlesford its unique character. The district plays host to a rich tapestry of historic architecture and public spaces that are inspired by the rural landscape.

The consistent character that runs throughout Uttlesford should be reinforced throughout the planning, design and development of any scheme within the district.

The first section of this appendix will outline distinctive housing typologies across the district, followed by high-quality street types and their features and functions.

The second part of this appendix will explore Settlement Centres including the largest towns, Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, accompanied by photos of the settlement's distinctive assets to inspire built form and public realm narrative. In addition, defining characteristics of large villages, small villages, hamlets and the rural landscape in Uttlesford are highlighted.



▲ Historic terraced homes come in a variety of colours and with a strong roofline in Church End, Great Dunmow.

This chapter should be used as inspiration for all types of development. For example inspiration may be taken from the rural hamlets to create a characterful edge to a new neighbourhood, or an urban square within Saffron Walden may inspire a new focal space.

Common Building Types in Uttlesford

Whilst there is a common Victorian red brick residential vernacular in Uttlesford, there is great variation within the vernacular of the district, influenced by its rich history. Types range from the timber framed terraces and shops that line the historic village and town cores, market town influences, to the thatched cottages and rural farmstead clusters within the countryside. The following pages outline the predominant architectural forms in the borough.

The form described in the following pages should be fully considered by designers when addressing their site and considering their built form influences.



▲ The Mill in Hatfield Heath is a strong example of a contemporary barn conversion incorporating the local Uttlesford vernacular.

Timber framed terraces



▲ Timber framed terraces in a linear form as pictured here on Castle Street, are a distinctive house type in the centres of medieval settlements in Uttlesford.

Their unique historic form comprises of timber frames, often with colour-washed plaster in restrained natural colours. Pargetting is also commonly used to give variation and texture to elevations. Roof forms are typically varied and strongly textured adding to distinctive and varied streetscape.

Characteristics:

- linear terrace form
- timber framed
- restrained natural coloured plastering
- pargetting commonly in combed or stamped patterns (for example, zig zags)
- overhanging jetties
- central ridgestack of mellow redbrick
- plain clay peg tiled roofs
- wood sills and doors
- front doors opens out onto street
- found within centre of larger settlements as a distinctive form

Victorian terraces



▲ The Victorian terraces here at the Causeway, Great Dunmow provides a variation on the medieval form, interpreting a national style through local materials such as flint.

In Uttlesford, these mellow red and gault brick buildings take a more ornate form, with a distinct repetition of bay windows and a small to medium front curtilage. They are particularly prevalent in the centre of towns and larger villages.

Characteristics:

- generally mellow red brick and gault
- flint detailing
- often contrasting brick panelling and banding
- slate roofs
- shared back garden entrance
- sandstone detailing
- vertically proportioned sash windows
- ground floor bay windows
- clipped or simple roof details
- buildings set in linear straight rows
- medium sized front gardens
- brick boundaries with stone gateposts

Farmsteads



▲ The rural landscape around Uttlesford informs much of the vernacular architecture across the district as pictured here at Sorrell's Farm, High Lane.

Reflecting prevailing architectural fashions, traditional farmsteads provide familiarity, yet variety to the countryside. They are designed in a range of styles and their form is inviting with their buildings typically clustered and grouped with courtyard spaces in between.

Characteristics:

- buildings set in clusters and informal groupings
- consistent use of red brick
- exterior brick chimney
- dormer windows
- black weatherboarding for outbuildings
- front courtyards
- slate roofs
- sandstone or brick sills
- porch entrance to the main building
- cottage style doors
- clipped roof details
- clay pantiles used for outbuildings
- brick or hedge boundaries

Cottages



▲ Found both on the edge of larger settlements and within rural villages, cottages like the above on Cambridge Road, Stansted Mountfitchet form a key part of the district's history and built character.

Often detached but also found near other cottages, their form is consistent with small variations in detail and decoration. Steep thatched roofs and their location differentiate this house type from other historic homes in Uttlesford.

Characteristics:

- detached/semi-detached buildings but often found near others
- steep thatched roof made of long straw with simple flush ridge
- decorative eaves edge
- exterior brick chimney
- dormer and casement windows
- timber framed
- coloured plaster
- cottage style doors
- fenced or hedge boundaries
- moderate amount of curtilage
- central entry
- single or 1.5 storey entry
- edge of larger settlement and inner rural settlements

Mansion houses



▲ Castle Street, Saffron Walden (left image) and Walden Place (right image) are grand examples of the typical mansion houses in Uttlesford.

These typically Georgian buildings use symmetry in tandem with fenestration and ornate detailing to emphasise their importance. They are mostly found on the edge of settlements or within hamlets and the open countryside.

Characteristics:

- sash windows with smaller panes
- tall windows at lower levels with small windows on the top storeys
- symmetrical flat exterior
- parapets with pitched roof
- typically red brick with strong vertical emphasis and horizontal banding
- usually 3 storeys
- ornate and exaggerated chimney details
- centrally located front entry
- occasional bay windows emphasising hierarchy of floors
- ornate brick and rainwater details

Almshouses



▲ Almshouses as pictured here in Thaxted, were originally used as charitable housing in the middle ages.

Uttlesford's traditional almshouses are single storey terrace houses with steep pitched roofs. Their dental detail, central chimney stack and dormer windows provide a memorable signpost to Uttlesford character, whilst their layout and size make them appropriate for all ages.

Characteristics:

- generally red brick with some flint detailing or rendered
- often contrasting brick panelling and banding
- slate roofs
- shared back garden entrance
- sandstone detailing
- vertically proportioned sash windows
- ground floor bay windows
- clipped or simple roof details
- buildings set in linear straight rows
- medium sized front gardens
- brick boundaries with stone gateposts

Edwardian Semi-detached



▲ Edwardian Semi-Detached homes using symmetry with distinctive rooflines on Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden (left image) and Station Road, Great Dunmow (right image).

Typically found within the outer town suburbs where new housing was developed after the housing boom of the Victorian era. These are generally more ornate than the traditional form of a semi-detached property.

Characteristics:

- houses built in a straight line
- red brickwork
- porch with wooden frames or red brick and arched doorways
- recessed doorways paired to the centre
- de-coupled bay frontage with white detailing
- mock-tudor cladding and timbers at the top of the house, often painted white
- deep front gardens
- set back from the pavement
- clipped or simple roof details
- brick boundaries
- slate or terracotta roofs

20th Century semi-detached



▲ Semi-detached homes with a strong roofline rhythm along Recreation Ground, Stansted Mountfitchet.

An evolution of the Edwardian semi-detached, the 20th century semi-detached is a strong example of a distinctive home found in the middle of small towns and rural centres in Uttlesford.

These generously sized houses build upon the previous era of semi-detached properties, with more detailing and a defined roof form to create a distinctive street scene.

Characteristics:

- decorative canted bays
- repetitive gabled roof form to street scene
- distinctive moulded square or rectangular brick chimney stacks
- recessed doorways with timber pilaster and arch detailing
- tiled roofs
- simple bargeboards to the front
- typically red brick, with whitewashed rendered iterations
- white timber detailing

Rural domestic



▲ Timber framed cottages with decorative facades in Free Roberts (left image) and Bannister Green (right image).

Rural Uttlesford comprises of clusters of residential properties around village greens or road junctions. These are intimate in form and create welcoming, familiar forms within the open countryside. Some of these buildings are purpose-built homes with their architecture reflecting their past connections to industry.

Characteristics:

- simple form
- rendered facades
- colour-washed plastered walls
- red brick facades
- simple ordered facade
- varied setback with direct frontage to street in historic village cores
- larger frontages and formal boundary treatments in smaller villages and hamlets
- many formerly thatched cottages
- strong connection to historic industry

Villa homes



▲ Villas on Mount Pleasant Road (left image), and London Road (right image) in Saffron Walden are classic examples of buildings with ornate details.

As wealth associated with trade around Uttlesford, Victorian villas were developed to provide large spaces set within larger plots. These properties are typically found on the outskirts of the historic cores in areas such as Saffron Walden, with larger gardens and clear defined boundaries set off the street.

Characteristics:

- complex roof forms often with gabled roofs
- set in short rows or gently meandering streets
- brick boundaries with hedges
- decorative and ornate roof details
- detached or semi-detached
- carved brick and sandstone details, sometimes rendered / painted
- ornate contrasting details and banding

Manor Houses and Public Buildings

Distributed evenly throughout the district, Manor Houses and Public Buildings add to the rich tapestry of the built form and public realm in Uttlesford. Uttlesford’s illustrious history means several of these buildings still remain in excellent condition, with many repurposed and retrofitted for public use.

Manors, halls and church complexes hold a significant role in the growth of Uttlesford’s settlements. Often these buildings were built in isolation for the wealthy and settlements would then grow around them forming the historic villages that we know of today. The status of Manor Houses has meant they have generally been kept in good condition.

Public buildings have a more varied history - function for the community e.g village halls and schools. While many still exist in the form of council offices, and libraries, several have been converted to residential uses.

Characteristics:

- 2+ storeys
- symmetry of form and detail to emphasise importance
- variety of window types
- decorate entrances with ornate door designs
- variety of building materials, ranging from mellow red brick to timber framed and weatherboarding
- large plots often with extensively landscaped gardens
- often surrounded by moats and ancient woodland



▲ Three storeyed manor house at Down Hall, Hatfield Heath.



▲ Uttlesford District Council Offices, Saffron Walden.



▲ Symmetrical form and layout at Audley End house, a 17th Century manor outside of Saffron Walden.



▲ Vernacular contrast of past and present industrial farm built forms on Bentfield Bury Farms.

A.3 Looking for design cues

Interpreting historic character in contemporary design

This section sets out the broad settlement and building typologies for the district. Suggested approaches are also provided to identify and use design cues in the existing built environment in the design of new development. This will aid an appreciation and understanding of the local character and result in well-designed new development that responds positively to its context.

Local architectural precedents in the existing built form will also provide clues to the success of past architectural inventions. This is particularly relevant where the existing townscape includes evidence of post-mid-C19 buildings which would have been influenced by the availability of more building materials and access to new national architectural styles and their building techniques.

How do these fit within their context and what lessons can be learnt from them?



▲ The form, scale, street rhythm, and material palette of buildings on Castle Street in Saffron Walden, should provide creative hints to future proposals within the district.

It is important that designers propose creative responses and solutions to the context they sit within.

We do not advocate direct copies, and instead encourage designers to take creative hints from surrounding architectural styles. As a result, designs will be responsive in their appearance and form, but will avoid being repetitive.

