

# HANDFORTH

## HERITAGE



## Bentley Historic Core, Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal

August 2024

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# 1. Introduction

Handforth Heritage have been asked by Bentley Parish Council to provide a Conservation Area Appraisal for an area of land that encompasses the historic core of the parish of Bentley and its surrounding fields and ancient woodland.

This document provides an overview of the proposed designation of the Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area, outlining its history, special interest along with those buildings and features which contribute to its character. The area proposed to be covered by the conservation area boundary includes eleven listed buildings, six buildings of local significance (identified within the Neighbourhood Plan) and numerous historic properties and landscape features of interest. The proposed designation would recognise all features within the area that form part of its character and would ensure that planning decisions take the enhancement and preservation of the character of the area into consideration as per the requirements of section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The special interest of the Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area is predominantly derived from its connection with the Tollemache family who consolidated four manors at Bentley in the 16th century, enlarging an estate which they had held since at least 1200. This resulted in the development of a relatively large rural settlement of scattered hall houses, farmsteads, cottages, church and associated structures. The key features of interest are outlined below:

- the historic core centred around the grade II\* listed church
- open fields and manorial land
- dispersed farmsteads
- ancient woodland
- High quantum of highly graded manor houses and high-status houses, largely set in their original settings
- Modest railway interventions that have resulted in attractive publicly accessible routes, bridges and cottages.

The quantum of grade I, II\* and II listed buildings in the area, non-designated heritage assets, their relationships with one another, their agricultural landscape and ancient woodland all make positive contributions to the special interest of the area, enhancing its rural character and offering quality examples of vernacular timber framed buildings of varying statuses.

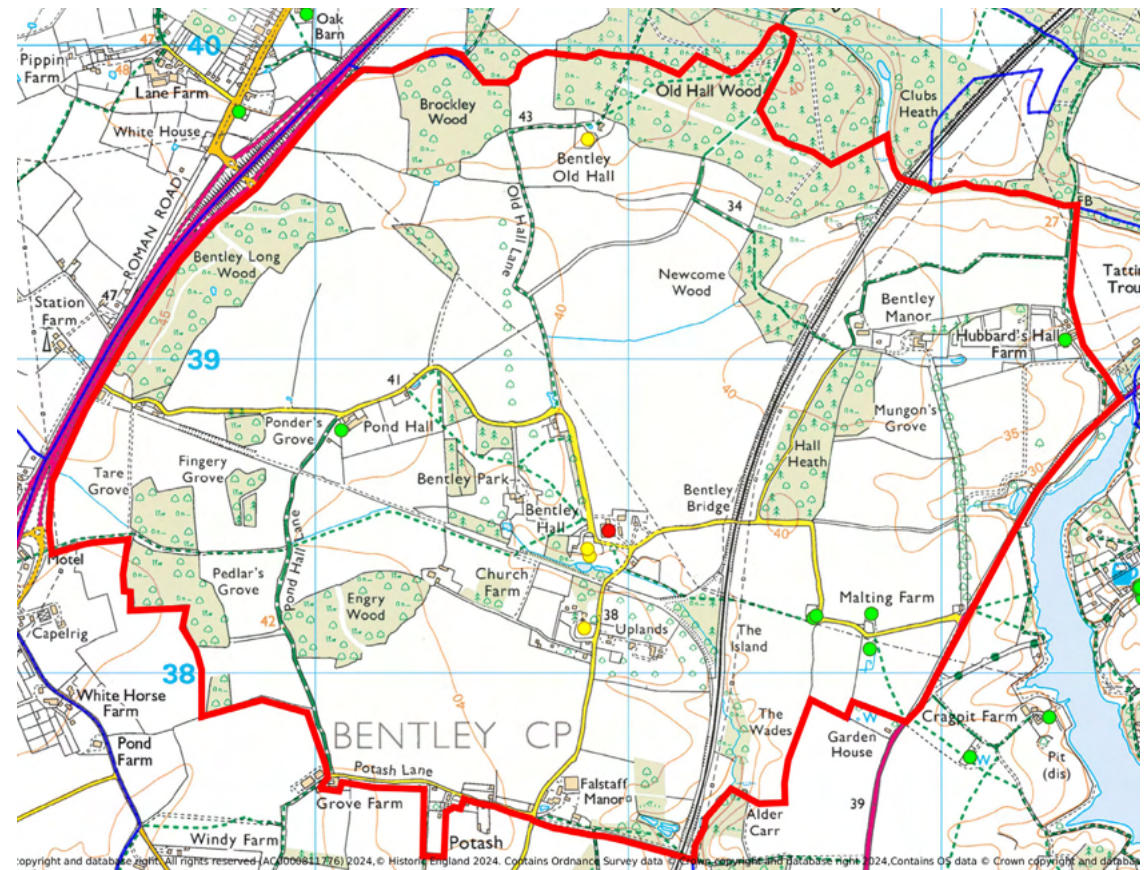


Figure 1 Proposed Conservation Area Boundary, grade I listed buildings highlighted in red, grade II\* in yellow, grade II in green.

# 1. Introduction

This appraisal examines the area under a number of different headings following the guidance set out in Historic England's 2019 *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1*.

The document is not intended to be prescriptive or overly descriptive, but a demonstration of the quality of the area, sufficient to inform the council's decision making process. As the Historic England guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.

The Historic England guidance (2019) states that (*inter alia*):

*New conservation areas or areas that might be suitable as extensions to an existing designated area may be identified in a number of ways, including:*

- *stand-alone studies of particular areas in response to development proposals, pressures for change or new awareness of significance through processes such as local listing.*

It goes on to state that:

*The NPPF cautions local planning authorities to ensure that an area justifies designation as a conservation area because of its special architectural or historic interest, so that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.*

Three of the key considerations highlighted by Historic England are whether the area has:

- a) sufficient architectural or historic interest for the area to be considered 'special'?*
- b) whether this is experienced through its character or appearance? and*
- c) whether it is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, and what problems designation could help to solve.*

The well preserved medieval structures and field patterns are important landscape features which form a fundamental part of the character and appearance of the area. The area retains unique, quiet, intimate, small-scale rural qualities, characterised by fields, many of which are accessible via public footpaths/bridleways and often bounded

by tall hedgerows and mature trees.

## 2. Legal and Planning Policy Context

The legislative framework relating to conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of this Act imposes a continuing duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Part 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

The proposed Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area is located within the wider district of Babergh. Local planning policy is set out in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (November 2023).

Relevant Policies within the Local Plan are:

- SP09 –Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- LP15- Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP19- The Historic Environment
- LP23 - Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 - Design and Residential Amenity

In addition to the Local Plan, the Bentley Neighbourhood Plan is a “community-led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration, and conservation” of Bentley and was adopted in December 2022. The following policies are relevant to this assessment:

- Policy BEN 11 – Heritage Assets
- Policy BEN 12 – Buildings of Local Significance



## 4. Origins and Evolution

Historic England's advice note on *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* states that:

*Although the understanding of an area's special historic interest is an important component of an appraisal, this should not require a detailed account of the area's history. Rather the appraisal should focus on setting out what makes the area special and the impact of its history on its current character and appearance.*

Outlined below therefore is a brief overview of the historical evolution of the area. Further elements of historic interest will be drawn out, where relevant, in later sections of this document.

According to The Institute for Name-Studies, Bentley refers to a 'woodland clearing where bent-grass grows'. There are references to Bentley within the Domesday Book of 1086, with multiple references to different landowners owning agricultural plots and deer park, suggesting that the parish was divided up at this point into at least four manors. Bentley is recorded as being located within the hundred of Samford and the county of Suffolk and is documented as having a population of 18 households.

