
Rochford District Council

Allocations Submission DPD
Examination in Public

Examination Hearing Statement

Prepared on behalf of Mr R Stacey

August 2013

Rochford District Council

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr R Stacey in respect of the Rochford District Council (RDC) Allocations Submission Document (ASD) and his land interest to the South of Anchor Lane, Canewdon.
- 1.2 Representations were previously submitted by Mr R Winsborough (R W Land and Planning) at both 'Discussion and Consultation' stage in April 2010 and 'Pre Submission' stage in November 2012. Barton Willmore Planning LLP is now acting in respect of Mr Stacey and has confirmed with the Programme Officer (Ms Kerry Freeman) that we will be attending the relevant hearing session on 4 September for Canewdon.
- 1.3 My client's land interest is categorised as site 'SC1' in the ASD and our representation respondent number is 28693.
- 1.4 The ASD identifies two parcels of land to the east and west of the lane (which provides access to Canewdon Hall Farm and St Nicholas Church) as the preferred location for the development of 60 dwellings and associated infrastructure in Canewdon. The preferred site is categorised in the ASD as 'SER7' and its proposed allocation is the focus of my client's objection.
- 1.5 My client has previously made representations to Issue 1 (Overall Strategy), but is not attending this hearing session. The following sets out my clients specific responses to the 'Issues and Questions' posed by the Inspector (Final version dated 18 July 2013) in respect of Canewdon.

2.0 RESPONSE TO INSPECTORS QUESTIONS

i) Have the consultation procedures undertaken been adequate and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012.

2.1 My client has previously raised concern in respect of the consultation procedures undertaken and considers comments raised previously, both by officers and within the wider community, have been disregarded.

2.2 The Discussion and Consultation ASD document dated February 2010 was well advertised and included a presentation and meeting within each of the focus villages. At this stage of the process the local community raised concern with residential proposals that may impact on the heritage setting of St Nicholas Church to the north of SER7. The local community voted in favour of SC1 (Land to the south of Anchor Lane) and voted against the preferred option site.

2.3 We are surprised and concerned that RDC consulted the community at options stage, yet did not listen to their views and chose a site not favoured by local people. We do not consider the correct level of consultation was undertaken and local people have been ignored beyond the initial discussion stage. Indeed local residents have made substantial representations on this basis and we understand they will be attending the examination to verbally explain their concerns. These concerns were also documented in Southend Echo earlier this year. (**Appendix 1**). My client disagrees with the element of the article which states the preferred site was favoured locally, when clearly this was not the case. We question whether Councillors were misled in forming a view on future development in Canewdon. The further assertion that a defensible boundary cannot be incorporated is also incorrect and we focus on this matter in para 2.24 of this statement.

ii) Would development of Site SER7 conserve the heritage asset of St Nicholas Church in a manner appropriate to its significance? How could this be achieved by design?

2.4 In short, my client objects to the proposed allocation of SER7 on the basis of its setting and the adverse impact it would have on the Grade II* Listed St Nicholas Church. SER7 is to the west of the village which is acknowledged as the most sensitive location for development. Para 3.201 of the ASD states that '*development*

must be sensitive to the views of St Nicholas Church particularly from the south west'. RDC has therefore acknowledged that SER7 is sensitive to the views of the church, but is content with simply mitigating this through design alone. At best this would result in single storey dwellings because it is clear that any building higher would substantially obstruct views towards the lower half of the church, leaving just the spire in eyeshot. The SER7 policy wording does not, however, restrict building height and if adopted it is anticipated that two storey dwellings would be constructed.

- 2.5 In the context of the above, it is also worth noting that the church is illuminated at night. The following sets out why the proposed allocation of SER7 would not be in conformity with the RDC Adopted Core Strategy (ACS) and the NPPF.

Compliance with the Core Strategy

- 2.6 Chapter 3 of the ACS (page 32) sets out the 'vision' for Rochford and 'Special qualities of the district' are described. Paragraph 3.2 states that *'Whilst it is within easy reach of key economic hubs, the District retains its rural character, with the vast majority of it Greenfield, Green Belt land encompassing numerous local, national and international sites of nature conservation importance. As such the landscape of the District is rich in biodiversity, heritage and natural beauty.'* One of the key 'heritage' assets in the district is the St Nicholas Church in Canewdon.
- 2.7 Chapter 5 (page 61) sets out the vision and strategic objectives under the heading 'Character of Place'. For the medium to long term vision, two points are listed in the ACS as follows:
- The District's distinctive character and historical built environment has been retained.
 - New development has been implemented which contributes positively towards the built environment.
- 2.8 Furthermore, strategic objective 1 is to ensure that new development respects and make a positive contribution to the built environment and strategic objective 2 is to support and enhance the local built heritage. My client considers the medium and long term vision would be severely impacted if SER7 were allocated and clearly the quoted objectives would not be met and the plan would therefore fail.