The following key aspects must be carefully reviewed by Designers: must interpret the surrounding form, place and architectural vernacular:

- form and scale
- elevation composition and street rhythm
- boundaries and thresholds
- material palette
- articulation and detail

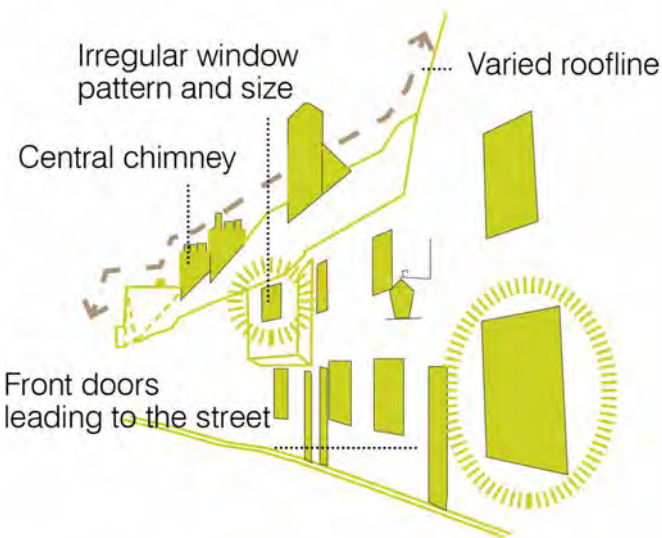
Applicants will be required to define how their design proposal responds to the surrounding context and vernacular.



▲ The front gable and dormer window of this home in Great Dunmow nods to the prevailing roof forms elsewhere in Uttlesford.

Timber framed terraces

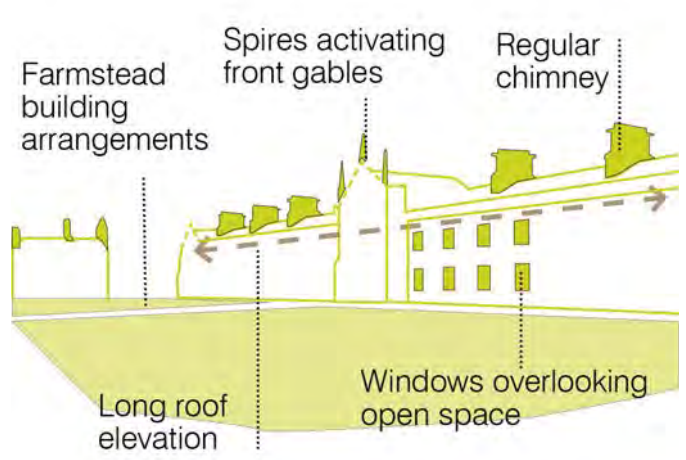
A range of architectural details define the medieval terrace. Irregularity is common along window and door position, size, and their roofline. This breaks up repetitive house types and adds variety to the street scene. Historic lighting and central chimney stacks adds further character.



▲ Photo and diagram of timber-framed terraces

Almshouses

The arrangement of Almshouses creates a well-enclosed open space that is overlooked by all. The long roof elevation of the buildings and central chimney creates symmetry and intrigue. The spires activate front gables and help to emphasise the cultural importance of the buildings.

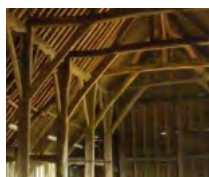


▲ Photo and diagram of King Edward VI Almshouse, Saffron Walden

Material Palette



Colour plaster



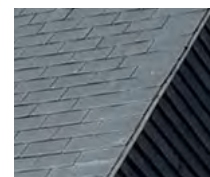
Timber frames



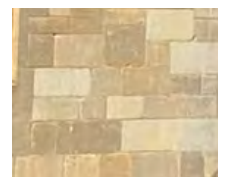
Peg tiled roof



Mellow Red Brick



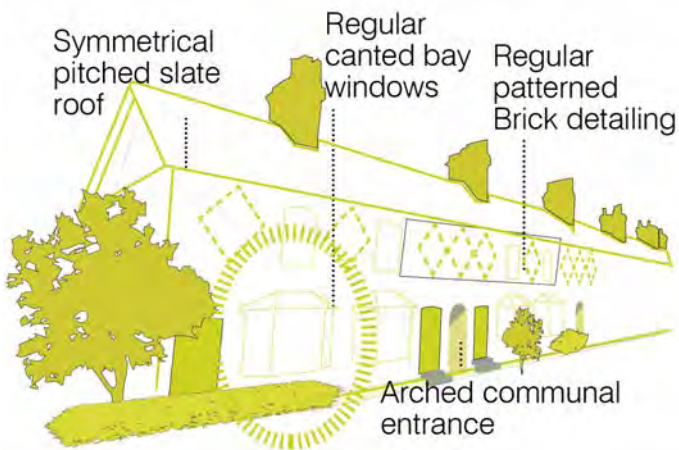
Slate roof



Stone

Victorian terraces

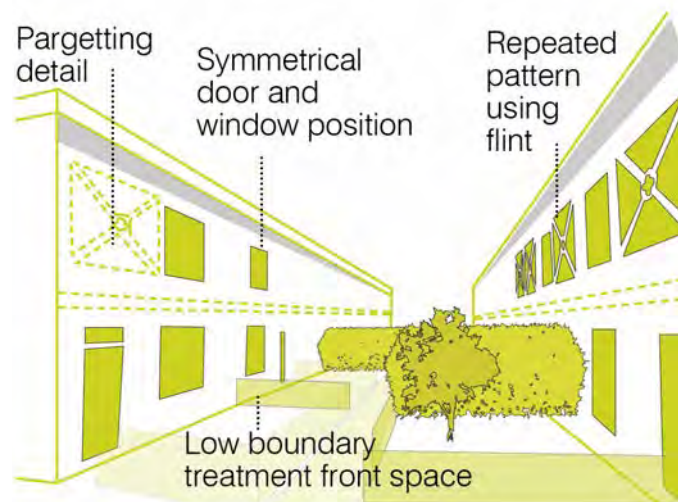
Patterned gault brick detailing mixed with traditional red brick, creates a distinctive architectural character. A repetition of canted bay windows and symmetrical pitched slate roofs increase the presence of the homes on the street, with shared arched entrances strengthening the sense of community among the buildings.



▲ Photo and diagram of terrace homes on The Causeway, Great Dumow

Tanners way

Intimacy is created along Tanners Way through a communal pedestrian walkway. Symmetrical door and window positions that overlook the private front space add a further sense of order to the built form. A mixture of pargetting and a repeated flint pattern across the facades strengthen the identity of the street.



▲ Photo and diagram of terrace homes on Artisan Dwellings, Saffron Walden

Material Palette



Gault brick



Red brick



Slate roof



White brick



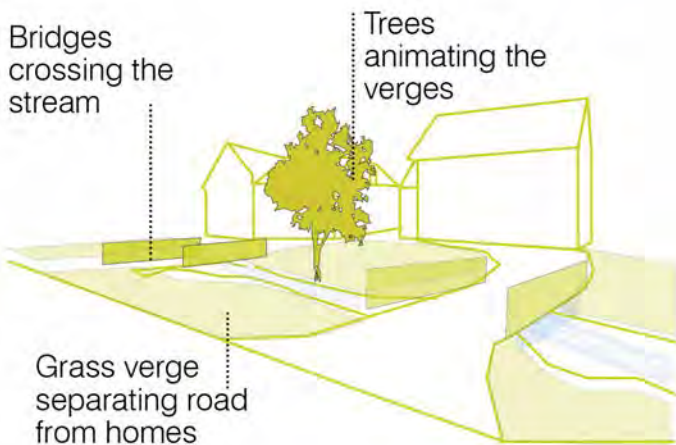
Pargetting



Flint

Arkesden Bridge

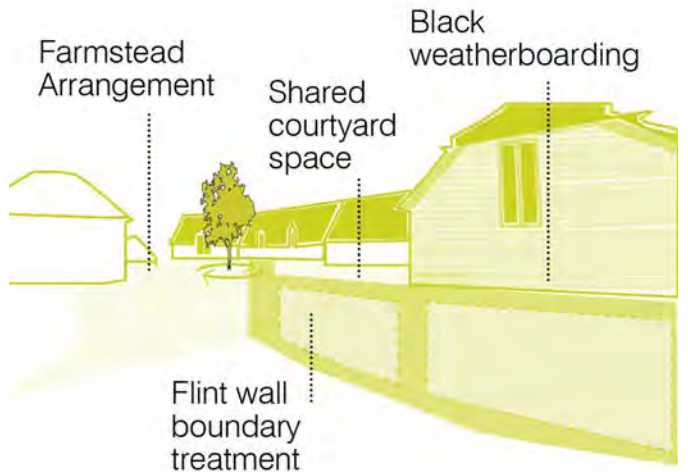
Streets with bridges across streams provide a number of distinctive design cues for prospective development. Private access via bridges create a unique arrival experience and a village-wide identity. Trees animating the grass verges emphasise the generous approach to landscaping.



▲ Photo and diagram of bridge access to homes in Arkesden

Farmstead

Taking influence from the layout of farmsteads ensures a generous amount of flexible space is well-enclosed between the buildings. Using agricultural materials can strengthen the collective character of the buildings and the space.

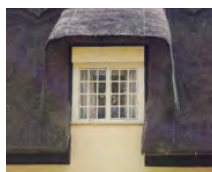


▲ Photo and diagram of a barn conversion in Stansted Mounfitchet

Material Palette



Jettying



Thatched dormers



Bridge



Black weather-boarding



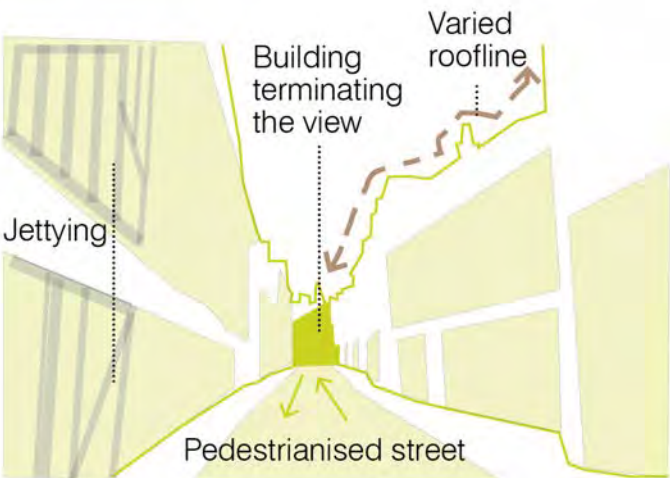
Flint wall



Peg tiled roof

High Street

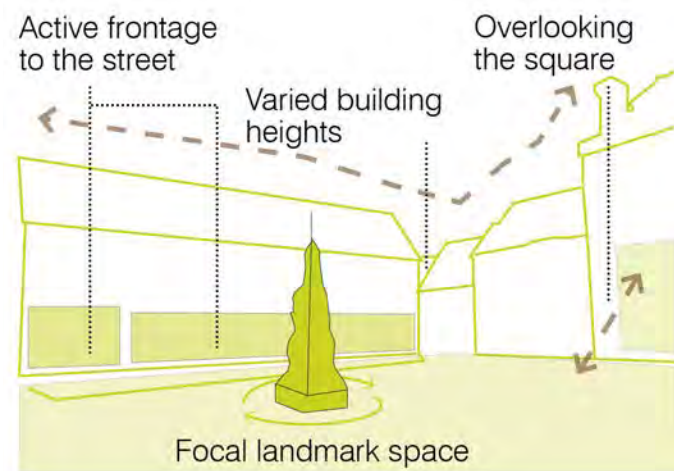
High-streets can be pedestrianised to encourage footfall. Buildings terminating views and desire lines can draw people from one anchor to another, on the street. A varied roofline and the use of local building materials and techniques, such as jettying, can add intrigue and attract people to the space.