The most important familial tie to the area comes with the Tollemaches, who are first recorded in manorial records in the first-half of the 13th century. It is possible that their seat was at the grade II\* listed Bentley Old Hall (itself being described as 'old' in a 1613 document and believed to date to the 13th century). The only building older than this, and likely the earliest in the parish, is the Church of St Mary, whose existing nave has 12th century origins.

By the end of the Middle Ages, the majority of the parish was in the hands of four landowners, the Tollemaches to the north, Fastolfs to the east, Priory of the Holy Trinity, Ipswich to the west and St Mary Dodnash Priory to the south. By the 16th century however, all four estates fell under the ownership of the Tollemache family thanks to the Dissolution and their close Royal connections. It is around this time that a number of new structures were built in the area, many of which survive today, dating to the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, including the grade II\* listed Bentley Hall, Meeting Hall (grade II\*) and Bentley Hall Barn (grade I).

In 1610, Anne Tollemache, sister of the then head of the Tollemache family, married Robert Gosnold V of Otley, elder brother of Anthony Gosnold, who had sailed to Virginia in 1607 with the pioneering mission led by his cousin Captain Bartholomew

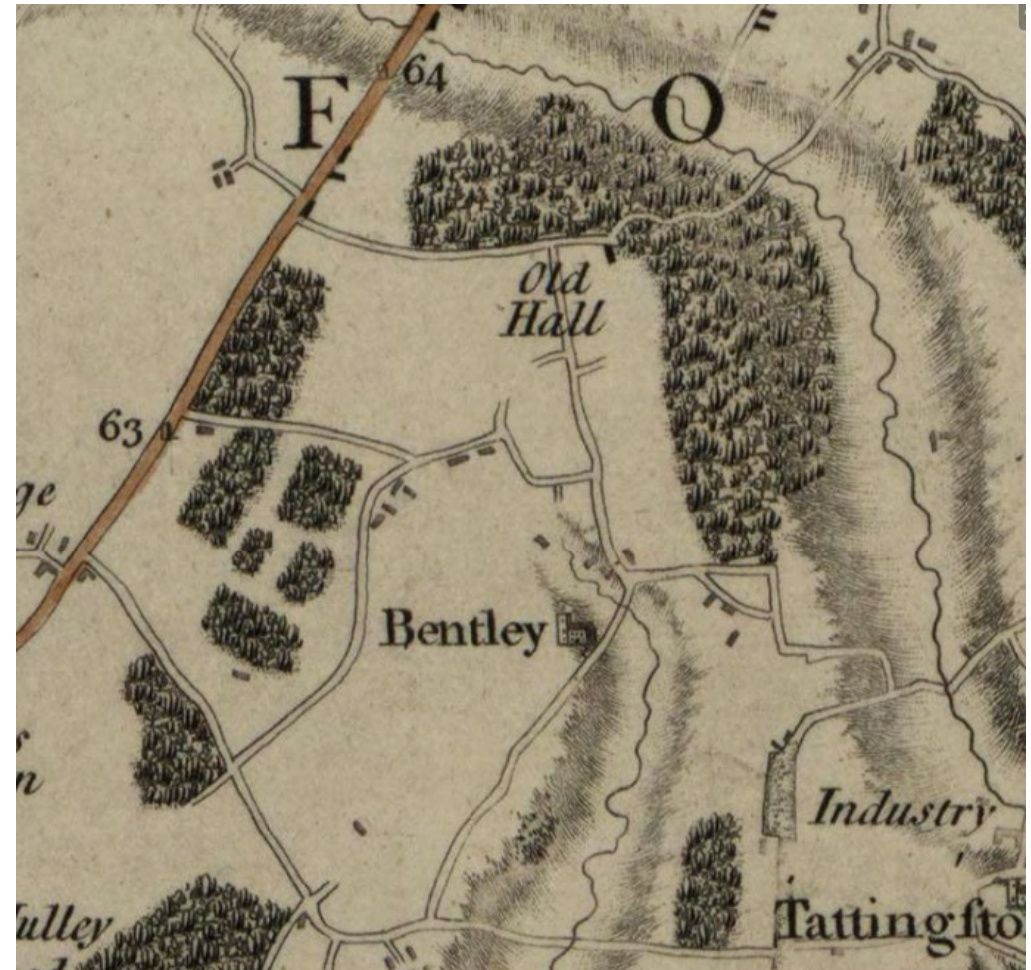


Figure 3 1783 map depicting the county of Suffolk by Joseph Hodkinson and William Faden.

## 4. Origins and Evolution

Gosnold and Captain John Smith, the founding fathers of Virginia and ultimately the United States of America. During the first half of the 17th century, the extended Gosnold family settled in large numbers at Bentley. Anthony Gosnold was the only member of his family to survive the difficult years following the foundation of Jamestown. He returned from Virginia in the 1620s to claim a legacy from his grandfather Robert Gosnold III and married his cousin Beatrix Carrell at Bentley in 1635, where he too settled. Several of their children were baptised at St Mary's and Anthony's aunt Elizabeth Gosnold, with whom the couple lived, was buried prominently on the north side of the chancel of the Church.

Two of the earliest maps to show the area in any detail are Hodkinson and Faden's of 1783 and Verron's of 1796. Both depict a number of structures along Church Road leading up to Old Hall and other scattered dwellings, many of which are still present today. The road layout as seen today has largely been laid out by this point and many of the ancient woods are recorded. Shortly after this, in 1805, the 'Mudge' map was produced which shows extra detail, including Enry Wood, which appears to have been omitted on the earlier maps. It was around this time that the common field farming system was replaced as a result of the enclosure movement which led to the creation of larger, planned fields with relatively straight boundaries.



Figure 4 1796 Verron map providing an early glimpse into the layout of the area.



Figure 5 1805 'Mudge' map of Kent, providing an early glimpse into the layout of the area.



## 4. Origins and Evolution

The next cartographic record that shows the area in any reliable detail comes with the 1838 tithe map. Here a number of the ancient woodlands, including Old Hall Wood, Brockley Wood, Bentley Long Wood, Newcombe Wood, Mungon's Grove, Hall Heath, Engry Wood, Pedlar's Grove, Tare Grove, Ponder's Grove and Fingery Grove are all visible. In addition to this, the field layouts, road network and majority of structures all remain largely intact today with only a handful of later structures changing the appearance of the area, several of which date to the Victorian/Edwardian period and are of interest in their own right. What is remarkable is that many field names remain unchanged from those found in the 1613 Tollemache Survey of their Bentley Estate. Figure 6 shows a clean version of the tithe map and figure 7 includes annotations of features that survive to this day.

The only major changes that came to the area were the construction of the railway line along the east which runs north-south and the Bentley Hadleigh Line which ran east-west. Whilst this latter railway line was eventually dismantled, evidence of its existence remains in the landscape in the form of a linear wooded footpath along with built fabric including the Crossing Cottage and worker's cottages towards the west of the area

Figure 8 depicts the 1881 OS map, and is annotated to provide an indicative overview of the dates of historic buildings within the area. What is of note here is that a high number of buildings are believed to be 16th century or earlier. Of even greater interest is the fact that many of the buildings in the area may be even older than indicated and would benefit from internal inspections to provide further evidence.