Compliance with the NPPF

- 2.9 Para 17 of the NPPF sets out key principles and overarching roles that the planning system should play. The NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles which should underpin both **plan-making** and decision-taking. Principle 10 states that planning should:

*"conserve **heritage assets** in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*

- 2.10 It is clear, therefore, that conserving heritage assess should be a key objective for RDC when plan making. Section 12, para 126 states that:

*"Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a **positive strategy for the conservation** and enjoyment of the historic environment, including **heritage assets** most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that **heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance**. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*

- the desirability of **sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets** and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that **conservation of the historic environment** can bring;*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to **local character and distinctiveness**; and*
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the **historic environment to the character of a place**."*

2.11 We consider that the allocation of SER7 would not confirm with any element of para 126 of the NPPF.

2.12 Para 129 states that:

*"local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any **heritage asset** that may be affected by a proposal (including by **development affecting the setting of a heritage asset**) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

2.13 Again we do not consider that in preparing the ASD, the council has taken into account the impact of SER7 on the church, or drawn on available evidence and expertise. Instead RDC appear more concerned with the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst the latter point is of course a major planning consideration, it must be weighed up in tandem with the adverse impact on heritage assets.

2.14 It is also worth drawing on Para 132 which states that:

*"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated **heritage asset**, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, **grade I and II* listed buildings**, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

- 2.15 In allocating SER7 it is my client's case that weight has not been given to heritage asset conservation. Indeed we consider that significant harm to a grade II* listed building will occur and the views to and from this key heritage asset will be adversely disrupted and lost forever.
- 2.16 We note that English Heritage has raised a strong objection to SE7 and they consider that development to the west of Canewdon will impact on the setting and distinctiveness of the church. As mentioned above, RDC has not drawn on available evidence and expertise, yet they have ignored the concerns of the statutory authority charged with commenting on development that could impact on important heritage assets.
- 2.17 We urge the Inspector to consider this element of our representation in tandem with English Heritage as well as undertaking a detailed site visit from all relevant directions and views.

iii) Is the allocation contrary to the Policy H2 of the Core Strategy which refers to 'South Canewdon' whereas at least part of the site lies to the west?

- 2.18 The RDC Core Strategy was adopted in December 2011 and although a challenge to its content was made by the third party in spring 2012, the document was found sound.
- 2.19 Policy H2 'Extensions to residential envelopes' (page 37) identifies 'land to the south of Canewdon' as being suitable for 60 homes for delivery between 2015 – 2021. The supporting Proposals Map Key Diagram (page 172) shows a purple triangle again located to the south of the village. It is assumed for presentational purposes the triangle has been shown slightly to the west because if it were directly south it would cover the whole of the village and this would have no doubt caused undue concern about the scale and location of future development. The accompanying wording is however clear as to the direction of growth.
- 2.20 The proposed allocation at SER7 is to the west of Canewdon and does not therefore adhere to policy H2 which clearly states that the location of 60 units would be in 'South Canewdon'.

- 2.21 Furthermore, it is of note that sites to the east of Canewdon were dismissed at an early stage of the plan making process in part for not being 'south of Canewdon'. This is a clear inconsistency in the decision making process undertaken by RDC.

iv) If Site SER7 is found unsound, would option SC1 (Representation 28760) be sound?

- 2.22 Site SC1 represents an excellent opportunity to deliver all 60 dwellings and associated infrastructure as required by the ACS. The site is in single ownership and is wholly deliverable. We note that SER7 is not in single ownership and separate representations appear to have been submitted by the parties promoting their various elements of SER7. Whilst we are not party to the landowner discussions, we question the deliverability of the site as a whole and suggest that at best piecemeal development in separate planning applications will occur. We also note the current proposal is for 66 units and could increase due to the minimal green belt boundary shown on the illustrative plan.

SC1 Site Suitability

- 2.23 An illustrative masterplan has been prepared by JCN architects (**Appendix 2**). The masterplan layout demonstrates that the dwellings could be located in defined residential parcels with a substantial planting plan along the southern boundary (minimum of 20m dept). A new frontage onto to Anchor Way would be constructed allowing for a main vehicle access into the development.

Landscape and the Green Belt

- 2.24 SC1 is wholly suitable for development and is large enough to offer land for green spaces and sufficient landscaping to mitigate the impact of development within the wider Green Belt setting. Furthermore, development of SC1 will create a direct link with the existing village and the site could connect directly into the existing public footpath that runs north-south via a new footpath across my clients land.
- 2.25 Open Spaces Landscape and Arboricultural Consultants Ltd prepared a landscape visual assessment in 2010 (**Appendix 3**) which assessed the broad area of land to the south of Canewdon in line with the emerging Core Strategy. Canewdon is set on a hill at a height of 42 metres AOD and this factor coupled with the setting of a grade II* listed building means landscape design is extremely important.