▲ Photo and diagram illustrating King Street, Saffron Walden

Market Square

Local landmarks within and surrounding the square will strengthen the legibility of the space and emphasise its importance in the local context. Active frontage will create life in the square, while varied building heights, vernacular and window patterns avoid repetition and provide visual attractiveness.



▲ Photo and diagram illustrating Market Square, Saffron Walden

Material Palette



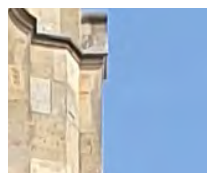
Timber jettying



Red brick



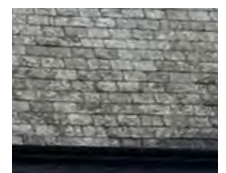
Wooden framed windows



Stone



Red brick/white brick



Slate tiles

Use of vernacular materials

The characteristic buildings of Essex are its medieval churches and timber-framed houses which are generally plastered. There is no natural stone so the other speciality of the District is brick (usually red, with gault brick increasing in prevalence in the north of the District) which was increasingly used from towards the end of the C15 onwards. Clay tiles (with pantiles for agricultural buildings) and thatch are predominantly used for roofing in the District, particularly in the north west. Slate is rare until the arrival of the railways from the mid-C19 onwards.

Local construction materials have been tested for their durability and sustainability for hundreds and thousands of years. They are appropriate to the climate of their locality and their continued use maintains the authentic architectural value of the district. High quality traditional local materials if used correctly are inherently sustainable as they generally have low embodied energy, low processing requirements and lower transportation impacts.

Vernacular construction materials have also influenced the form and design of buildings in Uttlesford as traditional materials have inherent limits to how they can be used in construction. The Essex Design Guide 'Building Form' section provides more details of typical forms and dimensions: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/design-details/architectural-details/building-form/>



▲ Use of black timber referencing surrounding farm buildings in Duddenhoe End.

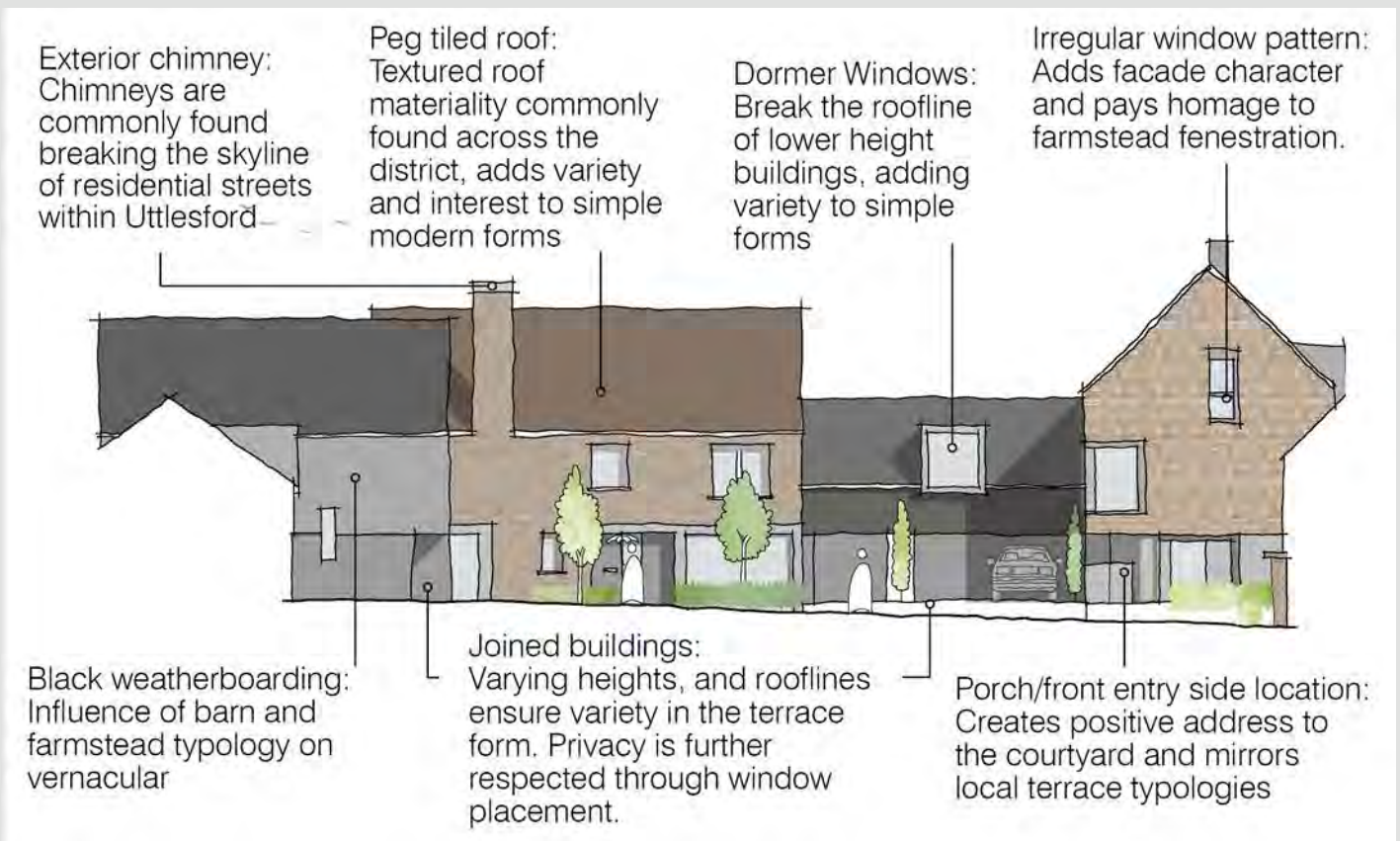


▲ Use of coloured render, jettying and varied roof forms in Hallfield, Quendon.

Case Study: The Avenue, Saffron Walden by Pollard Thomas Edwards

The Avenue in Saffron Walden provides an exemplary case study of the interpretation of historic Uttlesford character in contemporary design. The palette of materials utilised is traditional to Essex, complimented by modern, crisp detailing. The design respects the context of traditional buildings without imitating them.

Positioned around a series of courtyards, clusters of homes are reminiscent of farmsteads found across the district. The courtyards provide a community and pedestrian focussed scale and a varied palette, typologies and forms capture the varied roofscapes and tones found in Uttlesford.



▲ Front elevation sketch of The Avenue, Saffron Walden. The sketch illustrates the ways it has interpreted local Uttlesford context.



▲ Massing and materials reference traditional jetty forms of Uttlesford.

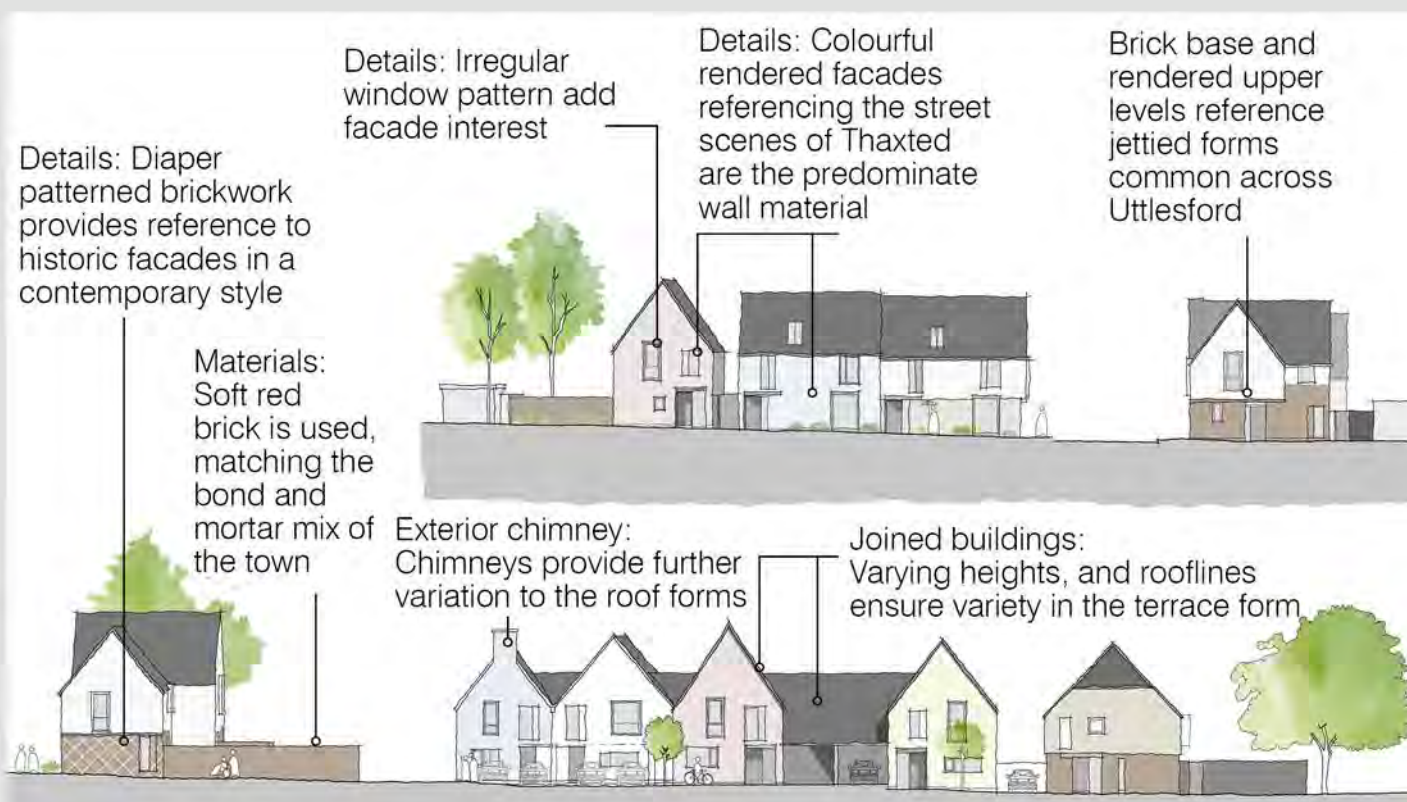


▲ Materials reference black cladding found within adjacent school buildings and complement the mature landscape setting.

Case Study: Morris Dance Place, Thaxted

Morris Dance Place in Thaxted arranges new homes in row forms or short terraces in reference to the development pattern of historic Thaxted. These row homes define intimate home zones which are reflective of the intimacy and density of the core of Thaxted. Existing listed buildings are sensitively incorporated into the scheme and, create a coherent and cohesive street frontage.

Proposals reference typical roof forms and pitches of Thaxted, and utilise narrow plans reflective of the spans of traditional timber framed houses. Morris Dance Place uses a palette of colourful tones which directly echo the Thaxted townscape, whilst utilising more modern materials to ensure ease of maintenance and achieve high thermal performance.



