

# Harlow Garden Village Estate Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Adopted December 2013





# Contents

1	Introduction	1 - 2
2	Background	3 - 6
3	Location & setting	7 - 9
4	Historic development & context	10 - 15
	<b>Character Appraisal</b>	
5	Urban form & townscape	17 - 21
6	Significant features	22 - 30
	Appendices	31 - 34

# 1 Introduction

## Conservation areas

- 1.1 Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by local planning authorities, in consultation with the local community, to preserve and enhance the specific character of these areas so that they can be enjoyed by people now and future generations.

## Appraisal aims

- 1.2 This document provides a character appraisal of the Harlow Garden Village Estate Conservation Area. It has been prepared alongside a management plan to fulfil the local planning authority's statutory duty to review and monitor conservation areas in the District and to produce proposals for their preservation and enhancement.
- 1.3 The purpose of this character appraisal is to:
  - define and record the special architectural, historic and townscape character of conservation area;
  - highlight special features of the conservation area which contribute to the character of the area and merit being preserved or enhanced;
  - describe the historic development of the Harlow Garden Village Estate and explain how its setting has changed over time and the factors which have influenced this process;
  - review and clearly define the conservation area boundaries, so that they reflect what is considered worthy of preservation;
  - increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area; and
  - provide a robust framework for making planning decisions.

## HARLOW GARDEN VILLAGE ESTATE

- 1.4 Harlow Garden Village Estate marks an important and often unrecognised era in the development of Harlow. Conceived nearly 30 years before Sir Frederick Gibberd drew up the masterplan for Harlow New Town, the estate was the brainchild of local developer Basil Scruby whose aspiration it was to build a garden village on just north of the existing settlement of Harlow.
- 1.5 The area contains a highly memorable collection of streets which include cohesive groups of homes exhibiting a distinctive garden village architectural style, set within generously landscaped plots.
- 1.6 Collectively, the estate provides a significant example of early 20th century suburban housing design and layout. This was heavily influenced by the writings of Raymond Unwin and garden city precedents such as Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City and Hampsted Garden Suburb.
- 1.7 Much like these pioneering developments, Scruby's vision was to create a greener and more spacious living environment where residents would benefit from improved access to clean air, sunlight, well-landscaped surroundings and open parkland.
- 1.8 Clear parallels can be drawn between these Garden City Movement principles and the values which motivated the New Towns movement and shaped the design of neighbourhoods in Harlow.
- 1.9 Nestled alongside Old Harlow and Harlow New Town, Harlow Garden Village Estate is an important element in the rich town planning lineage of Harlow. Though never realised in its entirety, the estate provides an important illustration of the social and cultural process which would eventually culminate in the large-scale movement of people from major cities to New Towns such as Harlow.



## SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The special architectural and historic interest that justifies the designation of Harlow Garden Village Estate as a conservation area and contributes to its overall significance as a heritage asset includes the following features:

- Dwellings laid out according to a highly planned approach with homes shaped around central landscape features in order to create a series of street pictures.
- A collection of cohesive housing groups which exhibit a strong garden village character, derived from unifying architectural and landscape features.
- A characteristic garden village roofscape of steep pitched roofs punctuated by projecting front gable elevations and tall chimneys.
- Within housing groups - consistent roof tiles materials and façade render.
- An attractive palate of pastel colours which creates highly distinctive, varied and attractive set of housing groups.
- Well preserved landscape features synonymous with of the garden village style, including front garden hedges, lawns and verges.
- Highly distinctive dwellings on St John's Avenue (particularly numbers 4 to 30 evens - locally listed buildings).
- Colourful sweeping gabled properties along Manor Road.
- The strong associative connections which can be drawn between Harlow Garden Village Estate and New Town Harlow in terms of the underlying town planning values and landscape design principles.



## 2 Background

### Statutory status of conservation areas

- 2.1 Conservation areas are defined under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

### Local planning authority duties and responsibilities

- 2.2 Once a conservation area is designated, a local planning authority has a statutory duty to:
- monitor conservation areas from time to time;
  - review conservation area boundaries and consider if any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas;
  - publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas; and
  - consider the views of local people when formulating these proposals.

### What is the planning status of this document?

- 2.3 The appraisal and management plan are material considerations when determining planning applications within the Harlow Garden Village Conservation Area. They have the status of a supplementary planning guidance and support and amplify the implementation of adopted planning policies with respect to the Harlow Garden Village Estate Conservation Area.

### Who should use this appraisal?

- 2.4 This appraisal will be used by:
- development management officers determining planning applications and defending the local planning authority decisions at appeal;
  - planning policy and regeneration officers formulating planning policies and regeneration initiatives for the area.
  - owners and occupiers within the conservation area submitting planning applications;
  - developers and planning agents proposing development, demolition or redevelopment within the conservation area; and
  - the highways authority, Essex County Council, when carrying out work to the highway and public realm.
- 2.5 Where technical urban design terms have been used in this document they are defined in the glossary found in the Appendix.



## 2 Background

- 2.6 This character appraisal sits alongside a management plan and both documents aim to provide an effective framework for managing growth and change in this sensitive area.

### Appraisal

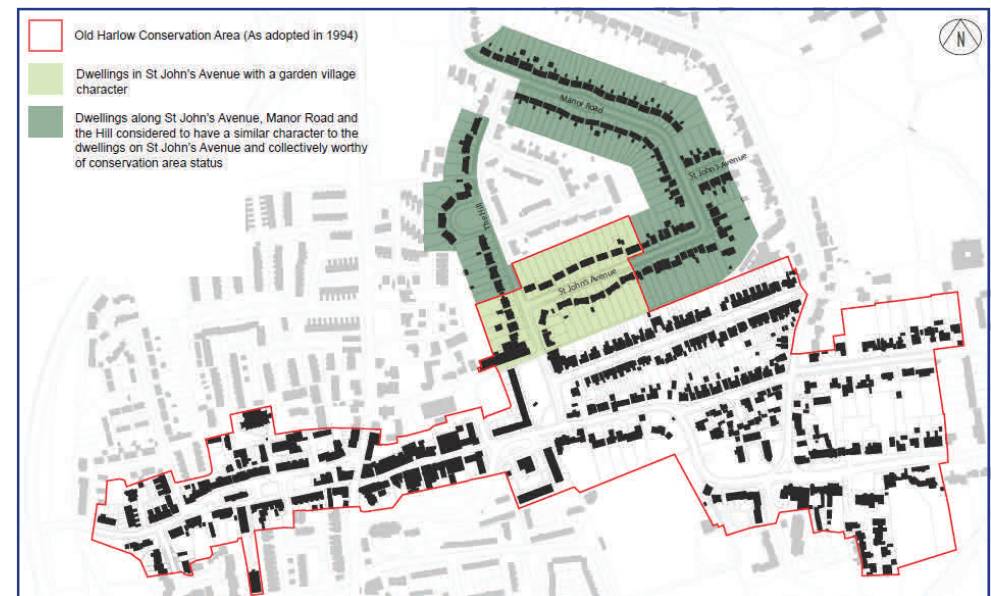
- 2.7 The purpose of the appraisal is to describe the historic development of the area and to highlight all of the special architectural, historic and townscape qualities present in the area. The appraisal has been designed so that it can be used as a manual for making planning decisions in and affecting the conservation area.