- 2.26 With respect to the impact on existing vegetation and views, SC1 is considered to have 'minimal' impact on the surroundings due to the open 'prairie' style of the existing site allowing ample scope for development without the need to encroach on the boundary vegetation. The hedgerows adjacent to Scotts Hall Road and Anchor Lane could be retained in their entirety whilst allowing vehicle and pedestrian access onto the land and retaining clear views over the countryside and beyond. When viewed from the south and east any development in this parcel would have a minimal visual impact.
- 2.27 It is of note that the Discussions and Option Document explicitly stated that SC1 'would afford opportunities for the creation of a defensible green belt boundary.' We are therefore surprised that the council later discounted SC1 on the basis it could not provide a defensible boundary.
- 2.28 In respect of SER7 (ref SC3 and SC4 in the Visual Assessment) it is concluded that views towards the village and historic church would be interrupted when viewed from the approach and surrounding roads (Scotts Hall Road, Apton Hall Road, Stambridge Road and Larks Hill Road). Carrying out a proposed development over two sites intersected with an existing lane would cause far more visual disruption from existing views than any other option whilst limiting the ability to screen, due to a restriction of space, to allow new views and landscape buffer zones to be formed.
- 2.29 The submitted layout proposal for SER7 shows development stretching half way up the field on the west. The promoters suggest this would allow views of the church, but we do not agree with this statement. Representations submitted also state a strong defensible Green Belt boundary could be incorporated to the west, but in delivering this element (and screening the proposed housing), the result would be that the church is also screened.

Flood Risk

- 2.30 SC1 is wholly located in Flood zone 1 (1 in 1000 chance of flooding).

Ecology

- 2.31 SC1 is currently in agricultural use and is farmed by Mr Stacey. There are no ponds on the site and following an initial walk over assessment, no protected habitats have been identified. A Phase I Ecology Assessment would, however, be undertaken as part of any future planning application.

Archaeology

- 2.32 There are no designated archaeological assets (scheduled monuments) on the site or nearby. There are no Registered Parks & Gardens that are relevant and the site does not fall within a defined area of archaeological interest or conservation area. An Archaeological Assessment would be undertaken as part of any future planning application.

Sustainable Development and Energy Consumption

- 2.33 Any residential proposal on the proposed development site would follow key sustainable development and energy consumption:
- A mix of housing types and tenure, catering to the needs of individuals of different ages, backgrounds and family situations.
 - All dwellings designed to Lifetime Homes standards, providing adaptability and flexibility and reducing the need for residents to move on should their needs change.
 - Attractive and direct links to direct pedestrian routes into the settlement centre, reducing reliance on travel by car.
 - Buildings, streets and spaces arranged in a layout that maximises benefit from solar gain (all housing could all be south facing) – allowing amenity spaces, gardens and buildings to enjoy direct sunlight on sunny days.
 - Surface water drainage by way of a SuDS network, ensuring no increased pressure on local infrastructure and catering for times of unusually heavy rainfall by providing areas for water storage on site.

- Introduction of a diversely planted landscape, offering increased bio-diversity, a significant number of new trees, and attractive spaces for residents and visitors to use and enjoy. Children's play space would also be incorporated in line with RDC standards.

(Note: My client is currently in discussion with the Woodland Creation Project Officer at the Woodland Trust regarding new planting that could be established long before any residential dwellings are built)

- Design and construction of dwellings to achieve the prevailing Code for Sustainable Homes.

Allotments

- 2.34 We understand from initial discussions with the parish council that the existing allotments in Canewdon are at capacity and there is a waiting list. My client is therefore willing to provide allotments on SC1 and would be happy for appropriate wording to be included within any proposed policy.

Infrastructure and Public benefits

- 2.35 If SC1 were developed for residential development my client has confirmed that all statutory obligations in terms of affordable housing and public contributions would be met. The site is in single ownership and free from abnormal costs. My client is also in discussions with Canewdon Parish Council regarding a potential contribution towards the new Canewdon Community Centre. This is a long standing ambition of the parish, although fundraising to date has only raised approximately 50% of the costs.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 In short, the wrong site has been chosen by RSD and the ASD is currently unsound. The allocation of SER7 would be against the principles of the NPPF and the adopted Core Strategy. The allocation of SER7 would impact on the openness of the Green Belt as well as the heritage setting of the Grade II* listed St Nicholas Church.
- 3.2 SER7 is split into two areas either side of the Lane. Parcel 1 is to the west and Parcel 2 to the east. It is my clients case that parcel 2 is of least impact on the openness of the GB being located more centrally. However, in developing just this element, 60 units could not be accommodated without developing a high density and thus parcel 2 is required in addition
- 3.3 Parcel 1 and my clients site 'SC1' have a similar impact on the openness of the Green Belt and both would need to demonstrate a new defensible boundary. In developing parcel 2 (which would have a major adverse impact on the setting of the Grade II listed church to the north as well as the setting and character of the village), RDC still require parcel 1 to meet the CS housing requirement (area 2 is not large enough on its own).
- 3.4 As an alternative is for RDC to allocate SC1. This would alleviate heritage issue and although there would be a need to ensure a strong defensible green belt boundary, my client has already demonstrated a minimum of 20m defensible boundary to the south of his site and is willing to increase this to a level that is acceptable with the council. The lack of a defensible green belt is clearly not a reason to disregard SC1.
- 3.5 In summary, SC1 is a single site, in single ownership and can provide a strong and defensible Green Belt Boundary. SC1 does not impact on the setting of the church and there are no technical reasons why the site cannot come forward in a timely manner to meet the councils housing objectives.