▲ Front elevation sketch of Morris Dance Place, Thaxted. The sketch illustrates the ways it has interpreted local Uttlesford context.



▲ Homes are grouped around courtyard parking which is overlooked by varied forms and articulation.



▲ New homes respond to existing heritage assets which are sensitively integrated into the development.

Case Study: Dairy Lane (Elms Farm), Stansted Mountfitchet

Dairy Lane in Stansted Mountfitchet has been inspired by the farming heritage of the site, the geometry of the original Stansted Hall and the traditional architecture seen in and around the local area. The layout of the masterplan

is formed around a series of groupings of buildings which reflect traditional farmyard and parkland vernacular. Roof pitches are reflective of the local area, by varying and using natural roof tiles and slates, brick chimney stacks and jetties.



▲ Front elevation sketch of Dairy Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet. The sketch illustrates the ways it has interpreted local Uttlesford context.



▲ Groupings of buildings around courtyards with open space or parking.



▲ Transition from farmland character to parkland character marked by gatehouse inspired dwellings.

A.4 Settlement Types

Uttlesford contains a rich mix of settlement types and sizes, ranging from 'Urban Areas' such as Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet, to picturesque villages and hamlets. Irrespective of size, each settlement is pivotal in shaping Uttlesford's distinctive character.

This section will highlight place and settlement-size specific design cues. In particular, the design cues will look at how the built form and public realm in Uttlesford helps to create character within a place.

Built form and public realm design cues are explored across four scales relating to the 2005 Local Plan: 'Urban Areas', Key Rural Settlements, Small towns, Villages, and Small villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

Places in Uttlesford often share the same architectural style, streetscape and the story of how their settlement has evolved. While this section highlights these similarities it also seeks to appreciate the variety found within each settlement type. Proposals should intend to take the same approach to development.

What you should consider?

Demonstrate an understanding of the place in which their proposals are located. Reference the history, architecture, townscape, street furniture and landscape of the site and its surroundings when planning and designing new development.

Look to the local vernacular for design cues (highlighted within this section for each Place), responding to the scale, form, composition, thresholds, boundaries, material palettes and detailing.

Pastiche styles will be resisted. Pastiche is defined as a traditional/historic style that does not use traditional/historic proportions, materials, construction methods, details, and forms.

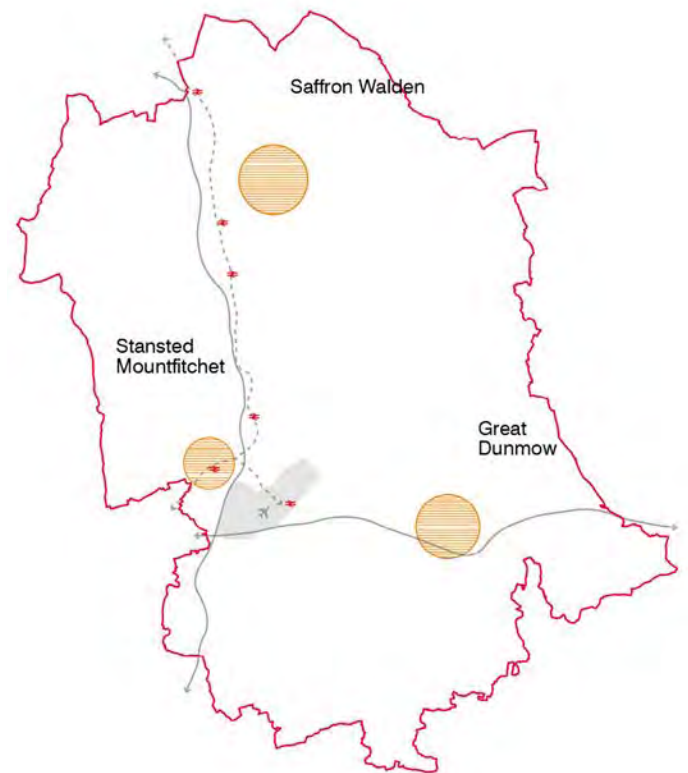
Proposals should enhance and elevate the existing character of the area. New development should contribute to the setting of existing historic landscapes and buildings and not be overbearing.

Urban areas

This section will explore the key settlements within Uttlesford. Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are the biggest settlements in the district, each with a town centre and a variety of facilities that sustains life within the town and encourages visitors from near and far.

This chapter will explore:

- Saffron Walden
- Great Dunmow
- Stansted Mountfitchet



▲ Uttlesford's Urban Areas highlighted in orange.



▲ St Mary's Church, a key historic landmark in Saffron Walden.



▲ Saffron Walden turf maze is a local destination with the town's focal green space.

Saffron Walden

The Parish of Saffron Walden is located in the north of the Uttlesford District and is home to some 16,000 people. Saffron Walden is a market town of exceptional heritage interest. The town retains a strong medieval character with the street pattern formed around the castle established after the Norman Conquest. It was particularly prosperous between 1400 and 1700 with its growth based on the wool trade.

The prosperity of the combined wool and saffron trade is evidenced by what is considered to be the finest surviving collection of timber framed buildings in Essex and there are numerous examples of C15 and later town-houses illustrating the development of this building type. The church is also one of Essex's largest parish churches and one of the most lavishly designed; standing in a commanding position on a hill, it is seen prominently around the town.

Great Dunmow

The Parish of Great Dunmow is located in the south of the Uttlesford District and is home to some 8,800 people. The town is more usually known as Dunmow and has two quite separate parts: the market town and Church End. The market town grew around the junction of two Roman roads, one of which is Stane Street (the main road westwards from Colchester), with the other leading south to Chelmsford Church End was a secondary Roman settlement located half a mile north of the market town and is today a 'sylvan suburb' (White's Directory of Essex 1848).

Church End today has a much more rural/village character as a result of its separateness from the main commercial centre of the market town to the south. It is dominated by a handsome church, but also contains a mixture of building types from the C14 to C19.

The market town incorporates Roman, medieval and post-medieval heritage which is reflected in the surviving built form and is an important collection of historic buildings. The prosperity of the town in the C16 and C17 as a result of the establishment of cloth and tanning industries is reflected in the number of houses built in this period.

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Parish of Stansted Mountfitchet is extensive and is one of the largest parishes in Essex. The town has developed from three centres of historic settlement – Castle/Lower Street, Silver Street and Chapel Hill – with Bentfield End and Green, small historic settlements, on the western side of the town.

Lower Street is overlooked by the remains of the Norman Castle and is the centre of the village where the medieval market place was located and contains some well-preserved vernacular post-medieval timber-framed houses from the C15 to C18. Silver Street/Cambridge Road is the secondary historic core at Stansted and there are remnants of burgage plots still in evidence. Its post-medieval and Victorian character is highlighted by C17 and C18 houses and C19 commercial buildings.

Saffron Walden built form design cues



▲ Complementing, yet different architectural styles within the town centre.



▲ Red brick gatehouse building typology with carriage-arch.



▲ Traditional pargetting on Gold Street with colourful palette.



▲ Building height decreasing in line with topography along South Road.



▲ Modern interpretation of barn typology on the Avenue (black weatherboarding and stone cladding).



▲ Two storey Almshouses differ in architectural style, while overlooking and enclosing public space in Saffron Walden.

Saffron Walden public realm design cues



▲ Market Square shared space with focal landmark and strong variation of design.



▲ Informal encounters along pedestrianised front gardens and doors on South Road.



▲ Mature trees provide enclosure and a sense of nature for pedestrians on The Avenue, Saffron Walden.



▲ Intimate mews street with black weatherboarding at Gold Street Surgery.



▲ Pedestrianised King Street, with an intimate sense of enclosure creating a cosy walking environment.



▲ Grass verges and mature trees create a coherent character with the green space on Ashdon Road.

Great Dunmow built form design cues



▲ Peg tiled roof, casement windows, and historic detailing on Market Street.



▲ Built form along Church Street retains key views towards St Marys Church.



▲ Colourful Victorian terraces establish a distinctive area of character in Church End.



▲ Strong continuous built form frontage reinforces hierarchy of character and use along High Street, Great Dunmow.



▲ Dormer windows and central stack chimneys create strong character for red brick terraces.



▲ Order and symmetry with Edwardian paired semi-detached houses with red brick and arched doorways on Station Road.

Great Dunmow public realm design cues



▲ Homes are positively addressing Doctors Pond from Star Lane, and overlook the pedestrian path around the water.



▲ Focality at the junction of High Street with New Street where the War Memorial is located.



▲ Curved Market Street with level change adds intrigue with a wide pavement for pedestrians.



▲ Adjoining green spaces lead to focal blue infrastructure along Star Lane.



▲ Parsonage Downs open space with its changing levels, mature trees and water feature makes an important environmental contribution to Great Dunmow.



▲ Threaders Green contains an important batch of thatched properties with key pedestrian links to local assets.

Stansted Mountfitchet built form design cues



▲ Historic architecture of timber frames and peg tiled roofs on Lower Street.



▲ Brewery House adds ornate character to the street through dentil detail and bay windows.



▲ Landmark windmill typologies and materials influence the built form in Stansted Mountfitchet.



▲ Distinctive historic landmark aids wayfinding and acts as a gateway to the high street.



▲ Black weatherboarded barn conversion with dormers, shared courtyard and flint wall boundary at Hall Barn and Garden House.



▲ Red brick victoria terraces with raised entrances along Sunnyside create a coherent narrative.

Stansted Mountfitchet public realm design cues



▲ Homes overlooking the informal shared space and front parking increase the feeling of safety on Mill side.



▲ Tranquil views from the terraces overlooking the Recreation Ground



▲ Bridges crossing the stream along Water Lane, creates a pleasant pedestrian-friendly environment.



▲ Building setbacks to create visual permeability to Bentfield Green.



▲ Symmetry and layout of homes within a shared courtyard create depth of perspective at the end of Dairy Lane.



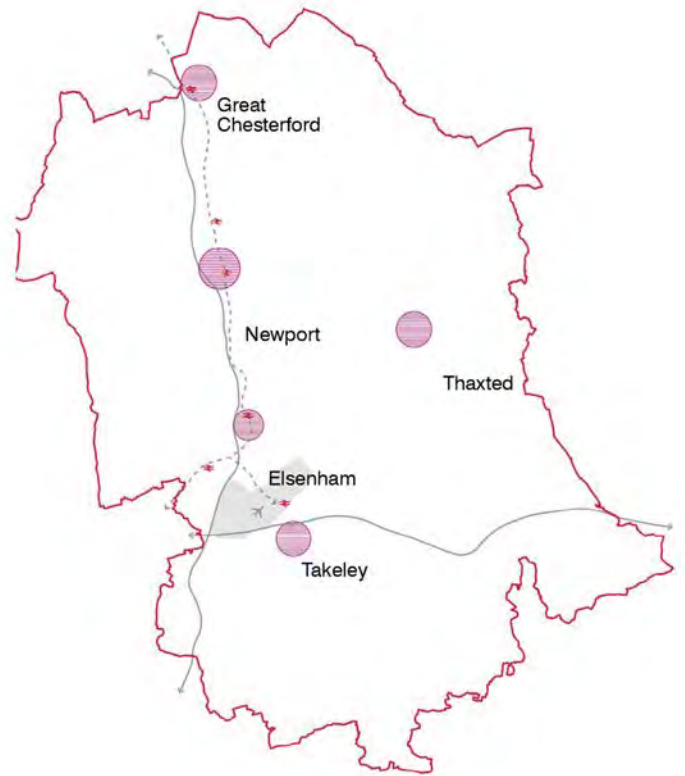
▲ Central green space with landmark on Chapel Hill creates a gateway into the town centre.