### Management Plan

- 2.8 The purpose of the management plan is to highlight the issues and threats affecting the conservation area and to put forward proposals for enhancing, preserving and strengthening the special qualities and character of the conservation area. The management plan is an important output of the character appraisal process. Proposals contained in the management plan are based on the findings of the character appraisal.

### Development of the conservation area

- 2.9 Harlow Garden Villages Estate Conservation Area was first proposed in 2011. During the Old Harlow Conservation Area Character Appraisal the opportunity was taken to review the character of the wider area and to determine whether the conservation area boundaries reflect the character and heritage assets present in the area.
- 2.10 A main recommendation of the Draft Old Harlow Conservation Area Appraisal was to remove dwellings on John's Avenue from the Old Harlow Conservation Area and to create a new conservation area with dwellings on Manor Road and the Hill - Harlow Garden Village Estate. This was because:
- the dwellings along St John's Avenue, Manor Road and the Hill share a highly distinctive and cohesive architectural and landscape character worthy of conservation area status; and
  - the townscape character of these streets is very different from the late medieval, Victorian and Edwardian character found in Old Harlow; and
  - this was confirmed through additional historic research.



## 2 Background

### Public consultation

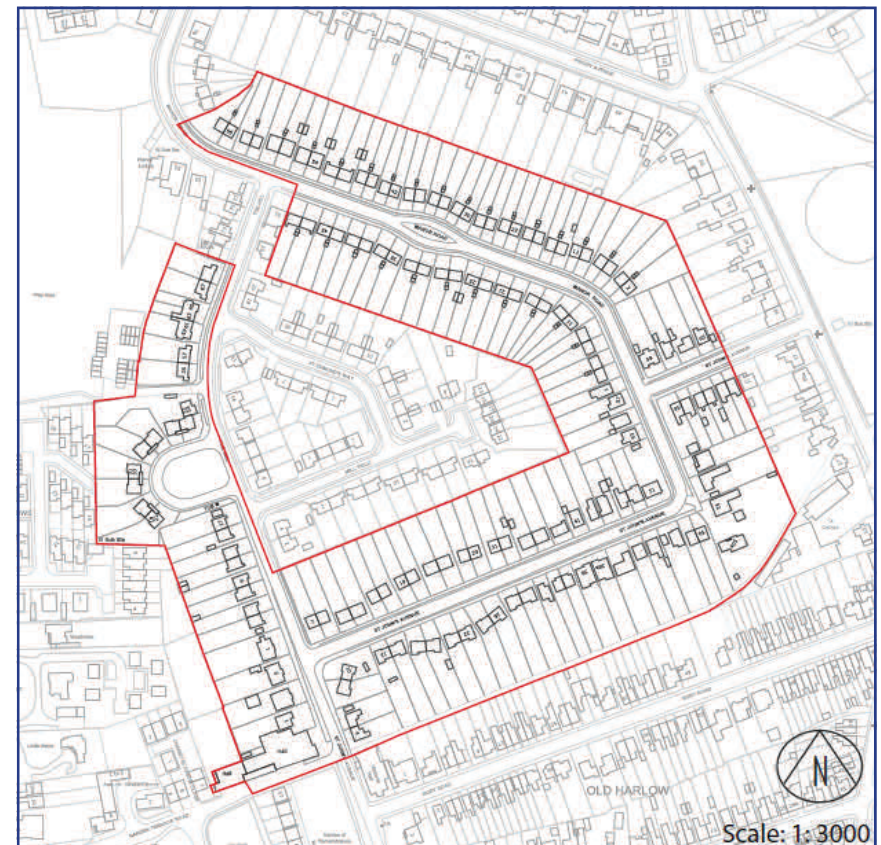
- 2.11 The Council carried out public consultation on the draft Old Harlow Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for a period of six weeks between 21st March and 2nd May 2011.
- 2.12 A detailed character appraisal of St John's Avenue was included in the draft consultation document, in addition to a character appraisal of areas along Manor Road and the Hill which the Council was proposing designate within the new conservation area.
- 2.13 This consultation process enabled residents and other stakeholders to provide feedback on the initial proposals and shape the final adopted document via a public meeting and a questionnaire which was posted to all addresses within the existing and proposed conservation area boundaries. A full record of the consultation process and the feedback received and changes made to the draft document is presented in the accompanying consultation statement.
- 2.14 Feedback received from residents demonstrated that there was strong support for the recommendation to create a new Garden Village Estate conservation area with over 80% of respondents to the consultation expressing their support.



Public exhibition event at Old Harlow Arc - 29 March 2011

### Conservation area boundary

- 2.15 The Harlow Garden Village Estate Conservation Area is defined on the map below. It includes the following buildings:
- 4 to 68 (evens) St John's Avenue
  - 7 to 65 (odds) St John's Avenue
  - 1 to 49 (odds) Manor Road
  - 2 to 68 Manor Road
  - 1 to 69 (odd) The Hill
  - Harlow War Memorial Institute, Garden Terrace Road
  - Harlow Women's Institute, Garden Terrace Road





## 2 Background

### The approach

- 2.16 The approach of the character appraisal has been tailored to meet the requirements of national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### The NPPF