The map, drawn some forty years after the tithe map also shows the relatively limited number of changes that have occurred to the area in terms of new buildings. The most noticeable change here is the construction of the railway cutting to the east, whose design helped it to successfully integrate with the historic landscape with minimal physical impact 'on the ground'. The Bentley-Hadleigh branch line is also visible here, which had a relatively short life, and now operates as a public footpath through the area.



Figure 6 1838 tithe map. Note the landscape and buildings visible here are very similar to the area's current appearance.

## 4. Origins and Evolution

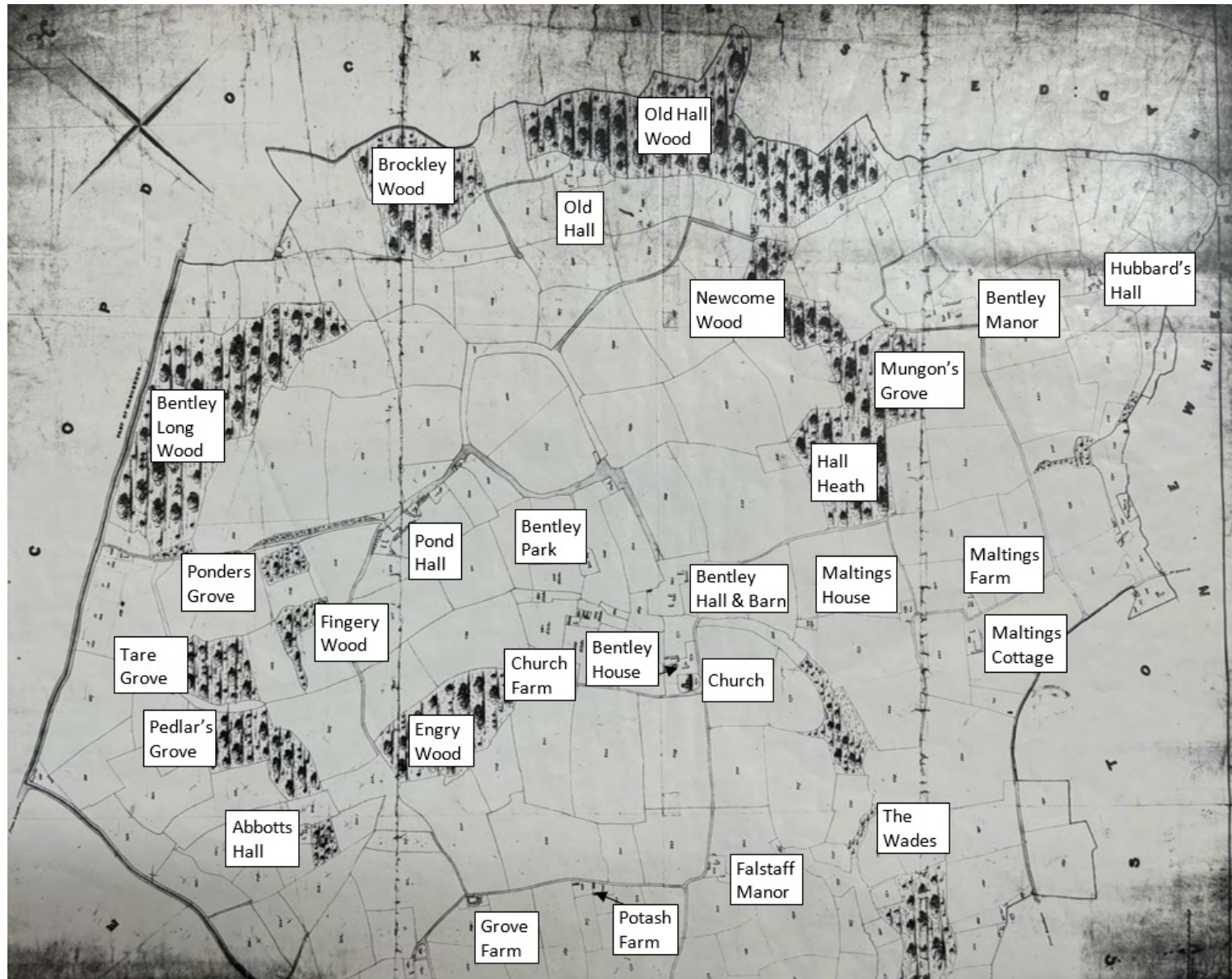


Figure 7 1838 annotated tithe map showing high quantum of surviving historic features in the area when compared to today.



## 4. Origins and Evolution

Outlined below are historic images of Hubbard's Hall and Bentley Hall Barn, two extant structures whose medieval origins are still clearly evident today, especially the Barn, which is on Historic England's Buildings at Risk Register.



Figure 9 1968 photograph showing Hubbard's Hall (AA88/1524 NMR).



Figure 10 1950 photograph showing Bentley Hall Barn (AA50/6757 NMR).

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

This section identifies both designated and non-designated heritage assets within the area, along with other features of historic and/or architectural interest including previously unrecorded buildings and landscape features.

### Designated Heritage Assets

The proposed conservation area features eleven listed buildings, including one grade I, four Grade II\* and six grade II listed buildings. An inventory of these structures can be found in appendix 2.

### Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews.

In some cases, local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications. There is currently no adopted list of buildings of local historical and/or architectural interest that covers the Bentley area. However, the Neighbourhood Plan has identified six Buildings of Local Significance which, in NPPF terms would be considered to be non-designated heritage assets. The Suffolk Historic Environment Record also records a number of buildings of interest. In addition to this, on-site analysis has identified several other buildings that have yet to be identified as non-designated heritage assets, but are proposed to be as part of this assessment due to the positive impact they have on the area. A list of these buildings is outlined in appendix 3.

These buildings have been identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival. Other buildings within the proposed conservation area may also be identified in the future as non-designated heritage assets, during the decision-making process on planning applications.

Outlined overleaf is a numbered map showing all designated, non-designated structures and features within the boundary of the proposed conservation area of interest, followed by correlating descriptions.



Plate 1 Hall Barn, an example of a grade I listed designated heritage asset within the area.



Plate 2 Park Cottage, an example of a non-designated heritage asset within the area.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