Key rural settlements

A number of significant medieval towns developed in the district. Those that grew are the key settlements of Uttlesford today, Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. Others that did not see the same level of development have retained much of their original medieval extent and appearance, for example, Thaxted and Newport.

This chapter will explore:

- Thaxted
- Elsenham
- Newport
- Takeley
- Great Chesterford



▲ Key Rural Settlements in Uttlesford highlighted in pink.



▲ Gateway village green on School Street, Great Chesterford



▲ Newport is structured around the high street running North to South through the settlement.

Thaxted

Thaxted was one of the most prosperous towns in Essex in the C14 and C15 as a result of the cutlery industry, vying in business importance with Saffron Walden. The late medieval wealth is reflected in the surviving historic building stock which includes the large Church and the Guildhall is positioned at the head of Town Street which is on the main street of the town.

Elsenham

Elsenham was a smaller settlement with Roman origins (a rich burial site is located to the east of the village). Although Elsenham is the one of the larger modern settlements it only developed in the second half of the 20th century and as result doesn't have a clear focus. The church lies outside the village near the Hall around which, in the post-medieval period, a landscaped park was developed.

Newport

Newport has its origins in the Saxon period as a royal manor with a market. It developed along the High Street and around the church where most of the important buildings in the town are located as a result of the market-based economy in the medieval period alongside the wool trade and saffron cultivation.

Takeley

Takeley is located in the south of the Uttlesford District and is home to more than 5,000 people. The settlement grew considerably during the C20 and the parish includes part of Stansted Airport. The most interesting buildings are found along Takeley Street where a cluster of medieval (C15-C17) and Victorian properties are found.

Great Chesterford

Home to 1,750 people and located in the low chalk hills, Great Chesterford has its origins in the Late Iron Age, but it is primarily known as a Roman settlement. The medieval town grew to the south of the Roman town and expanded little in the post-medieval period, but there are several attractive timber-framed houses in the village from this period.

Key rural settlements built form design cues



▲ Red brick terraces with barn doors opening onto Wicken Road, Newport.



▲ Dormer windows on the 17th Century thatched cottage in Takeley.



▲ Peg tiled roof, pargetting, dormer windows, central chimney and black weatherboarding on Dunmow Road, Takeley.



▲ Red brick mill with a retained historic facade converted into non-residential uses in Hatfield Heath



▲ Grade II listed Bury Farm Barn, Felsted, with a restored weatherboarded timber framed and Queen post roof structure.



▲ Single storey timber framed terrace houses decline in line with topography creating variation and interest to the street scene in Newport.

Key rural settlements public realm design cues



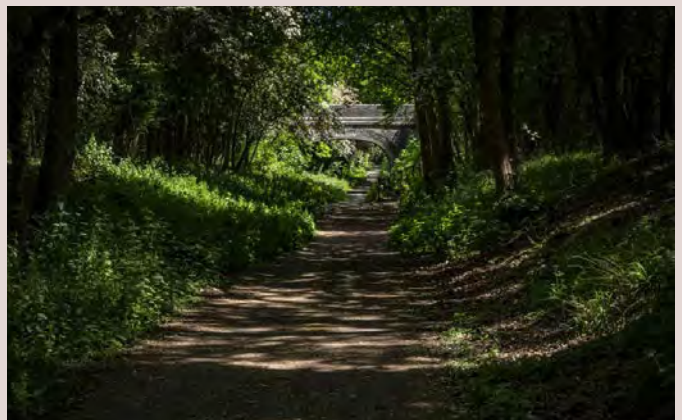
▲ Paths wind through the farmland landscape to the backdrop of historic landmarks, John Webb windmill and St. John the Baptist with Our Lady and St. Laurence.



▲ Curved High Street in Thaxted with coloured render moving uphill creates sense of anticipation.



▲ Holy Cross Church visible through mature tree lines at the top of station hill pulls visitors to the centre of Felsted.



▲ The Flich Way embraces features of the old railway line while enclosed with mature trees between Takeley and Little Canfield.



▲ Trees play an important role in the High Street scene in Great Chesterford with vertical emphasis and visual focal points from public view points.



▲ Shared space, with strong vernacular street character in Beehive Court, Hatfield Heath.

Villages

Villages are the dominant settlement type in Uttlesford. They perform a key function in the borough, linking all settlements to the rural landscape. They often comprise of small scale housing, minor public spaces, and occasional community facilities such as facilities and public houses.

Steeped in history the borough contains a range of settlements with evidence of Saxon occupation such as Littlebury and Berden. Villages including Wendens Ambo, Quendon, Hadstock and Ashdon have developed from a church/hall complex. Towards the centre of the district is Great Easton which is centred on a Norman Motte.

Small nucleated settlements like High Easter, and Elmdon have a rich mix of C16-C18 properties with the latter experiencing some ribbon development.

Medieval and post-medieval development is evidenced throughout villages in Uttlesford with building materials, landscape features and settlement structures reminding the district of its illustrious past.



▲ Distant views of the church and open fields across the Cricket Ground in Wendens Ambo



▲ Strong use of black and white weatherboarding along the High Street, Manuden

Key rural settlements built form design cues



▲ Timber framed cottage with peg tiled roof overlooking Bannister Green. Low hedged boundary treatment integrated with informal shared space.



▲ Mid 19th century terraces of flint-faced dwellings create distinctive village character in Wendens Ambo.



▲ Red-brick terraces, front facing timber framed gables, and pargetted dwellings create variety yet coherence in Hatfield Broad Oak.



▲ Front-gables with symmetrical windows and chimney stacks adds an ornate character in Wicken Bonhunt.



▲ Red brick Victorian terraces with central chimney and historic wall light on Birchanger Lane.



▲ Almshouses in Radwinter - Three gabled porches project on the front. Roofs tiled, with 4 chimney stacks each and casement windows.

Key rural settlements public realm design cues



▲ Gateway green space with attractive landscaping and landmark property celebrates the arrival experience in Hempstead.



▲ Intimacy and enclosure along Penham Road, Clavering before arriving at a key destination.



▲ Mature trees along the west side of the B1383 in Quendon add scale to the street scene and frame the view to the north.



▲ Strong sense of enclosure, continuous frontage and setbacks along the High Street, Stebbing.



▲ Water creates tranquillity at Horse Ponds in Little Easton lapping to the side of the road, and reflecting the sky glimpsed through the many mature trees.



▲ Bridges to homes over swales and green verges create a village-wide character in Arkesden.

Small villages, hamlets and farmsteads

Small villages, hamlets and farmsteads are key to defining character in Uttlesford. Found across all areas of the district, they provide a transition from settlements to the open countryside. They often comprise of small groups of housing, and the occasional community facility such as churches, bed and breakfasts, and village halls often located away from any buildings.

Some small castle remains also survive from the Norman conquest in smaller villages, for example, Great Canfield, and some early domestic buildings such as Little Chesterford Manor (a remarkable and rare stone secular building from the C13).

The District has some major concentrations of pre-1550 and pre-1750 farmstead buildings. Early (pre-1750) farm buildings (predominantly barns) are particularly concentrated across the claylands in the Northern part of the District.

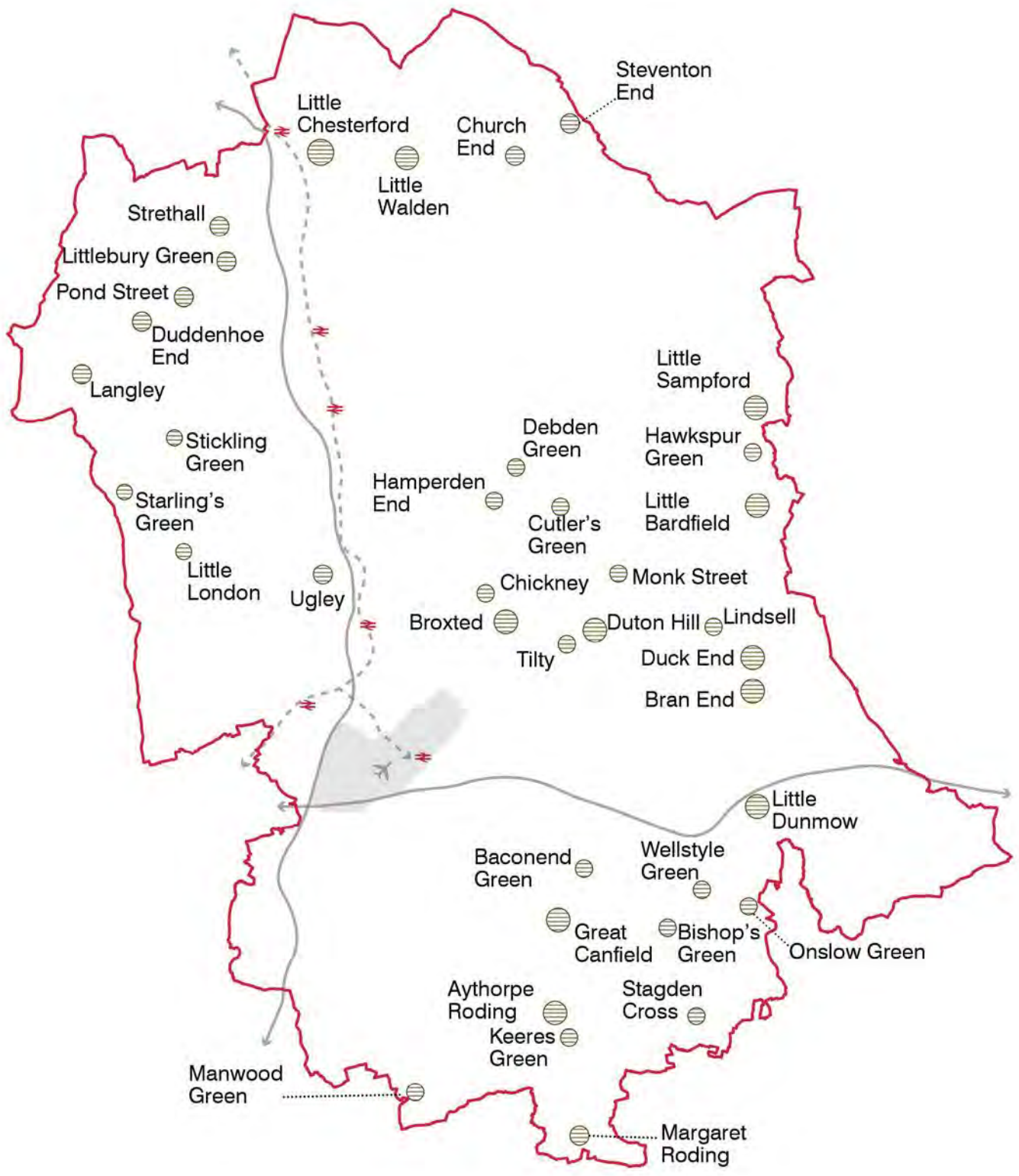
A distinctive characteristic of the small villages and hamlets are the timber-framed aisled barns dating from the 12th to the 19th century. Many are the result of a massive rebuilding programme that happened between 1550 and 1650.