APPENDIX 1
SOUTHEND ECHO EXTRACT - 22 JANUARY 2013

Residents demand a rethink on plan to designate site for homes



■ Not here – Shirley Maslanka, Sally Simmons, Sharon Hook, Chris Rooke, Cara Ayers, Raoul Chittenden and Julie Foster are furious over plans the church has to sell off land around the Grade II listed church, inset, so developers can build 60 new homes Pictures: AL UNDERWOOD BA74943_08,03

'No new houses on land by old church'

VILLAGERS are furious over plans to build 60 homes near a historic church.

People living in Canewdon say the new homes will ruin the look of the village and the view around the Grade II* listed St Nicholas Church, built in the 14th century.

Rochford District Council has selected the site nearby as its preferred option for new homes after a lengthy consultation.

This site, owned by the Diocese of Chelmsford, has been named by the council in a planning document which sets out where thousands of homes will be built in the district.

A Government planning inspector will review the document later this year and decide if it is suitable.

Julie Foster, who lives near the proposed site, says she knew the area had been suggested as a place for housing 18 months ago but thought another area, off Scotts Hall Road, would be chosen instead.

She said: "I live next door to the site. My view will be a lot of houses, not the church. I'm gutted."

By EMMA THOMAS
emma.thomas@nqe.com

"We have been here eight years and we never thought they would build on there. It just seems crazy."

Mrs Foster said she wasn't against new development in the area, but she didn't think this was the right place.

She added: "We accept there has to be houses in Canewdon, but there has to be better sites. Why isn't the council listening to anyone?"

Another neighbour, Sharon Hook, added: "We are not pushing any particular bit of land. There are a lot of locations the council is ignoring."

"The church draws people to the village, we have ramblers come from all over just to walk there. It is something people feel passionate about."

However, the council insists it had consulted with local people.

Keith Hudson, Tory councillor responsible for planning, said: "There are houses very near to the church. This development is nowhere near the church, compared to the existing houses."

FACTFILE ON CANEWDON

- The 14th-century parish church of St Nicholas on the village High Street stands on a ridge overlooking the River Crouch. Its impressive 15th-century tower, a landmark for many miles, is said to have been built by Henry V after his victory at the Battle of Agincourt in France.

- During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the tower was used as a navigation point along the River Crouch. During the First World War, it was used for observation and signalling.

- There is much superstition surrounding the village.

- George Pickingill (1816-1909) who lived in the village during the late 19th century, was said to practice a combination of Danish paganism, Arabic mysticism, Christian heresy and French witchcraft. He apparently called witches for a meet near St Nicholas church with a wooden whistle.

- Local legend says there will always be at least six witches in the village.

"From previous consultations, the site there was by far the preferred one. There was great concern about building south of the road because if you start there, where does it stop? The road is a buffer."

A spokesman for Chelmsford Diocese said: "Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance is entering into an option with Essex-based housebuilders Knights that gives them the obli-

gation to promote the planning of, and on obtaining a consent the right to buy, one of three sites in Canewdon.

"This would be a sensitive development that would not affect views. It would include green space."

People are invited to have their say on the plans until Friday, January 25.

For more information, go to www.rochford.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 2
JCN ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



Design notes:-

The design objective is to create a new development that will bind and integrate into the existing village edge.

The proposed development area slopes from north to south. Existing development extending north ward up the slope to the main village will retain existing views south over the site. Variation in roof and landscaping heights will feather the edge of the development along the southern boundary.

The site creates 2 opportunities to form definable spaces. The first to western cross roads and the second to the site entrance.

A feature building will form a navigational node / landmark building and the inter section view point from the north and west.

The character of the development is to be traditional Essex design guide style. Mainly continuous built form with on plot parking / on street parking.

- Illustrative landscaping
- Key building / focal point
- View point
- Views out of the development
- Proposed extent of the build form with storey heights varying from 1 to 2.5 storey's. Roof line to pepper potted with chimneys



Project:-
**Land off Anchor Lane
Canewdon,
Essex**

Description:-
**Proposed development
concept layout**

2 Exchange Court,
London Road,
Feering
Colchester,
Essex,
CO5 9FB

Scale:-
1-1250 @ A3

Date:-
Sept 2009

Rev:-
A

APPENDIX 3

VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Visual Assessment
in relation to land
situated south of Canewdon
Essex

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Date: April 2010

Ref: OS 108.IB

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Purpose of Report

This report has been prepared to visually assess the land of South Canewdon in relation to Rochford District Council's Core Strategy and their Allocations DPD document. A development comprising of 60 housing units with associated infrastructure and soft landscaping has been identified as being suitable for this location. The visual impact of any development will also be assessed with additional mitigation to support the preferred location with suitable landscaping.