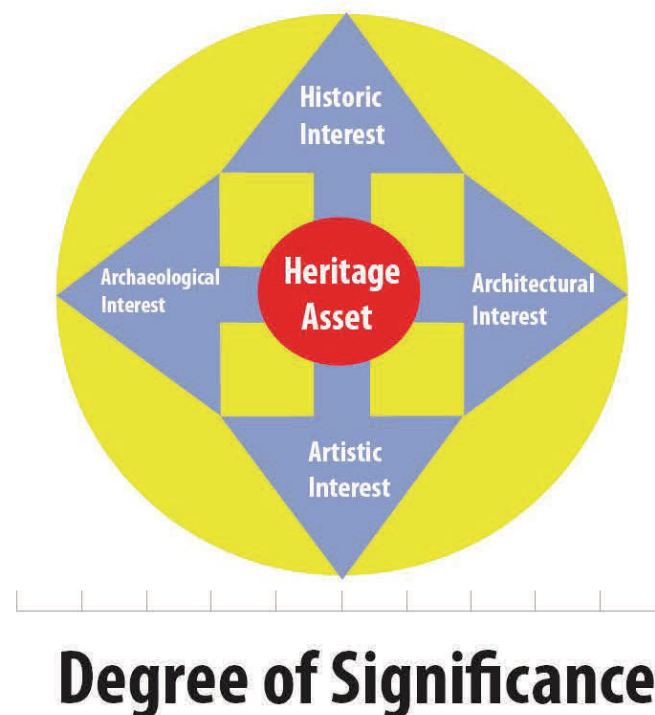
- 2.17 The NPPF outlines that the main purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It confirms that protecting and historic environment is a key element of sustainable development.
- 2.18 The NPPF provides a new framework for managing the historic environment. This is focused on two key terms - 'heritage assets' and 'significance' and builds on previous government guidance.
- 2.19 One of 12 core planning principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This is so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life by this and future generations.

### Definitions

- 2.20 A **heritage asset** is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated assets and non-designated assets.
- 2.21 As set out in the NPPF, conservation areas and listed buildings are defined as **designated heritage assets**. **Non-designated heritage assets** are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes which are identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. These are normally be identified by a local planning authority. eg locally listed buildings.
- 2.22 The term **significance** refers to the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The significance of a heritage asset is derived not only from the asset's physical presence, value and appearance, but also from its setting.

### Approach of the appraisal

- 2.23 The approach of this document is to establish the overall significance of the conservation area and establish which historic, architectural, landscape and setting related elements contribute to its significance. These aspects are drawn out through the appraisal as 'significant features' in order to assist the heritage planning process.
- 2.24 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF explains that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Alongside suggesting appropriate enhancements to the conservation area, this appraisal seeks to highlight those features which do contribute to the significance of conservation area as a heritage asset. This ensures that such features can be easily distinguished from less significant elements and given the material planning weight they deserve when making planning decisions which affect the character and significance of the conservation area.



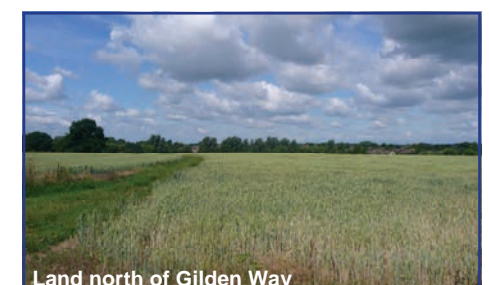
### 3 Location & setting

#### Location and Context

- 3.1 The conservation area is located within the residential area of Old Harlow a short walk from Old Harlow High Street. It is bounded to the east by Old Road and Priory Avenue and to the west by Station Road.
- 3.2 Like many other residential neighbourhoods within the District, Old Harlow is relatively enclosed by main arterial roads (the A414 and Gilden Way) and landscaping areas which run alongside these busy routes. East of Old Harlow is an area of open park land at Harlowbury and The Forbury. East of the brook at The Forbury is agricultural land. This land is subject to outline planning permission for residential development.

#### Landscape context

- 3.3 The estate is located close to open park land at The Forbury and the agricultural land which surrounds the Gibber Garden. The layout of the estate ensures that a strong relationship is formed with the wider landscape east of Old Road and this was clearly an original design intention. The Forbury provides a highly attractive and historic landscape setting which includes a circle of tall cedar trees and Harlowbury Chapel.
- 3.4 At the bottom of St John's Avenue the Garden of Remembrance provides an attractive rectangular pocket park which is fronted by surrounding homes.





### 3 Location & setting

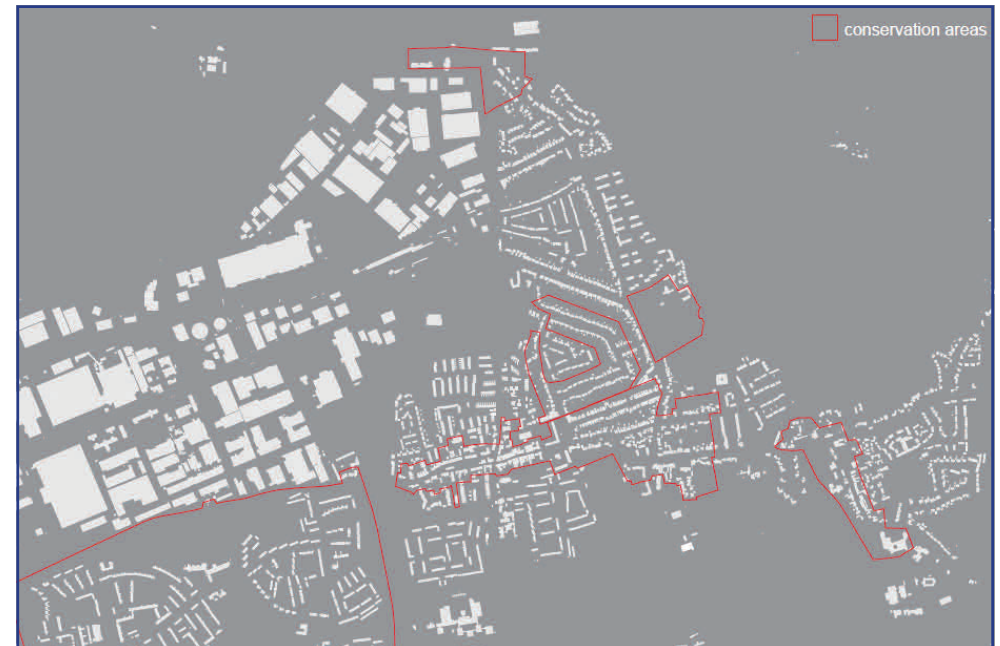
#### Topography

- 3.5 Land form in the area has been shaped by the brook to the east of the Forbury which runs south from the Stort. This has created a relatively undulating landscape to the east of the conservation area which is most notable where the land slopes away from Old Road towards this watercourse and rises up steeply towards the Gibberd Garden.
- 3.6 Land within the conservation area is generally level, though there is a slight decrease in gradient towards the northern ends of the Hill and Manor Road. To the south east of the conservation area Market Street and Old Harlow High Street are on slightly higher ground.