▲ Farmsteads and barns with weatherboarding and flint walls are a common sight within the hamlets of Uttlesford.



▲ Aerial view of Great Eatons linear structure.



▲ Small villages and hamlets in Uttlesford highlighted in brown

Small villages, hamlets and farmsteads built form design cues



▲ Typical Uttlesford farmstead built form layout at Duck End Cottage.



▲ Vernacular contrast of past and present industrial farm built forms in Uttlesford.



▲ Cottage in the east of the district incorporating several influences from traditional Uttlesford typologies.



▲ Typical Uttlesford farmstead arrangement in a hamlet near Hempstead.



▲ Thatched cottages with contrasting pastel facades in Duddenhoe End adding character to the hamlet.



▲ Modern example of house extension in Little Bardfield using local materials such as flint and white weatherboarding.

Small villages, hamlets and farmsteads public realm design cues



▲ Trees create intimacy by enclosing and overhanging rural lanes in Uttlesford.



▲ Windbreaker trees provide vertical emphasis and frame a view of the church in Little Bardfield.



▲ Local landmark post box located along one of Uttlesford's many protected rural lanes.



▲ A smooth transition between the built form and the public realm in Lindsell.



▲ Sports facilities are often found in the middle of the open countryside providing a picturesque setting for community activity.



▲ At Lindsell cricket club, a juxtaposition of open countryside and copses of trees woodland.

Landscape Character

Uttlesford's picturesque landscapes combine with the built form to create the district's unique character. This section will explore Uttlesford's three landscape character areas; Chalk Uplands, River Valley and Farmland Plateau. They each contain a set of distinguishable characteristics that will give the landscape its identity.

The landscape character is defined beyond nature and appearance. Whilst it is important to explore the history of the landscape, the topography, and the area's natural features, the built form plays a significant role in how the area has developed its distinctive landscape character.

Landscape character areas

The Design Code should be read in conjunction with the Uttlesford Landscape Character Area Assessment (2006). The document (jointly prepared for Uttlesford, Braintree, Chelmsford, Maldon and Brentwood Councils) maps the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and their area's distinctive landscape characteristics.

Within Uttlesford three broad landscape character types have been identified. These are further subdivided into 20 sub-character areas. Within this design code the three landscape character areas will be explored at a high level, however applicants for specific sites should refer to the landscape sub-character within which they are designing for further guidance.

Preservation of landscape character

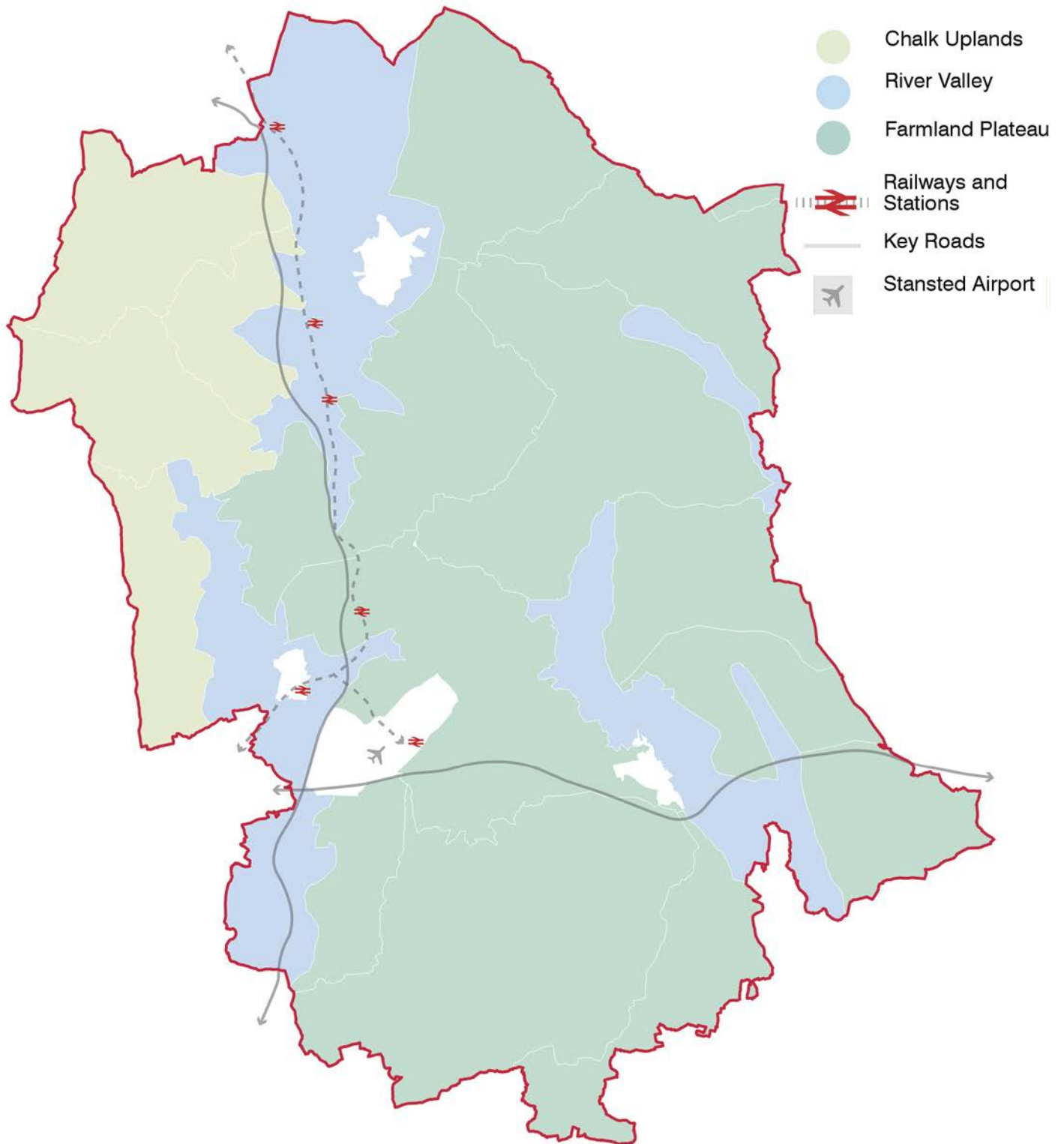
By understanding the relationship between buildings, human activity and the landscape, future development can create and preserve the distinctiveness of its settlement form and the wider landscape character across Uttlesford.

Relationship of landscape and settlements

The landscape character overview should be read in conjunction with its settlement characteristics. Some settlements of a similar form contain a very different function in contributing to landscape character by virtue of their topographical position, which given Uttlesford's topographical nuances is of great importance when creating extensions to existing settlements.

For example, a linear settlement may be located along a valley and be hidden by nature of its form. Alternatively, the same linear form located on the top of a hill could create landmarks within the landscape. The sense of arrival and relationship with the wider landscape is very different between the two positions topographically.

Once an understanding of the settlement form and typologies have been made, consideration of the topographical setting should be considered. Different topographies can present different opportunities to respond to natural aspects such as the climate emergency by orientating for maximum solar gain as well as structuring development to create the most walkable development form.



▲ A map illustrating the different landscape character areas in Uttlesford.

Chalk uplands

Located in the east of the district, chalk uplands are defined by a number of key characteristics that have wider influences on settlements and life in their area.

Encompassing villages such as Arkesden, Clavering, Chrishall, and Berden, the gently rolling chalk upland landscape of broad ridges and panoramic vistas, defines the area.

Isolated farm houses and churches on hilltops are a common sight, while sweeping vistas highlight the openness of the landscape that is created by the large-scale rectilinear arable field pattern.

Drainage ditches, grass verges and linear windbreak trees define field boundaries and create intimacy within settlements. Many small settlements are created along water courses, with individual bridges providing access to houses across the river.

Pale colour-washed plaster and timber-framed houses with thatched roofs are the local vernacular in the whole area. The use of weatherboarding, brick-and-flint, and mellow old red brick is also common among domestic and farm building, along with historic houses.



▲ Chalk uplands in Uttlesford highlighted in yellow.



▲ Arkesden village is structured along a stream.



▲ Sweeping view over the gently rolling upland landscape in Chrishall.

River Valley

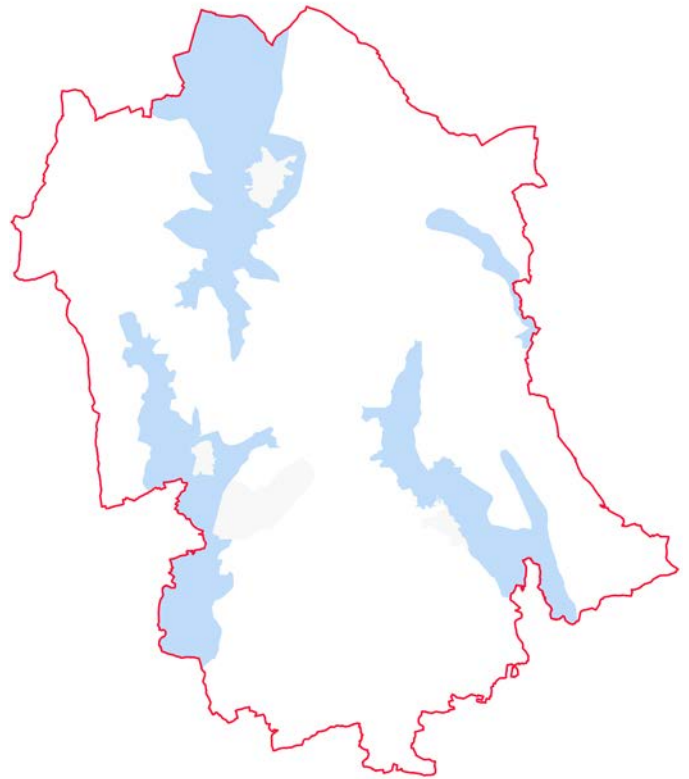
Running through various points of the district, the river valley's rolling landscape comprises of natural features that influence the built form within the area.

Rectilinear field patterns lined by hedgerows and tree belts are interspersed with semi-natural and ancient woodland. In the valley dense riverside and riverbank trees compliment grassland, wetland and scrub habitats.

The rolling topography means views of towns and villages are visible from higher ground with their church spires detectable above wooded skylines.

Both larger and smaller settlements such as Saffron Walden and Manuden are a common feature within the landscape character. Their shape varies from a linear structure to nucleated settlements clustered around village greens.