Location

The village of Canewdon lies south of the Crouch estuary within the District of Rochford, Essex. The town of Rochford lies approximately 4 miles to the south-west with Southend-on-Sea approximately 8 miles to the south, see Figure. 1.

The whole of the land identified within the Allocations DPD document (Option SC 1-4) and subject to this assessment lies to the south of the village and is outlined in red (Figure 2). Additional options (Area A and B) are also considered and are outlined in blue and yellow (see Figure 4 - 8 for precise locations of all options and areas).

Topography

Canewdon is built on one of the highest hills on the Essex coastline, with the highest point being 42 m above sea level.

The surrounding land slopes away from the village towards the Crouch estuary to the north and towards Southend-on-Sea to the south. Many views from the village are far-reaching, therefore it is imperative that any development is accompanied with strategic planting to allow it to fully integrate with the surrounding landscape. (see Image 5).

To the east of the village lies the reclaimed land between the Crouch and Roach estuaries, terminating in the RSPB wildlife and wetland reserve at Wallasea Island.

The land identified within the core strategy lies mainly to the south of Anchor Lane and to the north of Lark Hill Road. Land to the north of Lark Hill Road and to the western part of Anchor Lane rises substantially towards St. Nicholas Church.

Land to the south of Anchor lane falls away to the south of the village with an initial drop of approximately 0.5 m from road to field level adjacent to 'Option SC1'. Towards Gardiners Lane (Area B), this drop is more pronounced and is in the region of 1.5 m between road and field level which physically segregates this parcel of land with the adjacent village.

There is no evidence of drainage ditches on the land adjacent to Anchor Lane, however a drainage ditch bisects the overall site running along a north-south axis adjacent to the west of 'Area B'.

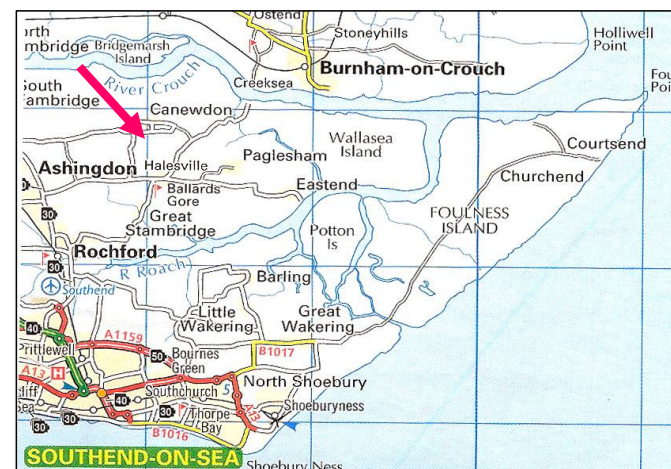


Figure 1. Location Plan, Canewdon in relation to Rochford and Southend-on-Sea

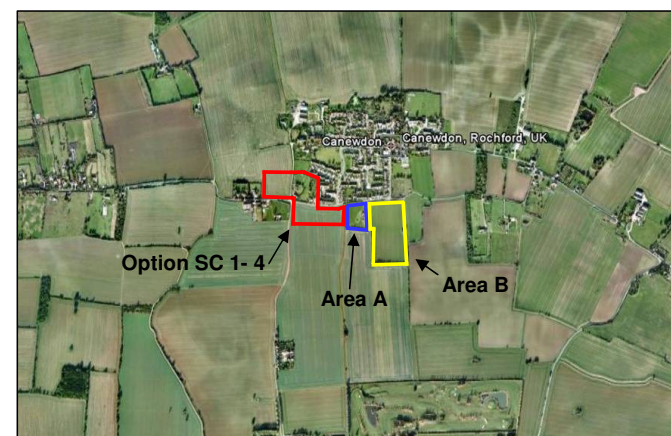


Figure 2. Extent of South Canewdon Options 'SC1-4'. (outlined in red). Additional options outlined in blue and yellow.

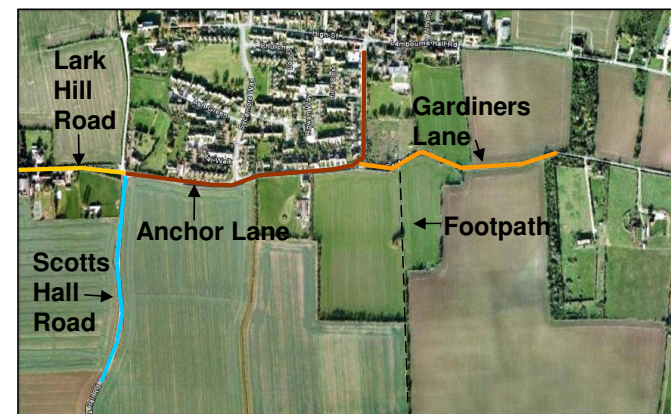


Figure 3. Road names adjacent to the land identified as suitable for development

Locations of Options

Options identified within 'Local Development Framework Allocations DPD – Discussion and Consultation Document' are set out within Figure 4-7 with additional land areas shown in Figure 8.