#### Wider townscape setting

- 3.7 The surrounding townscape contains a diverse range of residential streets and commercial areas. This north eastern area of Harlow contains the highest proportion of Harlow's heritage assets including a large number of listed buildings and conservation areas. A notable feature of the townscape in and around Old Harlow is how historic areas have been to some extent subsumed into New Town Harlow.



- 3.8 Immediately to the south of the estate are Victorian and Edwardian streets which contain a number of attractive terraced and semi-detached homes. The estate is bounded to the east by a number of attractive Edwardian homes along Old Road. To the north, a line of bungalows can be found along Priory Avenue.



### 3 Location & setting

3.9 Four other significant heritage assets exist in the wider area. South of Gilden Way is Churchgate Street Conservation Area, a historic hamlet. Harlowbury Chapel - a Grade I listed building also comprises a conservation area and lies in the open parkland east of Old Road. Further north along Old Road is Harlow Mill Conservation Area containing a number of historic locally listed buildings and Harlow Mill Restaurant a Grade II listed building. West of the A414 is Mark Hall North Conservation Area - one a comprehensively planned New Town neighbourhood.

3.10 Surrounding Old Harlow and Harlow Garden Village Estate conservation areas are a number of early New Town era housing areas such as Jocelyns, East Park, Chippingfield and The Oxleys. These generally comprise lines of hipped roof terraces arranged in slightly insular layouts around greens and cul de sacs and were some of the first New Town housing areas to be developed in the town.

3.11 East of the A414 are two large employment areas - Edinburgh Way and Templefields - which contain large footprint commercial buildings in industrial, storage and distribution and retail warehouse use with large areas of hardstanding.



Old Harlow



Harlowbury



Churchgate Street



Harlow Mill



Old Road



Templefields



Mark Hall North



Jocelyns



## 4 Historic development & context

4.1 This chapter traces the origins and historic development of Harlow Garden Village Estate. It describes the way in which the estate was conceived and marketed and examines the social and economic factors and town planning principles which influenced its form and layout.

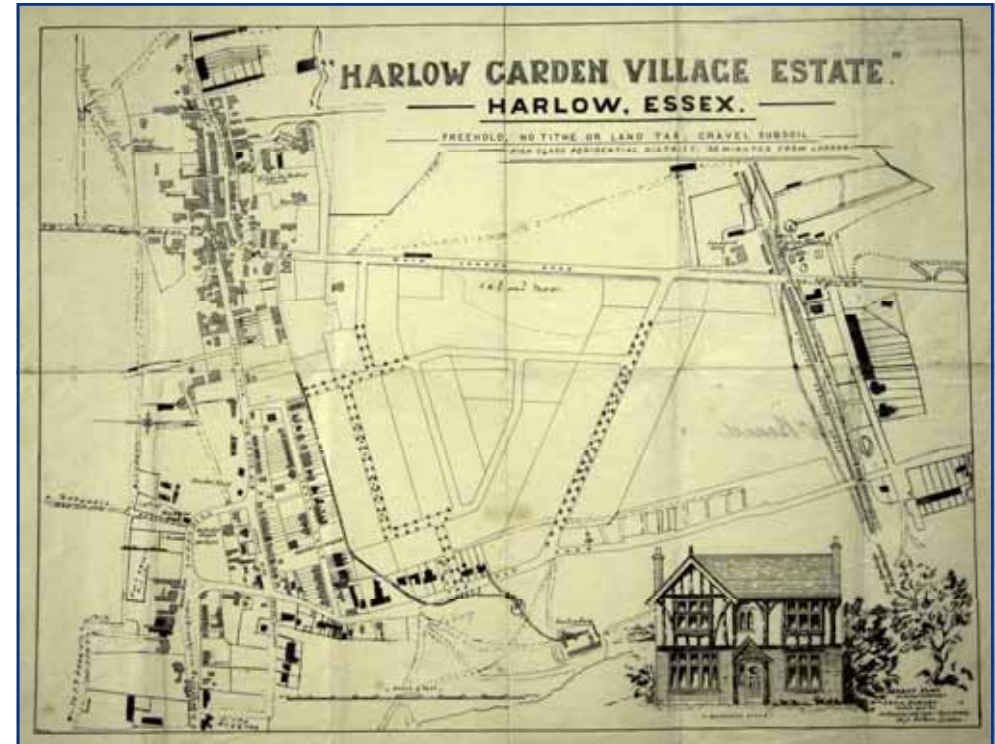
### Pragmatic idealism

4.2 It was Basil Scruby's dream to build a new garden village estate in Harlow. The estate was to be laid out on land north of Bury Road between Old Road and Station Road. New dwellings would benefit from close proximity to Harlow Village and the Great Eastern Railway which provided rapid access to London and Cambridge.

4.3 Basil Scruby, from Harlow, became a successful property developer after the First World War and created some high profile garden suburb developments in Petts Wood, Bromley and Peacehaven, East Sussex. A successful entrepreneur, Scruby had a clear vision for the places he wanted to create and this was deeply rooted in the garden city town planning and design principles prevalent at the time.

4.4 Scruby's aim was to provide high quality suburban housing within attractive, spacious and well-landscaped plots with good access to light, clean air and the open countryside. Scruby died in 1946 and would not have seen the development completed in its entirety with his son Charles and brother Cecil driving the project forwards.

4.5 Clear parallels can be drawn between these ambitions and those of Sir Frederick Gibberd, the masterplanner of Harlow New Town. Rubbing shoulders with the original Harlow village and Harlow New Town, it is the way in which the area demonstrates this lineage of town planning principles which makes the Garden Village Estate and its setting significant.