The landscape has a strong relationship to the adjacent farmland area. Farm buildings are built using red brick and black weatherboarding. Domestic properties in the river valley are primarily cream or white/bright colour-washed plaster with thatched roofs. Towards the north of the district gault brick is used more widely, while elsewhere red brick is more popular.



▲ River Valley in Uttlesford highlighted in blue.



▲ Wetland habitats are a key feature in Little Easton.



▲ Views of rolling fields interspersed with small patches of woodland near Saffron Walden.

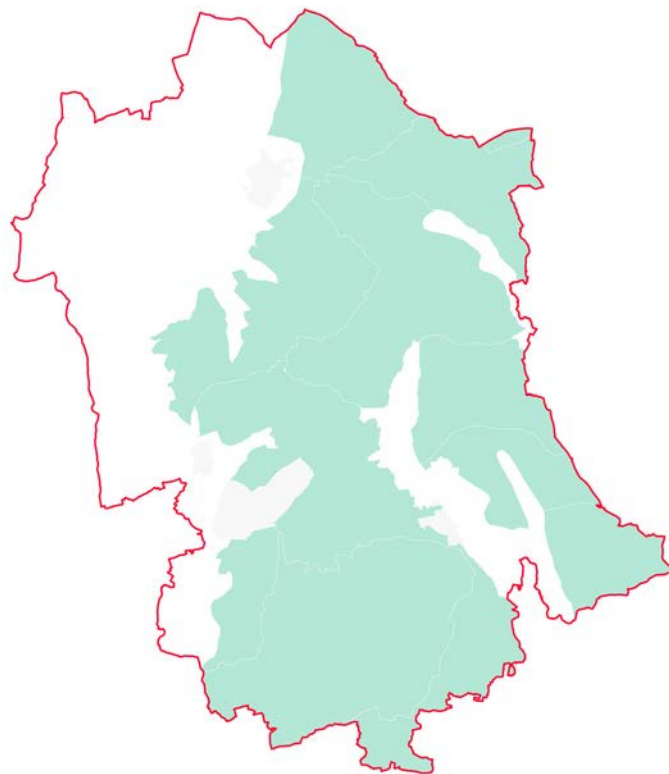
Farmland plateau

The farmland plateau landscape is the largest across Uttlesford. Found mostly within the centre and in the east of the district, the landscape's relationship to farming is understood through a number of key characteristics.

Rolling arable farmland with broad ridges and hills surrounding steep valleys with small streams characterise the farmland plateau landscape. Dense woodland patches and copses provide structure and edges in the plateau, with shelterbelts forming a dark backdrop to the farmland.

The texture of this landscape is layered in all seasons, from smooth green fields in spring to summer's golden grain. This has influenced the local vernacular with timber frames, colour-washed plaster, decorative pargetting, the prevalent materials. Halls and farmsteads are scattered throughout the area with the latter using red brick and black-stained weatherboarding.

Wide views from open roads and high plateaus contrast with enclosed nature of wooded areas in valley bottoms. Landmark church views are visible on higher ground, and in areas where the plateau broadens views become more expansive and full of big skies.



▲ Farmland plateau in Uttlesford highlighted in green.



▲ Dense woodland provide structure to, and enclose The Flich Way.



▲ Topography in the area enables view of the church on higher ground beneath woodland in Debden.

A.6 Settlement Characteristics

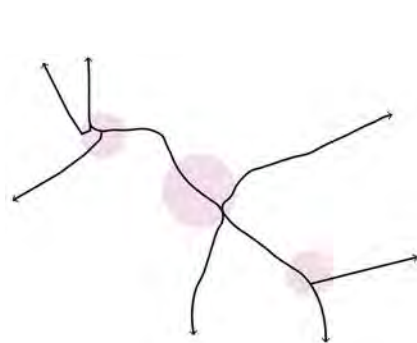
Settlements of all periods are often fluid entities, being created and disappearing, expanding and contracting, and sometimes gradually shifting. This section will explore, identify and summarise some of Uttlesford's key settlement characteristics, including their structure, focal points, and their interaction with natural and historic assets.

How we've characterised settlements

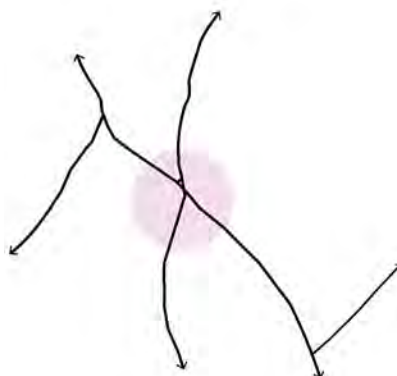
The District's settlement is generally a mixture of villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads. Very few settlements are clearly one settlement type or another; most comprise features of different categories, but there are some overall common arrangements as set out in the following pages.

Focal and Polyfocal Structure

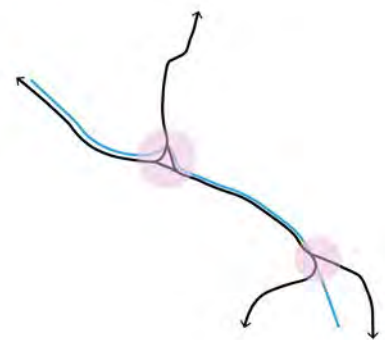
These often originated as nucleated settlements along a thoroughfare with later ribbon development spreading from the focal point along the route, creating a more linear structure. Stansted Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow are both examples of this type.



▲ Diagram illustrating a polyfocal settlement structure



▲ Diagram illustrating a nucleated settlement structure



▲ Diagram illustrating a linear settlement structure

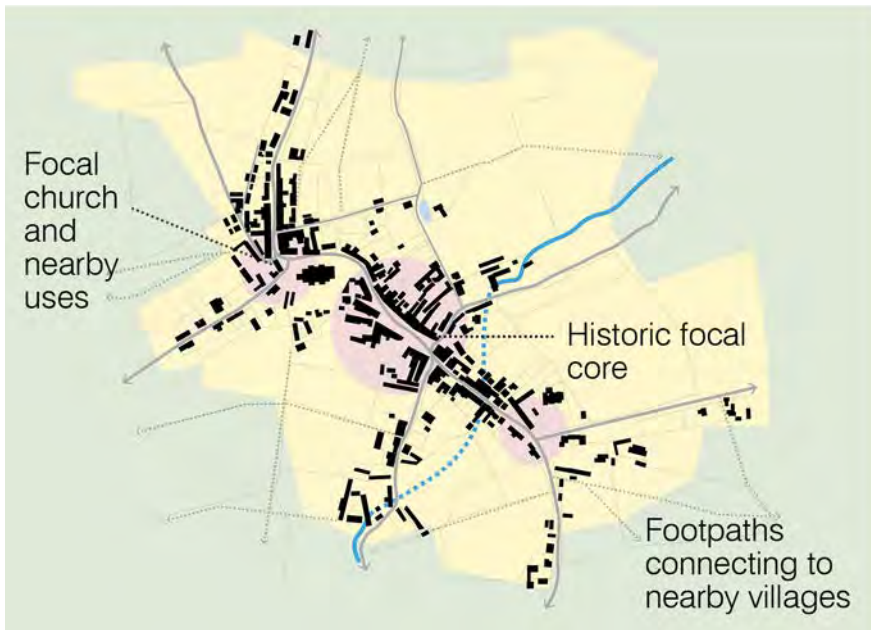
Nucleated Structure

Nucleated settlements tended to develop from a clear focus such as a crossing point on a river, or a hall/church complex, sometimes a castle, or a road junction. Development then radiates out along the routes that often converge at or near the focus of the settlement, e.g. Hadstock.

Linear Structure

Linear settlements often originated historically from ribbon development along Roman (or earlier) roads or trackways such as Stane Street (the original Roman road from Braughing to Colchester) or that between Harlow and Cambridge. Linear settlements also developed along heaths (e.g. Hatfield Heath) and along linear greens.

Focal and polyfocal structure



Trade and commerce have played a key role in growing settlements along linear high streets. Focal spaces along the linear street have emerged at the convergences of roads in front of key landmarks, and within the civic core.

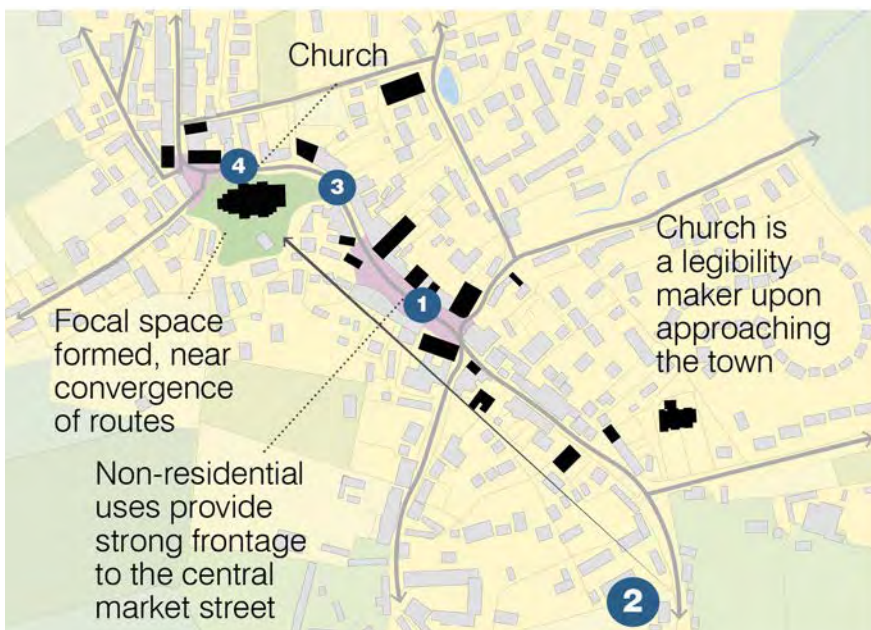
Focal points often complement each other, with landmarks providing a backdrop to the high street. This creates a distinctive street scene and aids legibility.

Structure Characteristics

- Linear historic routes
- High/main street integrated within the middle of the historic route
- Convergence of roads forming green space
- Focal landmark within the centre of the settlement (church/pub)
- Development occurs along the main route
- Local routes to neighbouring settlements branch off from the main village route

▲ Historic settlement structure of Thaxted from 1888-1913, with contemporary settlement extents.

Examples of key features in polyfocal settlements



▲ Contemporary settlement structure of Thaxted, with key views towards the church numbered.

Analysis of polyfocal space



▲ Key view of the Guildhall and the church from the bottom of Town Street, Thaxted.

A key feature of Thaxted's polyfocal structure is the relationship between the town's church and the main linear route/high street.

Situated on top a hill, the church sits as a backdrop to a distinctive street scene along Town Street. Varied rooflines and local vernacular give the focal town centre space a distinctive character.

As the road continues up the hill to the church, the built form mirrors the curve which creates a sense of arrival to the church and the surrounding space.

Examples of key features in polyfocal settlements



▲ The image above shows Thaxted's focal church is a legible marker for visitors entering the town.