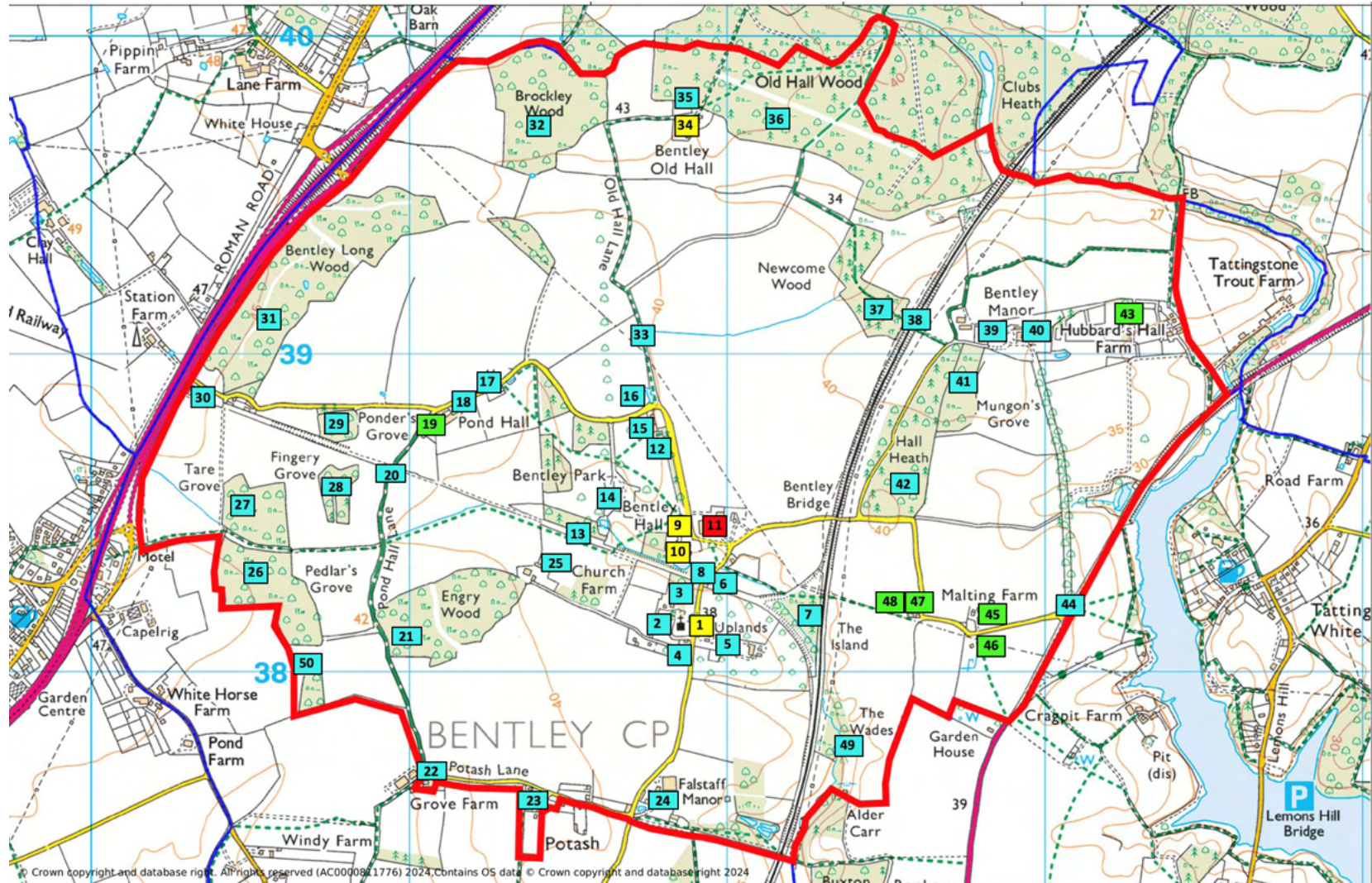


Figure 11 Outlined above are architectural and landscape features of interest within the proposed conservation area boundary. Red denotes Grade I listed buildings, Yellow, Grade II\*, Green, Grade II and other historic features of interest are highlighted in blue.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

Cross referencing figure 11, outlined below is an overview of the features of architectural or historic interest within the conservation area, followed by a series of photographs.

1. St Mary's Church, Grade II\* Listed, earliest building within the area, dating to the 12th century and the family church of the early Tollemaches. The building is located in a highly tranquil and agrarian setting, but much of it is now screened by mature vegetation and dense hedgerows. It is of significance for its exceptional historic and architectural interest and is the oldest recorded building within the parish. The tower of the structure is also visible throughout many parts of the proposed area reflecting its importance.

2. Historic (closed) Churchyard with many early memorials to the Gosnall and Whimper families and (open) Churchyard opposite (including Commonwealth war graves). These spaces allow the church to be appreciated and form part of its attractive, quiet setting.

3. Bentley House, formerly Bentley Church House, the manor house of the Manor of that name. The structure features a medieval core with 18th and 19th century additions. The structure is not listed but is of both architectural and historic interest and sits within a historic and mature landscaped setting.

4. Hope Lodge, red brick lodge louse to Bentley Church House. The building is a good Victorian example of a lodge with its attractive pitched roof form with timber bargeboard and decorative chimney stack making a positive impact on the conservation area.

5. Uplands Fruit Farm, Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan) is a contemporary house designed by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects in 2004-2005, with landscaped garden including croquet pavilion on an historic plot. This building is not appreciable from the public realm, but does continue the 'manor house' typology insofar as it is a considerable detached house set within ample landscaped gardens. Its architectural significance is reflective in it winning a number of RIBA awards.

6. Crossing Cottage. This 19th century cottage was constructed for railway workers keeping watch on the crossing of the Bentley-Hadleigh branch line. The building is single storey in red brick with gault brick dressings. It retains much of its original character with curved headed sash windows with side lights. Its relationship with its historic function is still legible through the retention of part of the branch line for a

public footpath.

7. The Island. A 19th century, railway engineering works which created a three-way junction, set amongst woodland trees.

8. Stream and medieval fishponds below Bentley Hall. These elements formed part of the medieval landscape and are intrinsic parts of the setting of the Hall. Public views of the features are possible from Church Road.

9. Bentley Hall, Grade II\* Listed. The Hall was the seat of the Tollemache family from 15th century and manor house of the Manor of that name. The hall complex is one of the most architecturally and historically significant parts of the conservation area. Historically the Hall had functional links with both the Meeting Hall to the south and Barn to the northeast. The latter has now been separated through ownership and the construction of a road.

10. Bentley Hall Stables/Meeting Hall, Grade II\* Listed. Intrinsically linked as an ancillary structure with Bentley Hall but of great architectural and historic interest in its own right as reflected in its high designation.

11. Bentley Hall Barn, Grade I Listed. The barn dates to the 15th century and is described within the list description as *amongst the largest and most impressive Tudor structures in Britain and, although masonry barns of comparable scale survive, it may be the longest timber-framed barn of the period in the country*. The building has been on Historic England's Building at Risk Register for 20 years (Risk Entry No. 1351965) and its condition is described as 'very bad'.

12. Obscured original Lime Avenue to Bentley Hall. The historic maps (figure 12) clearly show that historically there was a lime tree avenue running from the north which overtime has been eroded through later planting and suckering elms.

13. Footpath along the disused Bentley-Hadleigh branch line, fringed with oak trees. This footpath is not only a tangible reminder of the path of the former branch line, it also allows for views across the wider landscape.

14. Bentley Park and Park Cottage (with Medieval core). Historic maps show this building to be a more modest structure than its manorial neighbours although it was substantially altered and extended in 19th century by the Gosnall & Turner families. Much of its historic parkland survives to this day.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form



Plate 3 View of St Mary's Church from within its churchyard.



Plate 4 Churchyard to the eastern side of Church Road opposite the St Mary's church.



Plate 5 Bentley Church House as seen from the church yard to the south.



Plate 6 View of Hope Lodge which formerly served Bentley Church House.



Plate 7 Crossing Cottage, an example of a non-designated heritage asset within the area.



Plate 8 View of woodland that forms part of 'The Island'.



## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form



Figure 12 1838 tithe map showing path that ran from the north down to Bentley Hall. This once would have been lined with lime trees, some of which are still discernible on the both sides of the road in amongst later trees. Bentley Hall (1), Stables/Meeting Hall (2) and Barn (3) are all visible here. Avenue highlighted in green.