1914 map showing St John's Avenue, Manor Road, the Hill and Priory Avenue



Chiselhurst Road, Petts Wood, Bromley - Garden suburb developed by Basil Scruby



## 4 Historic development & context

### The Garden City Movement

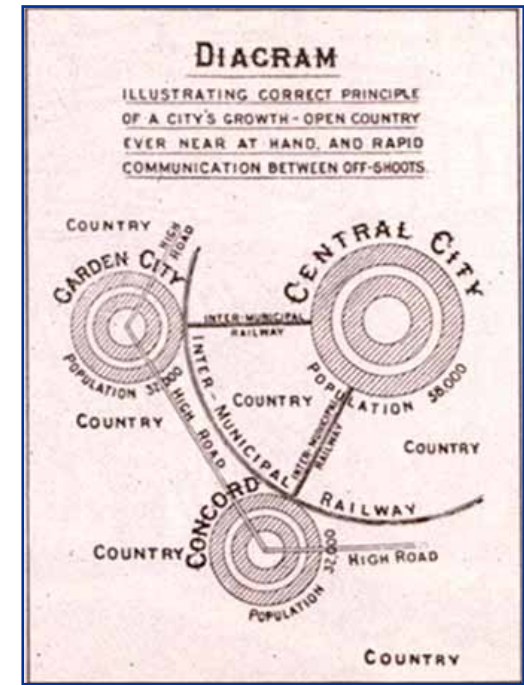
- 4.6 The Garden City Movement was a utopian town planning movement initiated in 1898 by Ebenezer Howard in his book Garden Cities of Tomorrow.
- 4.7 Intended to be comprehensively planned, self-contained communities with easy access to the countryside, garden cities were intended to enable residents to enjoy the benefits of living in a town whilst also providing the health and quality of life benefits associated with countryside living.
- 4.8 The driving motivation behind the Garden City Movement was to relocate people living in overcrowded urban centres to more healthy, attractive and spacious environments, in which people had access to the countryside and green spaces. At its core, the Garden City Movement was aspirational. It was premised on the idea that major social improvement and change could be achieved by enhancing people's living environment and quality of life.

### Garden City Principles

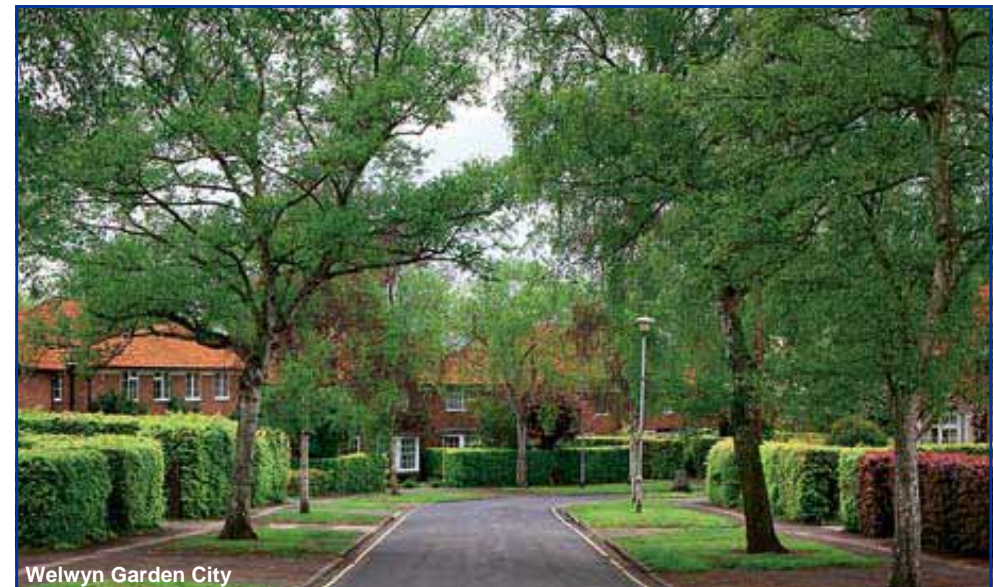
- 4.9 Homes were laid out at lower densities than were found in large urban areas, with houses and plots shaped in order to provide residents with suitable levels of sunlight, fresh air and garden space. An emphasis was made to make use of natural elements and landscaping features such as garden hedges and long front and back garden lawns. The design of housing areas was focused on creating sufficient 'breathing room' and 'playing room' to enable a more healthy existence.
- 4.10 Only two true garden cities were ever built in England at Letchworth and Welwyn. A number of garden suburbs built between 1918 and 1939, one of the most famous being Hampsted Garden Suburb in London, which was designed by Parker and Unwin.



'Room to breathe - a key message of the Garden City Movement



Howard's Garden City concept



Welwyn Garden City



## 4 Historic development & context

### Raymond Unwin & Hampsted Garden Suburb

- 4.11 An influential figure in the Garden City Movement was Raymond Unwin, designer of Hampsted Garden Suburb and author of *Town Planning Practice* - a seminal book in which Unwin espoused Garden City street design principles. It is easy to assume that Unwin's book and examples such as Hampsted Garden Suburb were an inspiration to Basil Scruby.
- 4.12 In his masterplan for Hampsted Garden Suburb Raymond Unwin explicitly sought to break free of the rigidity of 19th century bye-law street standards and to create a healthier and greener suburban community which sought to better responded to the challenges of modern living in terms of traffic congestion and overcrowding.
- 4.13 For the first time streets were designed to shelter residential homes from through traffic through the use of courtyards and cul de sacs. Buildings were arranged in picturesque groupings around small greens and along curvilinear streets.
- 4.14 In terms of architectural style Hampsted Garden Suburb also set a significant precedent for suburban design drawing heavily from the romanticism of the Arts and Craft philosophy and the renewed interest in more traditional building types and materials. This was expressed in steep tiled roofs, large chimneys, gables and the use of timber.

4.15 Raymond Unwin's design philosophy are summarised below:

- The arrangement of buildings must be the primary consideration in layout out the site.
- A designer should arrange buildings in order to achieve a beautiful and satisfying grouping and to help frame the street picture and views being created.
- The delineation of plots and roads should come after the best arrangement of buildings has been achieved.
- Enclosure and completeness of a street pictures should be a key layout principle.
- More irregular and curved arrangements of streets and buildings may be more satisfying than is commonly found on terraced Victorian streets.
- By grouping buildings it is possible for all dwellings to enjoy a decent outlook.
- To achieve the same quality of outlook, street picture and to shelter dwellings from the noise buildings should be set back slightly from the road behind lawns, hedges.
- Street trees provided along grass verges in the street should help to beautify the street scene and improve resident's outlook.
- Dwellings and street layouts should be orientated so as to maximise daylight and sunlight into habitable rooms with the most important rooms in homes positioned to overlook greenery and gardens.