Figure 4. Option SC 1: Land to the south of Anchor Lane.



Figure 5. Option SC 2: Land to the north of Lark Hill Road.



Figure 6. Option SC 3: Land to the north of Lark Hill Road and Anchor lane.



Figure 7. Option SC 4: Land to the north of Lark Hill Road and to the north and south of Anchor Lane.

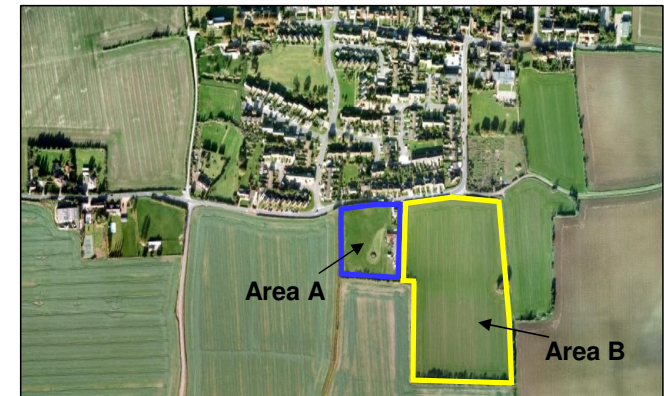


Figure 8. Area A and B: Land to the south of Anchor Lane.

Cultural Heritage and Land Use

The parish of Canewdon extends along a predominantly east-west axis and bordering the southern bank of the River Crouch.

The earliest occupation has been dated to Neolithic times (4,000-2,000 BC) attracted by the topography of the land and its close proximity to the sea. The name 'Canewdon' dates back to Saxon times (around 600AD). There are significant historical associations with King Canute, and it is believed he set up his encampment on nearby land prior to his victorious battle with Edmund Ironsides in 1016.

The village of Canewdon originated around the site of the existing church (see Image 1) before enlarging to what is now known as the High Street (see Image 2). The church is sited at the highest point of the ridge and is a skyline focal point, see image 3 for view from Gt. Stambridge, approximately 1.5 miles to the south of Canewdon.

The surrounding landscape is predominantly arable farmland. Modernisation of farming practices have dramatically altered this landscape and resulted in many large 'prairie' style fields. There remain, however, evidence of the more traditional field structure adjacent to Anchor lane and west of Gardiners Lane. These traditionally sized fields are still bound with mature field hedgerows. (See Figure 4).

Canewdon today contains two village shops, a Primary School and two public houses. Within the village are two Conservation Areas, one taking in the majority of the High Street (see Image 2) and the other centred on the historical Church.

The main village settlement is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt, with Coastal Protection Belt designation to the west and north.



Image 1. St Nicholas Church, Canewdon.



Image 2. View of High Street, Canewdon.



Image 3. View from Gt. Stambridge.

Existing Vegetation

There is little in the way of existing vegetation within or adjacent to the land identified within the core strategy, refer to Figure 9 for positions of existing field hedges.

Option SC 1

Managed, mature, elm field hedges growing adjacent to the eastern half of the boundary with Anchor Lane and the northern section of its boundary with Scotts Hall Lane. Along the eastern boundary and growing within 'Area A', is an unmanaged field hedge. The field is presently used for arable crops.

Option SC 2

A 2 m high elm hedge is growing adjacent to the southern boundary of the arable field with a 1.2 m high elm hedge growing adjacent to the eastern boundary.

Option SC 3

Mature elm hedging is growing along the southern boundary of the arable field with sporadic, ornamental shrubs/hedging growing to the south of and adjacent to the residential property bounding Anchor Lane. The lane leading to the church is bound on its west side with a 1.2 m high mature elm hedge and a 2-3 m high mixed hedge along its eastern boundary. The area surrounding the residential property include mature ornamental gardens and garden paddocks.

Option SC 4

This Option is divided between three sites, refer to Option CS 1-3 for comments on existing vegetation.

Area A

Bounded on each side with an unmanaged, mature field hedge, approximately 3-5 m high and predominantly elm, which reinforces the traditional field pattern and gives this parcel of land a unique character within the surrounding 'prairie' style fields.

Area B

Bounded along its north, west and eastern boundaries with unmanaged, mature field hedges, predominantly elm, approximately 3-5m high, with a small opening at the junction of Church Lane with Gardiners Lane. A 3-5 m high, unmanaged elm field hedge borders the southern half of the eastern boundary, adjacent to the public footpath, whilst a small group of poorly maintained willow trees surrounding a dried up pond, is also located along this boundary.

There are no trees within the land identified for development other than the willow trees growing adjacent to the public footpath (Area B).

Existing Vegetation - Views



Image 4. Existing housing adjacent to Anchor Lane with field hedge along site boundary.



Image 5. View over location of Option SC 1 towards the south.



Image 6. View to willow tree copse surrounding a dried up pond.



Image 7. Extent of open field systems adjacent to the village, from Scotts Hall Road.