Figure 13 Present day aerial view showing same configuration as that of the 1838 map. The main differences are that the lime tree avenue is less discernible due to additional planting and suckering elms and the barn has been physically separated by the extension of the road.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

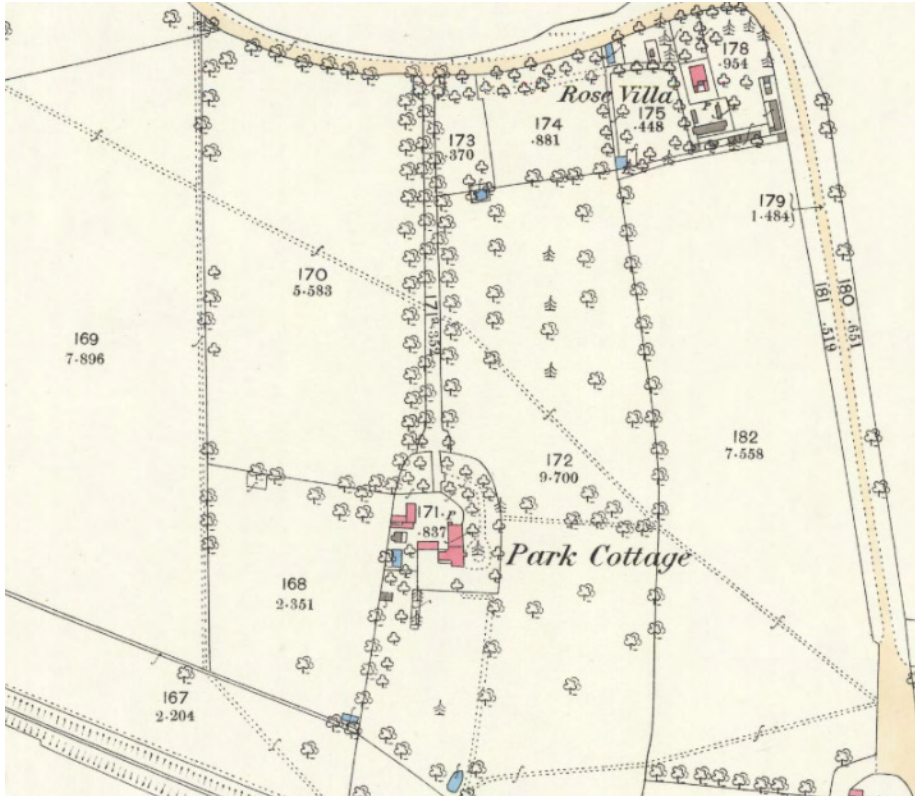


Figure 14 1881 OS map showing Park Cottage, believed to have a medieval core, with later Victorian alterations. Note the parkland and publically accessible footpaths running across it are still extant today.



Figure 15 Present day aerial view showing very little change other than extensions to the main house. The same footpaths are largely still present as is the parkland.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form



Plate 9 View of the medieval fishponds below Bentley Hall.



Plate 10 Bentley Hall's facade.



Plate 11 Bentley Hall Stables/Meeting Hall showing herringbone brickwork and closely spaced joists.



Plate 12 Bentley Hall Barn.



Plate 13 Public footpath along former Bentley-Hadleigh Railway line.



Plate 14 Pond Hall Cottages dating to the 19th century with vernacular detailing making reference to earlier Tudor-Medieval structures in the area.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

15. Park Cottage, Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan) located at the junction of Church Road and Old Hall's driveway. The building is a 19th century estate cottage with adjoining walled garden (visible on 1838 tithe map- although the present building likely to be later).

16. Pond on corner of roadway to Bentley Old Hall. This is a surviving feature of Medieval Bentley Moor and is visible on the 1838 tithe map.

17. Pond Hall Cottages, Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan). The buildings are first visible on the 1902 OS map but are likely to be later 19th century estate cottages. The buildings continue the vernacular detailing found in the wider area with gables and clay tile pitched roof. Unusually they have clay hung tiles at first floor level.

18. Pond Hall Farm, not formally designated but forms an attractive brick farm building complex. Some of the buildings appear on the 1838 tithe map and have direct functional relationships with the listed Pond Hall suggesting they could have 16th century origins.

19. Pond Hall, Grade II Listed. The list description describes it as having a 16th century or earlier frame with 18th century red brick facing. The building is typical of other vernacular structures in the area, with clay tile roof, dormers and casement windows. It has an attractive gambrel roof and impressive chimney stacks.

20. Pond Hall Lane, ancient tree and hedge lined roadway.

21. Engry Wood: ancient woodland, expressly mentioned in Charter of 1544 to Lionel Tollemache (under the Great Seal of Henry VIII) as "Ingry Wood".

22. Grove Farm, an historic farmstead originally called Potash Farm. The farmstead is visible on the 1838 tithe map and recorded in Suffolk HER. It is laid out in a loose courtyard plan with large modern sheds on the side.

23. Red Cottages and Potash Cottages, Buildings of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan) cottages visible on the 1838 tithe map. Potash Cottages, potentially date to the 17th century although altered over time.

24. Falstaff Manor, Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan): Medieval core with 18th and 19th century additions, originally held by the Fastolf or Falstaff family, but acquired by the Tollemaches in 1549. A number of ancillary agricultural

buildings are also visible within the grounds, several of which may have a similar date and are visible on the 1838 tithe map. The Domesday Book records it as being owned by the King originally.

25. Church Farm & Barns, Post- 1838 farmstead, originally owned by the vicar of St Mary's, approached by a historic tree and hedge lined track (visible on 1838 tithe map). It is probable that these timber framed buildings were translocated from their original location (slightly to the north) in the 1840s to accommodate the alignment of the Bentley-Hadleigh line, an early example of this technique.

26. Pedlar's Grove (historically Petland's Grove): ancient woodland, expressly mentioned in the Charter of 1544 to Lionel Tollemache as "Petteland Grove".

27. Tare Grove: ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

28. Fingery Grove (or Fingerfield Wood): ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

29. Ponder's Grove (or Pondhouse Grove): ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

30. Capel Station Cottages: built in the 1840s to serve the workforce on the Bentley-Hadleigh line and the now demolished railway station located to the west and now replaced by an MOT garage.

31. Bentley (Long or Great) Wood: sizeable ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

32. Brockley (or Brockhold's) Wood: sizeable ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

33. Old Hall Lane, believed to be an historic drovers' road leading from Bentley to Ipswich beside Old Hall and through Old Hall Wood.

34. Bentley Old Hall, Grade II\* Listed. Second oldest building in the area (after the church) and believed to be the original seat of the Tollemache family from *circa* 1200 to *circa* 1450, when it was superseded by Bentley Hall. After this time the building remained a farmhouse on the Tollemache Bentley estate. Internally the building retains remarkable early surviving adzed timbers. The building was described as "Old" Hall in the 1613 Survey of the Tollemache Bentley estate.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form



Plate 15 Pond Hall with distinctive gambrel roof and historic setting.



Plate 16 Grove Farm seen within its historic context.



Plate 17 Falstaff Manor, dating to the 18th or 19th century.



Plate 18 View of the grade II\* listed Bentley Old Hall.



Plate 19 Bentley Old Hall Barn, later ancillary structure to the Old Hall of historic interest.



Plate 20 Railway bridge with earlier fabric at track level.

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form

35. Bentley Old Hall Barn: attractive former brick and timber farm buildings formerly serving Old Hall, later sympathetically converted into a separate dwelling.

36. Old Hall Wood: ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

37. Newcome Wood (historically Newpondown Wood & Lady Grove): ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

38. Railway Bridges: a series of railway bridges first constructed in the 1840s as part of the deep cutting for the railway track, enabling the railway to have an almost imperceptible impact upon Bentley's historic landscape.

39. Manor Cottage: These buildings were originally a pair of staff cottages to Bentley Manor later sympathetically converted into a single house for the Hon. Mrs Stanhope Tollemache.