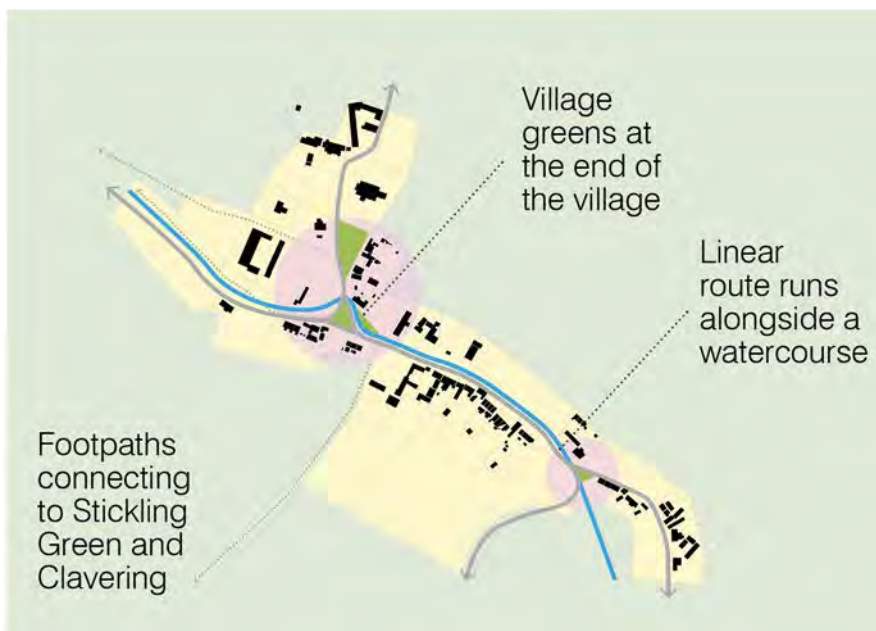


▲ Strong street presence and the building line enhances arrival to the focal space.



▲ Homes positively addressing the Church grounds near Fishmarket Street.

Linear structure



Many of Uttlesford’s villages have a distinctive character that is defined by its historic linear route and the convergence of routes and focal spaces at either end of the village.

Community assets are often clustered and framed around the focal core space. Key views of these assets are then framed by buildings which actively front on to the space/village green.

Structure Characteristics

- Linear historic route
- Convergence of routes at either end
- Focal space often found at one or both ends (whether that’s a village green or park)
- High street running through the centre of the settlement
- Facilities/uses/services branch off the linear route

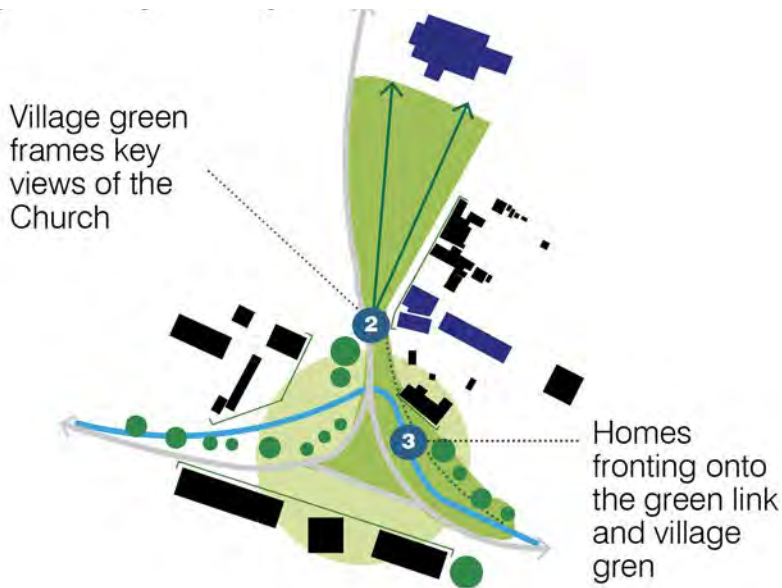
▲ Historic settlement structure of Arkesden from 1888-1913.

Examples of key features in linear settlements



▲ Contemporary settlement structure of Arkesden, with increased building footprints and adjoining routes.

Analysis of key focal space



This settlement will produce either a hierarchy of focal spaces, or one singular space at the end of the village.

Focal Space Characteristics:

- Linked green spaces
- Focal space frames views of landmark buildings
- Focal space provided with active frontages on all sides
- Formed at the convergence of routes and watercourse

▲ Focal space within Arkesden, with key views numbered. Numbers correspond with images below.

Examples of key features in linear settlements



▲ Swales and bridges form an attractive street scene within the green linear link in Arkesden.

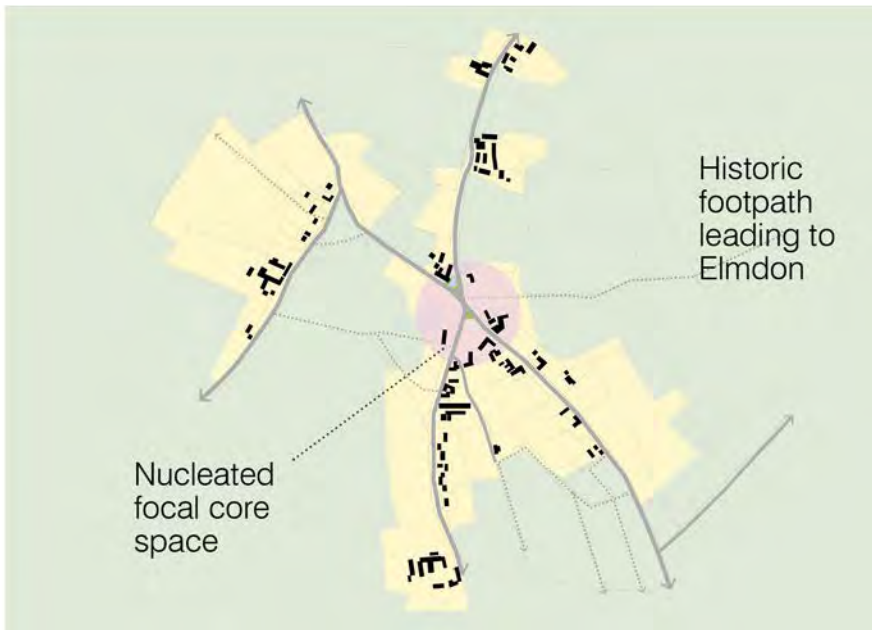


▲ Focal village green at Northern end of Arkesden frames a view of the church.



▲ In Arkesden, actively fronted homes similarly frame key views of the green space.

Nucleated structure



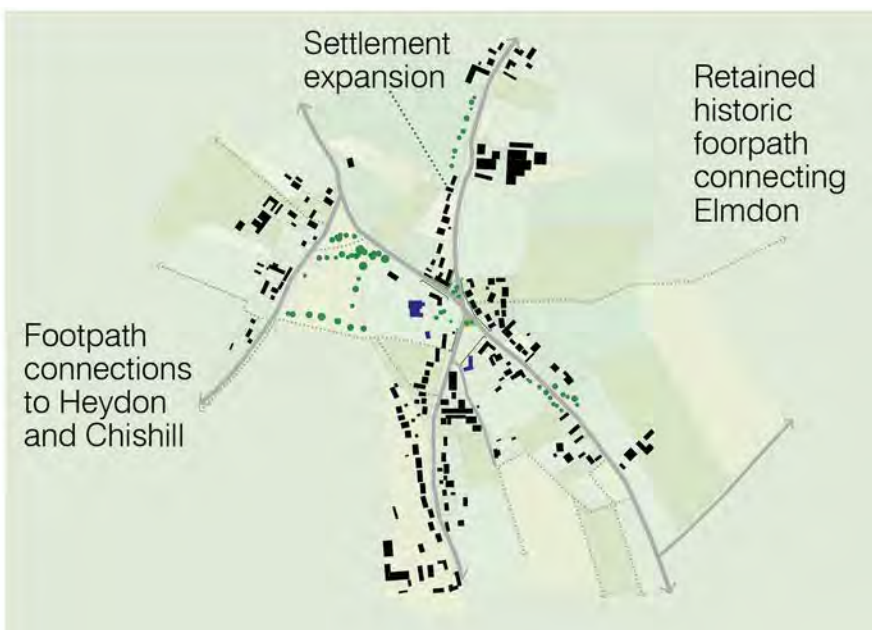
▲ Historic settlement structure of Chrishall from 1888-1913.

Several settlements in Uttlesford are characterised by their nucleated structure, originating as church hall complexes. Routes converge at the centre of the settlement, often creating a legible focal space in the form of a triangular green or a key junction.

Structure Characteristics:

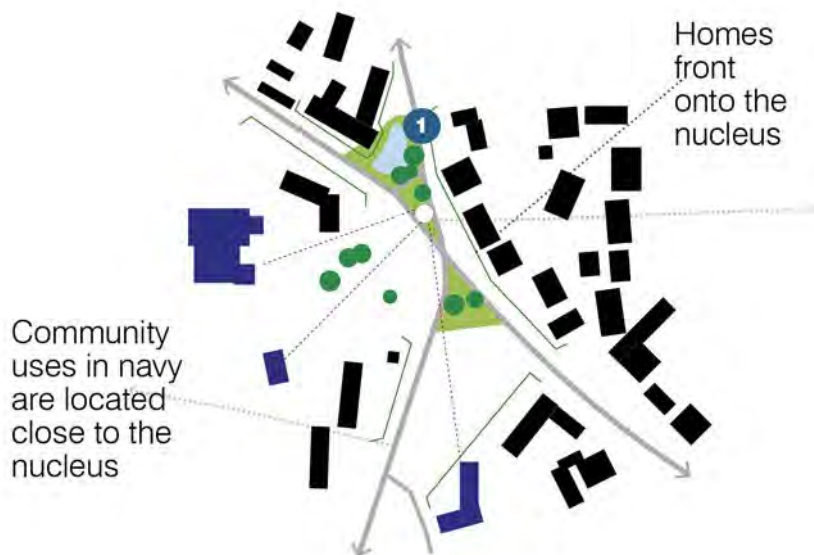
- Convergence of historic routes at the centre of the village
- Route convergence creates central green space
- Nucleus space contains legibility indicators at key junction
- Facilities/uses/services often are found near the nucleus
- Historic ribbon development grows along each route

Examples of key features in nucleated settlements



▲ Contemporary settlement structure of Chrishall with community assets outlined in black.

Analysis of nucleated space



▲ Diagram shows the focal Space within Chrishall with the numbered key view illustrated below.

Nucleated spaces have a strong relationship with community uses, and fronted homes. The spaces and convergence of routes often contain areas of public realm or nature that provide opportunities for rest and social interaction, as well as legibility aids.

Focal Space Characteristics

- Community assets are accessible to settlement nucleus
- Surrounding buildings front onto the nucleus
- Multi-functionality: Rest, legibility, wayfinding

Examples of key features in nucleated settlements



▲ Listed buildings, community assets, transport facilities, and local monuments enliven the green space found within the middle of Elmdon.



▲ Landscape at the nucleated space in Chrishall.



▲ In Wicken Bonhunt, a pub sits on the nucleated space within the village.