Image 8. Field hedgerow adjacent to Scotts Hall Road.



Image 9. Junction of Anchor Lane with Scotts Hall Road.



Figure 9. Aerial view showing location of hedgerows (shown in green) and direction from which images were taken. (Numbers refer to image numbers).

Existing Vegetation - Views



Image 10: View from the junction of Lark Hill Road and Anchor Lane looking north and showing the mixed vegetation to the western boundary of the residential property and the eastern boundary of the arable field 'Option SC 3-4'.

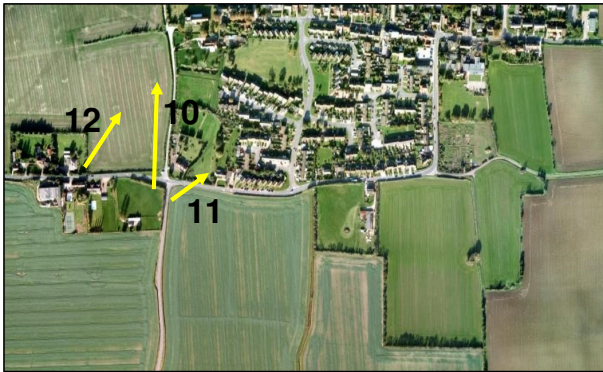


Figure 10. Aerial view showing location and direction from which images were taken. (Numbers refer to image numbers).



Image 11: View of ornamental vegetation adjacent to the southern boundary of the residential



Image 12: View from Lark Hill Road towards the church showing the eastern boundary of 'Option SC 2'

Impact on Existing Vegetation and Views

The impact any development would have on the existing vegetation and views are described below but, due to its hill top location, any development occurring on land north of Lark Hill Road and Anchor Lane would impact significantly, on the historical church when viewed from Lark Hill Road, Scotts Hall Road and further afield within the surrounding landscape (see Image 3 and 10).

There would be a large scale impact on the vegetation surrounding Areas A and B due to their limited size, with a substantially greater threat to the boundary vegetation caused by the requirements of the development and associated infrastructure. There would also be a large scale impact on the vegetation of Area A and B if both were to be combined as vehicle access and site lines would require the removal of hedgerow.

Option SC 1

There would be minimal impact on the vegetation and views surrounding Option SC 1 due to the open 'prairie' style of the existing field (see Figure 4) allowing ample scope for development without the need to encroach on the boundary vegetation. The hedgerows adjacent to Scotts Hall Road and Anchor Lane could be retained in their entirety whilst allowing vehicle and pedestrian access onto the land and retaining clear views over the countryside beyond. The hedgerow to the east of this land is within the ownership of land 'Area A' and would be retained. When viewed from the south-east, any development would have minimal visual impact.

There could be an option to move any proposed development further south to leave a landscape buffer zone between the proposed development and Anchor Lane. This would have the dual benefit of retaining additional clear views from Anchor Lane over the surrounding landscape and allowing clear long distant views of the village and church.

Option SC 2

Although the hedgerows to the south and east could be retained as part of any proposed development, important views of the historical church and village edge (see image 10 and 12) would be lost when approaching the village from both Scotts Hall Road and Lark Hill Road.

Option SC 3

As with Option SC 2, the hedgerows to the south and east of the arable field could be retained as part of any proposed development, however, any development within the adjacent residential property will result in the necessity to remove most, if not all, of the internal landscape. Any development will interrupt views of the historical church and village edge (see Image 10 and 12) when approaching the village from both Scotts Hall Road and Lark Hill Road and when viewing the village from the south.

Impact on Existing Vegetation and Views

Option SC 4

As with Option SC 2 and SC 3; the view towards the village and historic church would be interrupted when viewed from the village approach roads (Scotts Hall Road and Lark Hill Road) as well as from the land further to the south. Carrying out a proposed development over three sites would disrupt far more existing views than any other option whilst limiting the ability, due to restriction of space, to allow new views and landscape buffer zones to be formed.

Area A

This traditionally sized field is surrounded on all sides with mature but unmanaged field hedges. Although there is an existing vehicle access off Anchor lane which would not require the loss of any hedgerow along this frontage, any development of or approaching 60 units would create undue pressure requiring the loss of some, if not all of the existing hedgerows adjacent to the western, southern and eastern boundary to allow for garden space, infrastructure and views to the countryside beyond. Any development would be highly visible when viewed from the south-east.

Any development within this area of land would result in the loss of one of the few remaining historical fields with its associated hedgerows.

Area B

Although this field has been enlarged from its original field pattern, it has not reached the size of nearby 'prairie' style fields and its character is more in keeping with the traditional sized fields e.g. 'Area A'

Adjacent to the eastern boundary is a public footpath which is also used as a farm track. Any development which uses this track would affect the integrity of the adjacent hedgerow, it would also be highly visible when viewed from the east and south-east and without suitable screening to the eastern side of the track would ensure that any development within this area becomes highly visible. There would also be a substantial threat to the existing vegetation to the field boundaries which, due to its size, would have limited scope for new plantings.