40. Bentley Manor, Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan), late 18th century house and extensively remodelled in 1896: seat of the Hon Stanhope Tollemache, who re-established the historic family estate at Bentley in the 1890s and re-modelled and extended the pre-existing mid-Georgian Bentley Lodge as a "Jacobethan" manor house, using F. Brown (a pupil of G.E. Street) as his architect. Author of a notable book on "British Trees", Stanhope created a ha-ha, replanted the park and built a walled kitchen garden.

41. Mungon's Grove (historically Munslan or Mundesland Grove): another ancient woodland forming part of the historic Tollemache estate.

42. Hall Heath: woodland established later on the ancient Bentley Heath, its name recalling the earlier heath, which was still extant at the date of the 1613 Survey.

43. Hubbard's Hall (Grade II Listed), described within its list description as dating to the 16th century, the building was for a long period a tenanted farm on the original Tollemache estate and latterly the Home Farm to Bentley Manor. The building has a shallow jetty reminiscent of other earlier medieval buildings in the area.

44. The Lodge: remodelled lodge at the head of the main tree-lined drive to Bentley Manor. The building first appears on the 1924 OS map and has been sensitively designed to integrate with its historic context.

45. Maltings Farm (Grade II Listed): This farm formed part of the historic Tollemache estate up until the postwar period, The building features an attractive steeply pitched, clay tiled gabled roof, which is visible from numerous vantage points across the landscape.

46. Maltings Cottage (Grade II Listed): This cottage formed part of the historic Tollemache estate up until the postwar period. The building features a considerable brick built external chimney stack with red plain tile roof and casement windows.

47. Maltings House (Grade II Listed): This House formed part of the historic Tollemache estate up until the postwar period. The building dates to the 16th century and is timber framed and plastered. It features a characteristic clay tiled pitched roof with large chimney stack.

48. Pump at Maltings House (Grade II Listed): The pump formed part of the historic Tollemache estate up until the postwar period. It is a unique survivor within the proposed conservation area.

49. The Wades: Historic woodland that until the postwar period, formed part of the Tollemache estate.

50. The site of Abbot's Hall, an ancient farmstead associated with Falstaff Manor (shown on the 1881 OS map).

## 5. Architectural Interest and Built Form



Plate 21 Manor Cottage, Victorian workers' cottage associated with Bentley Manor.



Plate 22 Bentley Manor, a late 18th century structure featuring significant Victorian alterations and extensions.



Plate 23 Hubbard's Hall, grade II listed building dating to the 16th century.



Plate 24 Glimpsed view of the grade II listed Maltings Farm Hall with its distinctive gabled roof form.



Plate 25 Maltings Cottage (grade II listed).



Plate 26 Maltings House (grade II listed).

## 6. Assessment of Significance

The significance of the Bentley Historic Core is derived from the high number of surviving buildings of historic and architectural interest which sit within a landscape characterised by historic farmland, ancient woodland and formal parkland. With the exception of the grade I listed barn, which is on the At Risk Register, the remaining historic buildings within the area appear to be in a good condition.

Many of the buildings within the area, including the listed buildings, have not had internal inspections undertaken, and may be of much greater historic or architectural significance than currently known.

### Built Environment

The late medieval and post-medieval housing stock is in good condition throughout the area and all of these structures make a positive contribution to the area. Most of these structures are timber framed, some with their original plaster work and some with brick detailing. Many are characterised by steep pitched clay tiled roofs and jettied first floors, characteristic features of the period. Remarkably, most of these structures survive in their historic settings, with very little in the way of modern interventions interrupting an ability to appreciate them.

There are many later Georgian and Victorian structures in the area also, reflecting the wealth and status of Bentley. Remarkably, the oldest known structures appear to have avoided being remodelled during these periods as was often the case for fashion conscious landowners.

These later 18th and 19th century structures are largely constructed in red brick with clay tiled roofs reflecting the vernacular traditions of the area. Most of these houses have retained their historic integrity, with very few examples of any unsympathetic alterations being undertaken.

Irrespective of status, the majority of structures in the area are detached and sit in ample plots, well set back from the main road. Some feature ancillary structures within their grounds especially within farmsteads.

### Land Usage

The conservation area is dominated by residential buildings with one ecclesiastic structure and dispersed farmsteads set within agricultural land. A high percentage of land is given over to ancient woodland.

### The Ancient Woodlands

The grouping of ancient woodlands was assembled by Tollemache family by inheritance

and acquisition between 1200 and 1540. The woodlands contributed directly to England's naval strength during the Dutch Wars of the 1660s and 1670s, when substantial quantities of timber were purchased from Bentley by Samuel Pepys and the Admiralty Board and taken to Ipswich and Harwich dockyards to build ships of war. There are also extensive records of sales following selective coppicing and felling in the 1700s, largely to support shipbuilding on the Orwell and Stour.

In the 1820s the Steward of all these woodlands was Golding Constable, brother of John Constable, who had recommended Golding for the post, which was in the gift of his own patron, Lady Dysart, then head of the Tollemache family. John Constable was known to have visited the woods and sketched in and around them at Bentley during his brother's time as Steward, when he would have had unrestricted access to these woodlands.

In 1843, a detailed survey (figure 16) of all the woodlands was made and hand drawn and coloured plans drawn up (now held at Bentley Manor). At this point, all these woodlands were formally retained by the branch of the Tollemache family seated at Helmingham, whereas other holdings outside Suffolk were distributed differently.

In the 1890s, the second Lord Tollemache sold some of the northern woodlands to his brother the Hon. Stanhope Tollemache, who had by 1900 re-established a substantial agricultural estate at Bentley, centred on Bentley Hall and Bentley Manor. Nearby Bentley Park continues to be held by a direct descendant of the original Tollemache family, whose grandmother was the Countess of Dysart. The most recent member of the Tollemache family to be interred in the Churchyard was Miss Ina Tollemache in 2014, marking over 800 years of continuous association of the family with the parish, the Church and the Hall.

### Traditional/Local Building Materials and Details

Buildings within the Historic Core are constructed in materials which are regionally typical. The earlier structures are often timber framed with plaster render, some incorporate brick with vitrified headers in places reflecting early kiln technology. The structures often have horizontally emphasised fenestration details with moulded mullions and transoms. Gables, wings and pitched handmade clay tile roofs are almost universal throughout the area. Barn structures are often clad in weatherboard with some being in red brick with clay tile roofs.

The architectural language of the area is predominantly vernacular, with very few classical examples in the area, although some buildings have had sash windows inserted in to them, either in the Georgian or Victoria periods. These later periods saw the construction of a number of architecturally impressive buildings and more modern farm