Left - Unwin's Master-plan for Hampsted Garden Suburb

Below, right - Hampsted Garden Suburb



## 4 Historic development & context

### The development context - Old Harlow in the 1920s

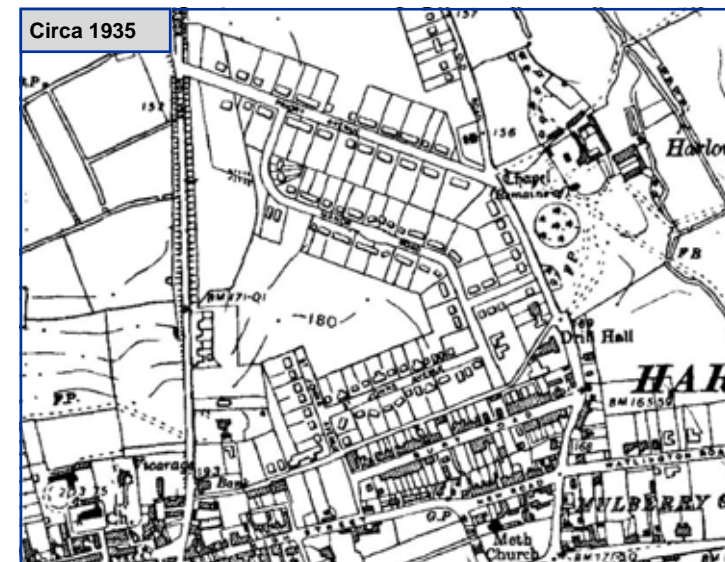
- 4.15 Old Harlow had expanded steadily following the opening of Harlow railway station in 1842. This resulted in a number of highly attractive Victorian and Edwardian homes on Bury Road, New Road, High Road and Park Hill. This era of development resulted in the eastward suburban expansion of Old Harlow and this process was continued with the development of the garden village estate to the north of Bury Road.
- 4.16 Reflected in the historic maps to the right are the clear differences in street design and layout between Victorian and Edwardian streets and the garden village estate layout which followed along St John's Avenue and Manor Road in which dwellings were shaped in a curvilinear fashion to enclose and overlook small green spaces. Laid out adjacent to each other these very different streets provide rich source of evidence of the gradual growth of Harlow and the distinct phases of urban development and change.



New Road



Bury Road





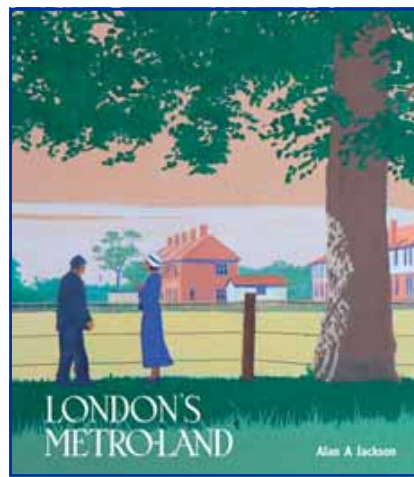
## 4 Historic development & context

### Driving social change - the railway

- 4.17 Developments like Harlow Garden Village Estate reflected powerful socio-economic changes underway during interwar Britain. Increased mobility provided by the railways in addition to the rising affluence and consumerism of middle and lower income workers created a demand for more spacious suburban environments and wider fronted homes outside but within easy access of London.
- 4.18 This led to housing growth around stations along rail routes which permeated out from London, a trend which was experienced particularly in rural towns to the south and north west of London. Many of these places have now been to a certain extent subsumed into Greater London such as Sutton, Ruislip and Croydon but were once in areas of the surrounding countryside. Harlow, with strong rail connections to London Liverpool Street and Stratford was not immune to this trend.
- 4.19 Such was the popularity of commuting into London from rural areas, the Great Eastern Railway was forced by an Act of Parliament to provide half price fares for workers. At the time the garden village estate was being marketed intensive suburban steam services provided efficient access for growing white collar workers who aspired to secure a healthier and more suburban lifestyle compared to what was on offer in London's terraced inner city streets.

- 4.20 As is shown on the advert (below), the railway and opportunity for workers to find a more rural, healthy life style are key selling points in the way the for the garden village estate was marketed. This resonates strongly with the way Harlow New Town was conceived and marketed as a more desirable merger of urban and rural living for inner city dwellers. It also mirrors the way in which similar places such as Cecil Park Estate in Pinner and Sutton Garden Suburb were conceived and advertised to potential commuters in London.
- 4.21 Of particular interest in the advert is the emphasis on plots being 150 feet (46m deep) and having long gardens. The focus on community participation in sport and outdoor activities is also notable and this was a strong element of the Garden City Movement ideals.

Bottom left  
Similar adverts for suburban developments north west of London which followed the extension of the Metropolitan rail service. During this period railway companies and private developers together sought to encourage workers to move out to new suburban homes built along the line.



Right  
Advert for  
Harlow  
Garden  
Village in the  
1920s





## 4 Historic development & context

### Homes for heroes

- 4.22 Another major social and economic factor which affected the development of the estate was the increase in Council house building which took place during the interwar years and was influenced by agendas such as ‘homes for heroes’ following the First World War. This form of housing was also strongly influenced by garden suburb principles.
- 4.23 Though plots at Harlow Garden Village were originally marketed for private sale during the 1920s, the project stalled and development did not get underway until the 1930s with the construction dwellings on St John’s Avenue and local authority housing along Manor Road. Local authority housing along The Hill was developed soon after the Second World War. In spite of the delays, the form and layout of the estate accorded with the masterplan garden suburb principles.



Early interwar Council houses. The Downham Estate, Lewisham, South East London

### The legacy of the Garden City Movement

- 4.24 The Garden City Movement heavily influenced the design of New Towns after the Second World War. Sir Frederick Gibberd, the Masterplanner of Harlow, readily acknowledged the role Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement played in the New Towns movement. Garden Cities and New Towns were similar urban planning responses to the same problem. They both sought to address the problems of overcrowding and poor health experienced in modern industrial cities and aimed to provide a healthier and greener existence for city dwellers. Both attempted to merge the benefits of living in the town and the countryside.