Anchor Lane is approximately 1.5 m higher than the adjacent field, therefore access onto this area of land from Anchor Lane would require the substantial removal of existing hedgerow to create appropriate vehicle site lines and embankments to support vehicular access.

Conclusion

Rochford District Council's Core Strategy and their Allocations DPD document has identified 'land south of Canewdon' as being suitable for the construction of approximately 60 housing units. This report has assessed the land for its suitability in relation to the visual impact of any development, impact on existing vegetation and potential for new landscaping.

Any development included within Option SC 2, SC 3 and SC 4 will result in existing clear views of the historical church and village core being severely and permanently interrupted when approaching the village from Scotts Hall Lane, Larks Hill Road or when viewed from further afield.

Area A comprises of a small traditional sized field with hedgerows to each boundary. Any development within this area would have a substantial impact on the existing vegetation with little scope for new landscape planting. Development would be highly visible when viewed from the south and south-east.

Area B comprises of an extended field but retains the character of the original field pattern. Although there is more space than land parcel 1 for development, its small size will compromise the retention of the existing vegetation with little scope to include new landscape. Any new development would be highly visible from the west, south and south-east

Option SC 1 is identified as wholly suitable for development within Rochford District Council's Core Strategy and their Allocations DPD document as it is large enough to offer land for green space and sufficient soft landscaping to mitigate the impact of development within the wider landscape. Development within this land option will ensure a sense of community and could directly link with the existing village both visually and structurally. The visual exposure of any development is limited to the south, however, the size of the available land is such that there is potential to design a range of housing and road layouts, together with landscaped areas and views over the surrounding countryside without the constraints associated with smaller acreage layouts. There is also scope to move any proposed development towards the south thereby creating a greater landscaped and potential recreation area adjacent to Anchor Lane.

In conclusion Option SC 1 has been assessed as suitable for development. Refer to Figure 11 for an indicative layout proposal which supports the requirements of Rochford District Council's Core Strategy and their Allocations DPD document and is in keeping with the findings of this assessment.



Figure 11. Indicative layout proposal for Option SC 1

Option SC 1: Proposed Mitigation – Landscape

The existing nature of the site will allow a comprehensive landscape scheme to be included which can offer the sense of connection to both the existing village and wider countryside, whilst limiting the visual impact of the proposed development.

Views over the wider countryside could be retained from within the proposed development site, from the village gateway at the junction of Scotts Hall Road and Anchor Lane and from the existing village. This could be achieved by creating strategic visual corridors through the proposed development site to the countryside beyond or by moving the development towards the south thereby lowering the height of the roof lines and creating clear views across the development to the countryside beyond.

The boundaries of the proposed development site could retain the existing hedgerows but also be reinforced with the strategic placing of indigenous trees. This would offer identity to the development in a generally tree-less landscape as well as creating new wildlife habitats.

The southern boundary of the proposed development could be screened from the countryside beyond with indigenous field hedgerows supported by shelter belts and groups of trees. This boundary could be designed to allow clear views over the surrounding countryside via the visual corridors whilst screening the development when viewed from the southern part of Scotts Hall Lane. Due to the size of this parcel of land, there is ample scope to provide a generous landscape buffer between the proposed development and the countryside.

A green space could be created at the junction between Scotts Hall Road and Anchor Lane. This green space could be landscaped with trees to channel views over the countryside along the visual corridor whilst creating an entrance feature to the village. There would be scope for placing seating or an alternative focal point within this space to further strengthen its identity, and could be designed to incorporate a pathway for pedestrian use.

Within the proposed development there would be ample scope to include high quality landscaping, including the planting of suitably scaled ornamental and indigenous trees. The proposed landscaping could help to channel views along the visual corridors and soften the development when viewed within.

The available space would easily accommodate recreational and play areas, whilst the introduction of footpaths would link directly to the footpath system within the surrounding landscape and provide a direct route for ramblers and residents to access the countryside..

Option SC 1: Proposed Mitigation – Ecology

The completion of a comprehensive landscape scheme would also benefit the ecology of the area, which at present is limited, by positively creating new habitat areas suitable for a range of wildlife. New wildlife habitat areas would include the shelterbelts along the southern boundary and tree groups along the southern and western boundary as well as within the development area.



Figure 12. Option SC 1: indicative landscape detail



Figure 12. Option SC 1: indicative landscape detail

Appendix 1 Location Plan - Images



Figure 13. Aerial view showing location and direction from which images were taken. Image numbers correspond to image numbers shown in this Appendix.



Image 1. Existing housing adjacent to Anchor Lane and opposite proposed development site.



Image 2. Gateway to village – junction of Anchor Lane and Scotts Hall Road.



Image 3. View from Sycamore Way towards Southend-on-Sea (potential visual corridor).



Image 4. View of Scotts Hall Road from junction with Anchor Lane (potential visual corridor).



Image 5. Panoramic view of land south of Canewdon viewed from south to north west, showing extent of prairie style field system.