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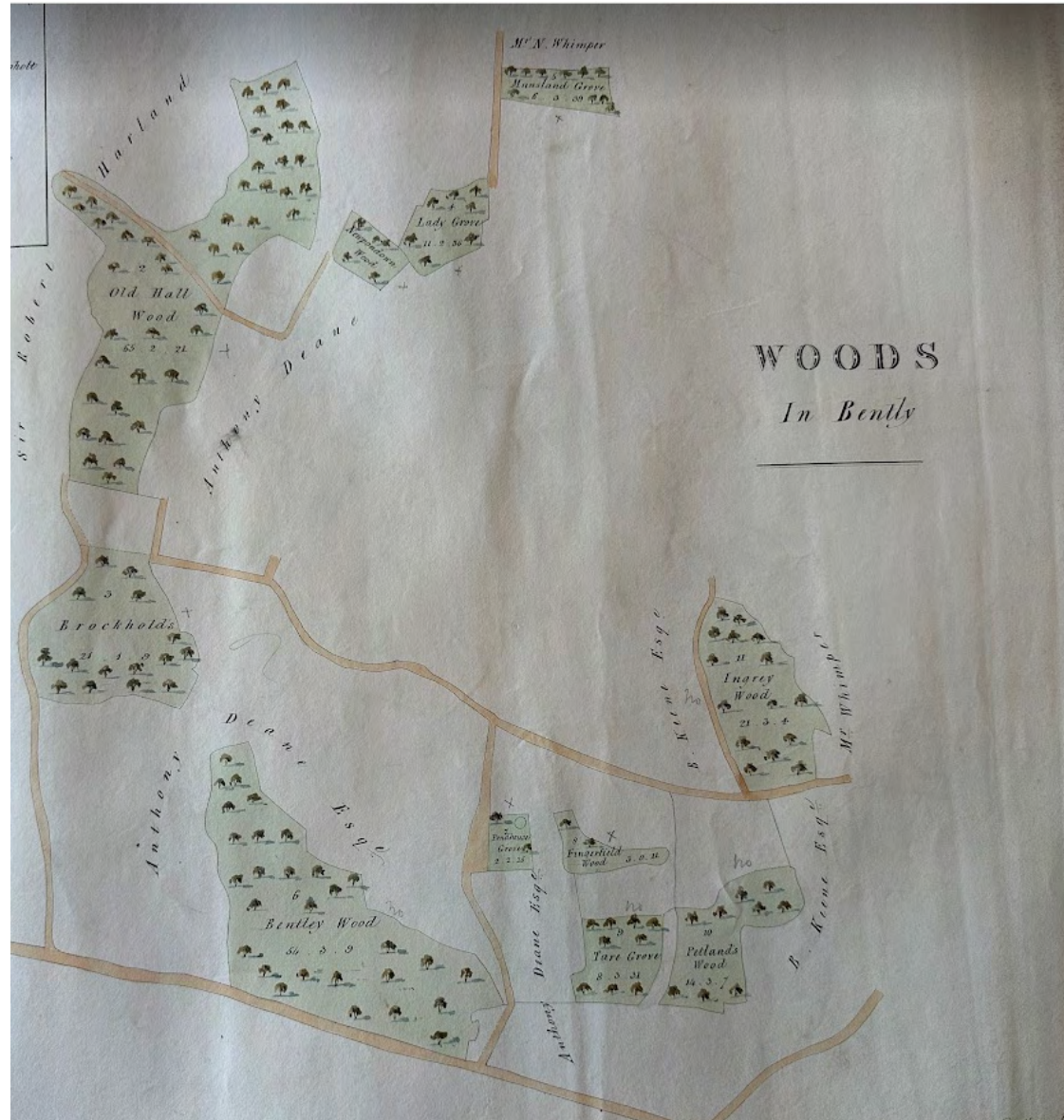


Figure 16 1843 Woods in Bentley survey showing the woodlands under the ownership of the Tollemache family which largely correspond with those visible today.

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dwellings, including Bentley Manor, Grove Farm and the Red Cottages.

### Landscape and Open Spaces

Bentley Historic Core's significance is inherently linked with its open rural aspect and the relationships between buildings, some deliberate, many incidental. Of particular note are the proliferation of public footpaths and bridleways which allow direct access or views of almost all parts of the proposed area.

The churchyard of the Church of St Mary is an important area of green space within the proposed conservation area. It is enclosed by a row of mature boundary trees which partially screen the Church from the road. The churchyard itself is modest in scale but provides an important publicly accessible space with great historical, associative and communal value to the parish. It provides a well maintained and positive ecclesiastical setting to the church. Opposite, on the east side of the road, is another graveyard, which has a more open aspect but untouched by modern development.

Wide areas of open landscape form a significant feature of the conservation area. These fields and manorial grounds are reflective of historic land uses dating back to at least the medieval period.

### Key Views

Most of the photographs included in this section were taken in the summer months and it must be emphasised that many of these views will be amplified by the loss of leaf cover in winter, potentially increasing visibility of important aspects of the historic environment.

Key types of views are identified below, although this list is not comprehensive and other views of significance may be identified during the decision-making process on planning applications. Any proposals for development within the proposed conservation area, or its environs, should consider the types of views identified below and any others which may be relevant or bespoke to that proposal.

- Views of notable buildings;
- Views of notable spaces;
- Medium/long range views taking in historic features/buildings;
- Glimpsed views throughout the conservation area.

Some key views of these types have been identified based on the above criteria. Note the views included are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there will be other views of significance in the area

Examples of these view types are identified on Figure 17 and described below along with some corresponding photographs:

1. View to Engry Wood from the field entrance in Church Road next to Little Bush property.
2. View across to Engry Wood from the field entrance in Church Road.
3. View across to Engry Wood from the field entrance in Church Road next to Falstaff Cottages.
4. View of Falstaff Manor from footpath/farm track.
5. View of the upper parts of St Mary's Church tower from field opening in Potash Lane to the right of the track to Falstaff Cottages entrance.
6. Long views from wide field entrance in Potash Lane to Engry Wood and the Church tower.
7. Long views from field entrance in Potash Lane to Engry Wood, Church Farm and the Church tower.
8. Views towards Engry Wood and the distant landscape south of Engry Wood due east towards the plantations on the banks of the Orwell.
9. Views into Engry Wood from Pond Hall Lane are especially attractive in spring when there are abundant numbers of bluebells and aconites.
10. Field views and of Fingery Grove from the footpath with cowslips growing here in the ditches.
11. Wood views to Pedlar's Grove and Tare Grove from footpath.
12. Views across to Engry Wood from the footpath.
13. Tree-lined walk with views towards woods in Bentley Park and towards Church Farm.
14. Views across Bentley Park and parkland including pond. The meadow land features an abundant quantity of daffodils in Spring.

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15. View from Church Road to Bentley Hall Stables/Meeting Hall and medieval fishponds allowing part of the historic setting of the buildings to be appreciated.
16. Views to Bentley Hall Barn from Church Road showing its historic context.
17. Views into Bentley Park parkland from Church Road.
18. Views across to Bentley Old Hall from Old Hall Lane.
19. Views across to Brockley Wood from Old Hall Lane.
20. Views of Bentley Old Hall and Barn and towards Old Hall Wood.
21. Views from Old Hall Wood footpath to beech trees.
22. Views in Newcome Wood from footpath.
23. Views right and left into Hall Heath wood and the wooded area with rhododendrons next to the railway line which is hidden from view.
24. Views into Hall Heath wood from Church Road.
25. Long distance views across large expanse of rural landscape with Bentley Old Hall and Old Hall Woods in the distance.
26. Views to Malting House and pump from Church Road and Winter views to the copper domes of Bentley Manor in the distance.
27. Views to Malting Cottage and Malting Farm from Church Road.
28. Long distance views to Bentley Long Wood and across to Brockley Wood from Bentley Hall Road. Also views to Ponders Grove, Pond Hall Farm buildings and Pond Hall. There is a sharp contrast between exiting the A12 slip road onto Bentley Hall Road onto this quiet, single track narrow lane.
29. View from Bridleway looking northwest to Old Hall Wood.
30. View northwest from footpath towards Hubbard's Hall where it can be appreciated in its historic context.
31. View west from bridleway to Old Hall.