### Harlow New Town

- 4.25 The New Towns Act of 1946 proposed a number of new settlements around London, of which, Harlow was one of the first. Frederick Gibberd was commissioned by the Harlow Development Corporation to produce a Master Plan for the town. The New Town was built to the west of Old Harlow.
- 4.26 In the early years of the New Town, much of the initial house building was concentrated close to Old Harlow due to the proximity of local shops and services. As part of the original Master Plan, Old Harlow was designated as a neighbourhood sub-centre. It is now a designated neighbourhood centre in its own right.
- 4.27 The result of these distinctive eras of development is that Old Harlow provides a rich tapestry of pre and post twentieth century heritage with late medieval areas rubbing shoulders with Victorian and Edwardian streets and garden village and New Town areas.



# Character Appraisal



## 5 Urban form & townscape

### Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter provides an appraisal of the urban form and townscape present in the conservation area. It draws out key features of the conservation area's character in terms built form, scale, layout, movement, views, character and landscaping.

### Urban form

- 5.2 Raymond Unwin emphasised the importance of laying out buildings before roads and plots so as to beautifully enclose and frame street pictures and provide an attractive outlook for resident. This approach to design is clearly in evidence when we examine a figure ground map of the conservation area. This shows clearly where building lines on each of the three streets in the conservation area have been purposefully set back and moulded in order to frame an attractive street vista or to overlook a small green.

- 5.3 Unwin's rationale for this approach to layout was as follows:

*'It is possible by arranging breaks in the street line, by setting the houses back around greens so that they may command some distant view or may lead onto some open space and, wherever a specially fine view is obtainable, by grouping as many of the houses as possible so that they may enjoy it.'* (Unwin:1909:330)

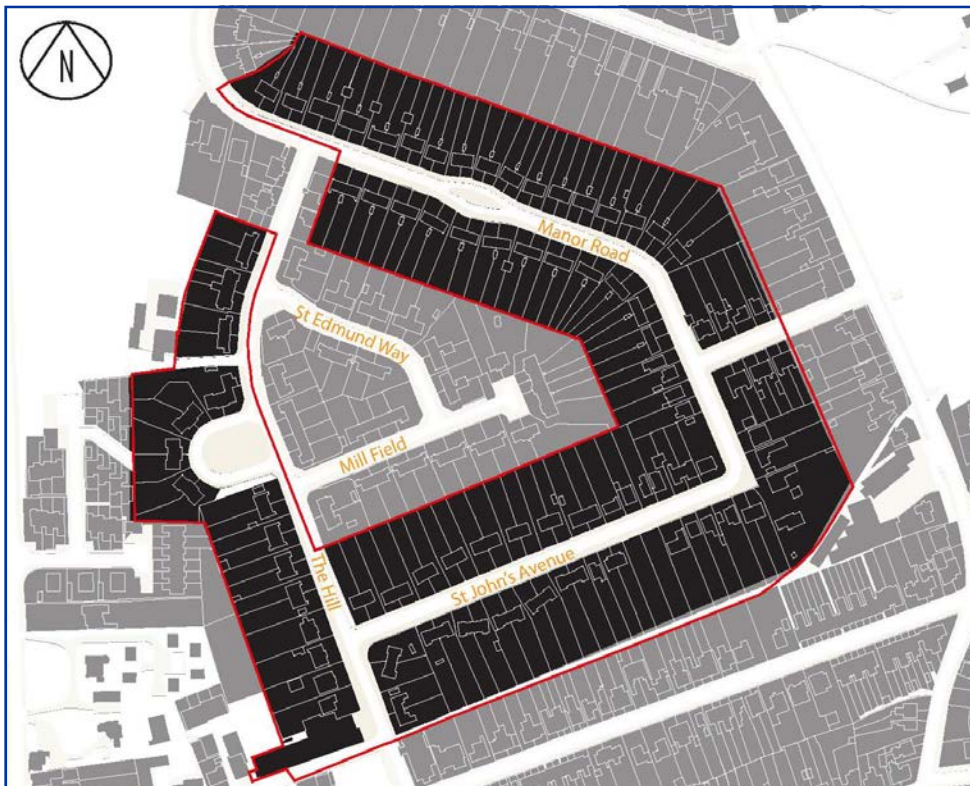




## 5 Urban form & townscape

### Streets, plots and blocks

- 5.4 The street pattern exhibits a highly planned approach with a series of interconnecting linear and curvilinear streets as devised in the original masterplan. Curvilinear routes such as Manor Road and The Hill provide visually interesting views. St John's Avenue is a more rectilinear, formal route which is defined by tall lime trees and characterised by sharper corners at right angles.
- 5.5 The street pattern creates a relatively large block structure with dwellings laid out in deep plots, providing long rear gardens. Plot dimensions are in fact remarkably similar to those recommended by Raymond Unwin and range approximately 6.5m to 8m wide by 44m deep. These dimensions were a key selling point in the marketing of the Garden Village Estate during the 1920s and 30s.



- 5.6 Perimeter blocks are defined by outward facing buildings which help to enclose streets and provide good levels of natural surveillance, despite being set back some distance from the footway behind hedges. Corner locations are defined by buildings sited on an angle and slightly shorter plots. This is consistent with precedent gardens suburbs such as those at Hampsted and accords with Unwin's concern for streets corners to be articulated.
- 5.7 Slight differences to the original layout conceived and the way development has been delivered are evident in the fact that Mill Fields has been designed as a cul de sac rather than a through route and the connection to Station Road to the south has not been provided. This reduces east-west connectivity between the estate and fields at the Forebury, an essential aim of the original masterplan.



## 5 Urban form & townscape

### Townscape

- 5.8 In accordance with Raymond Unwin's design principles, key townscape features are the way in which buildings are shaped to create attractive street pictures and the way in which landscape elements - hedges, lawns, verges, street trees and small green spaces - are formed around buildings in order to create a close relationship between dwellings and their landscape setting.
- 5.9 The moulding and orientation of building facades through the setting back of building lines in order to frame these street pictures creates a series of glimpsed views as one moves through the area and this is a critical component of the original masterplan and visual character of the area.