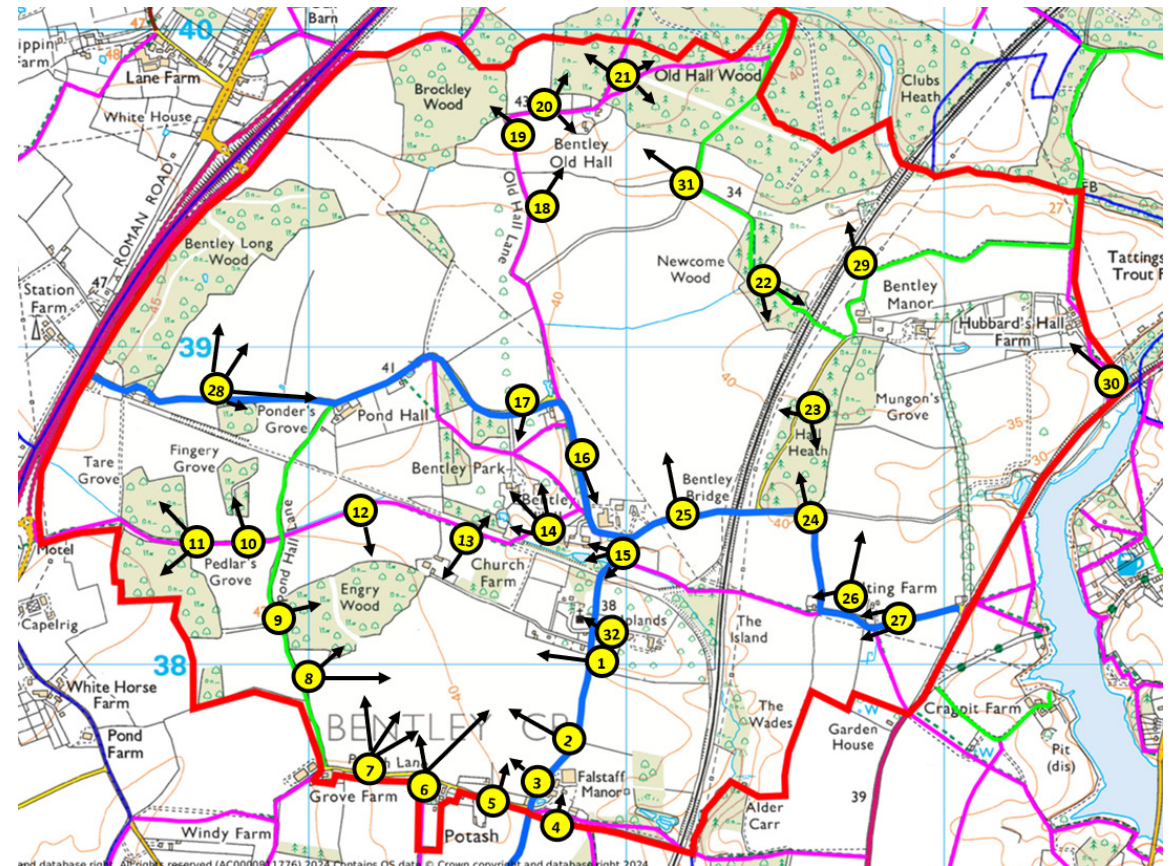


Figure 17 Important views from Public Rights of Way and Rural Lanes within the proposed conservation area.

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Plate 27 Long range view showing historic farming land and Bentley Barn in the distance.



Plate 28 Zoomed in view showing roof form of Bentley Barn.



Plate 29 View looking north towards Bentley Old Hall with its ancient woodland providing an attractive backdrop.



Plate 30 View west from Bridleway to Old Hall (view 31).



Plate 31 Glimpsed view of the upper storey of St Mary's Church tower (view 7).



Plate 32 Attractive view across Bentley Park towards the Park Cottage.

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Plate 33 View towards Engry Wood from Pond Hall Lane (view 8).



Plate 34 Long Range view of Bentley Manor showing its historic parkland context.



Plate 35 Long range view of Maltings Farm showing it nestled within its historic rural setting.



Plate 36 Long range view of Hubbard's Hall showing its historic rural setting (view 30).

## 7. Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that the proposed Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area is of great architectural and historic interest as a unique remnant of a rural landscape that dates back to the medieval period. A large number of buildings within the area date back to both the medieval and post-medieval periods and still retain much of their original character and vernacular construction details. Many structures that are identified as having a later date could house earlier fabric following further research.

The historic significance and status of the area is reflected in regal links between the Tollemache family and the Crown which pre-date the Dissolution. Links between landowners of the area and the ultimate founding of what would become the United States of America also brings an added layer of historic interest.

Several boundaries were considered for the conservation area before deciding upon the proposed extent. Initially a smaller area was considered but this failed to incorporate many of the ancient woods and historic and listed buildings that were scattered in the wider area. It is important to note that much historic parkland and agricultural fields have remained, as they were historically, since at least the Tudor period. They therefore provide a tangible, visible reminder of the historic setting and context of buildings within the proposed conservation area and are very much a part of their significance.

Tying back to Historic England's Conservation Area Criteria, three of the key considerations for designating areas are as follows:

- a) sufficient architectural or historic interest for the area to be considered 'special'?*
- b) whether this is experienced through its character or appearance? and*
- c) whether it is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, and what problems designation could help to solve.*

It is considered that the proposed area demonstrably meets these requirements. In terms of its rarity, the area incorporates a virtually intact medieval landscape, despite changes to agricultural practices with a high number of medieval and post-medieval structures, many of the highest significance. This, combined with the vast number of ancient woodlands in the area, whose timbers have been documented by eminent ecologists such as Oliver Rackham and been felled for centuries and helped shape many aspects of modern Britain further reinforces the inherent significance of the area.

The sheer quantum of highly graded listed buildings as outlined in appendix 1 reflects the 'special' nature of the historic and architectural interest of the area. It is possible to experience this special interest through the vast number of publicly accessible footpaths, bridleways and roads, which are all well maintained and are accessible all

year round. This rural, agricultural and in parts, formal landscape has remained relatively untouched by modern development, which is a rare commodity in the 21st century. The designation of the area would help to retain this unique medieval landscape for generations to come, allowing visitors to experience the peace and tranquillity the area offers, whilst also enabling an appreciation of the historic setting of so many designated and non-designated heritage assets.

## Appendix 1: Bibliography

### Secondary Sources

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## Appendix 2: List of Designated Heritage Assets within the Proposed Conservation Area

List Entry No.	Name	Grade
1351966	Pond Hall	II
1193864	Old Hall	II*
1033424	Hubbard's Hall	II
1033426	Maltings Farmhouse	II
1351929	Maltings Cottage	II
1351930	Pump in Front of and Approximately 7 Metres East of Maltings House	II
1033427	Maltings House	II
1193823	Church of St Mary	II*
1033423	Meeting Hall Stables, Bentley Hall, Approximately 30 Metres South of Bentley Hall	II*
1351964	Bentley Hall	II*
1351965	Bentley Hall Barn	I



### Appendix 3: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets within the Proposed Conservation Area

Entry No.	Name	Type of Designation
1	Bentley House	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
2	Hope Lodge	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
3	Uplands	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)
4	Crossing Cottage	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
5	Bentley Park: Medieval Park Cottage	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
6	Park Cottage	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)
7	Pond Hall Cottages	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)
8	Pond Hall Farm	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
9	Grove Farm	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
10	Potash Farm	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
11	Red Cottages and Potash Cottages	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)
12	Falstaff Manor	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)
13	Church Farm & Barns	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
14	Capel Station Cottages	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
15	Railway Bridges	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
16	Manor Cottage	Proposed NDHA as part of this Appraisal
17	Bentley Manor	Building of Local Significance (Neighbourhood Plan)