## 5 Urban form & townscape

- 5.10 The townscape character of the area is defined by specific garden village architectural features which include steep pitched tiled roofs, projecting front gables and sweeping gables. These distinctive roofscape elements provide a sense of rhythm and visual interest to views through the area. Other features on building facades such as canopy porches along Manor Road also contribute significantly to the cohesive visual character of the area.
- 5.11 Colours and building materials also contribute significantly to the character of the area. Along Manor Road pastel coloured dwellings with sweeping gables and tiled roofs orientated on a south-west access catch the afternoon sun and these colourful architectural features combine with the greenery of lawns and hedges to provide a visually rich street picture.
- 5.12 A similar, though less illuminated effect is present on the Hill's crescent. Along St John's Avenue beige pebble dash facades and red tiled pitched roofs create a cohesive and visually pleasing group of dwellings.
- 5.13 At its eastern end St John's Avenue connects with Old Road and establishes an important visual connection with the wider landscape at the Forbury, drawing the views of the countryside into the residential area.





## 5 Urban form & townscape

### Contribution of green spaces, verges, hedges and trees

- 5.14 Street trees, grass verges, front garden hedges and lawns are defining elements of the Garden Village Estate. These key landscape features are inseparable from the overall vision for the garden village in which landscape elements were intended to provide a complimentary setting to built form and ensure natural features have a close relationship with dwellings.
- 5.15 Landscape elements also play a key role in shaping the townscape character with buildings purposely shaped around green spaces to ensure these views could be enjoyed by the maximum number of dwellings with building facades, trees and hedges helping to frame these important street pictures in three dimensions.

- 5.16 Of particular importance to the character of the conservation area are the tall lime trees, verges and front garden hedges along St John's Avenue. These significant landscape features help to frame linear views along the street, with trees providing an upper canopy and hedges and verges providing essential natural elements and rhythm along the pavement edge.
- 5.17 Two other important landscape areas are the green at the Hill and the grass segment half way along Manor Road. Manor Road contains a number of attractive Beech Trees.
- 5.18 Significant green spaces just outside the conservation area are the Garden of Remembrance and fields at Forebury. The proximity of these two open areas was key to the Garden Village concept and providing dwellings with open space, clean air and recreation within close proximity.



Landscape elements and trees Manor Road



Green at The Hill



St John's Avenue - hedges, lawns and trees

## 6 Significant features

### Introduction

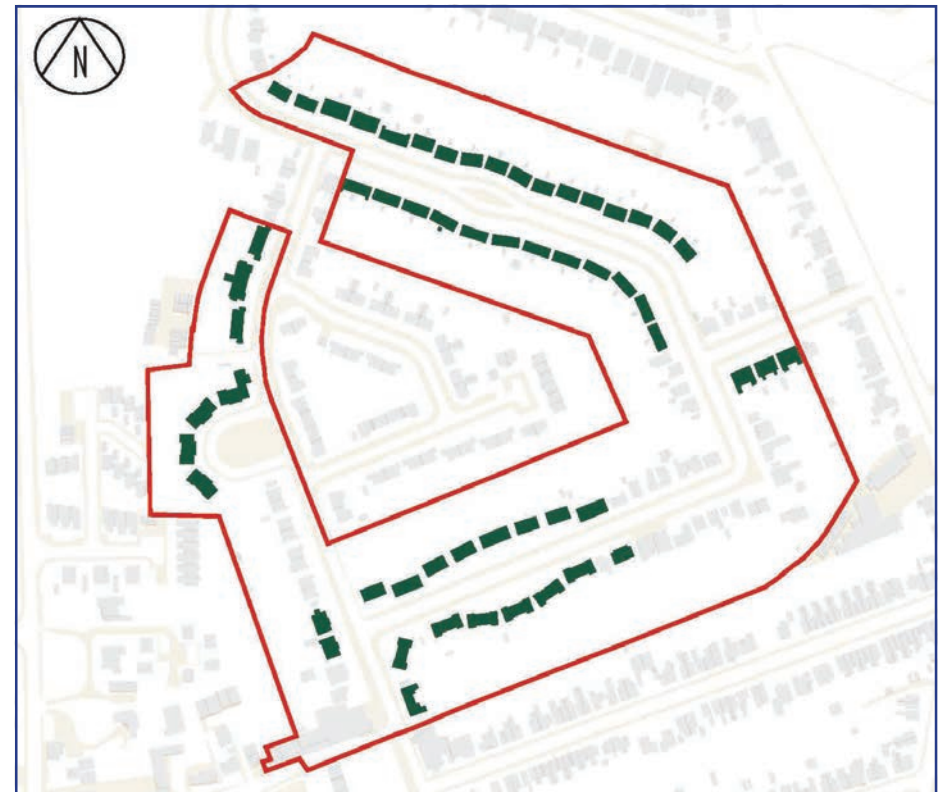
- 6.1 In accordance with paragraph 138 of the NPPF, this chapter draws attention to the features of the conservation area which contribute to its significance as a heritage asset. This allows for these elements to be distinguished from those which do not make a contribution to the significance or character of the area.
- 6.2 Features highlighted in this chapter will be material planning consideration where the local planning authority considers development proposals which would result in the removal of or impact to significant features.
- 6.3 Though individual aspects of the area are highlighted separately, this chapter should be read as a whole as, in most instances, it is the combination of landscape and architectural elements which creates the conservation area's special quality and character.

### 6a.) Dwellings which exhibit a garden village estate character

- 6.4 Not all dwellings in the conservation area exhibit garden village estate character. However, the majority of dwellings do and this provides the backbone of the conservation area's character. These dwellings are shaded dark green on the map to the right.
- 6.5 Three highly significant groups of garden village estate housing are found along St John's Avenue, Manor Road and around the green at the Hill. A line of cohesive semi-detached dwellings on the eastern side of St John's Avenue also exhibit garden village characteristics.
- 6.6 Other plots exhibit variation in building style and character and this is a consequence of the sale of plots for development in a slightly incremental manner. Whilst certain groups of dwellings were developed in a cohesive style by the same developer or architect, it is evident that other land parcels may have been developed in a more ad hoc style with some buildings designed as single entities, possibly by home owners who purchased a solitary plot.

- 6.7 Though these groups of homes differ in terms of architectural style, their shared characteristics are derived from the following features:

- relatively steep pitched roofs (with some hipped roofs on Manor Road)
- projecting front gable elevations and sweeping gables
- reddish coloured roof tiles
- consistent building materials
- visually prominent lines of brick chimneys stacks and pots
- a rich and attractive palette of beige, pastel and red brick coloured façades
- strong landscape boundaries comprising garden hedges

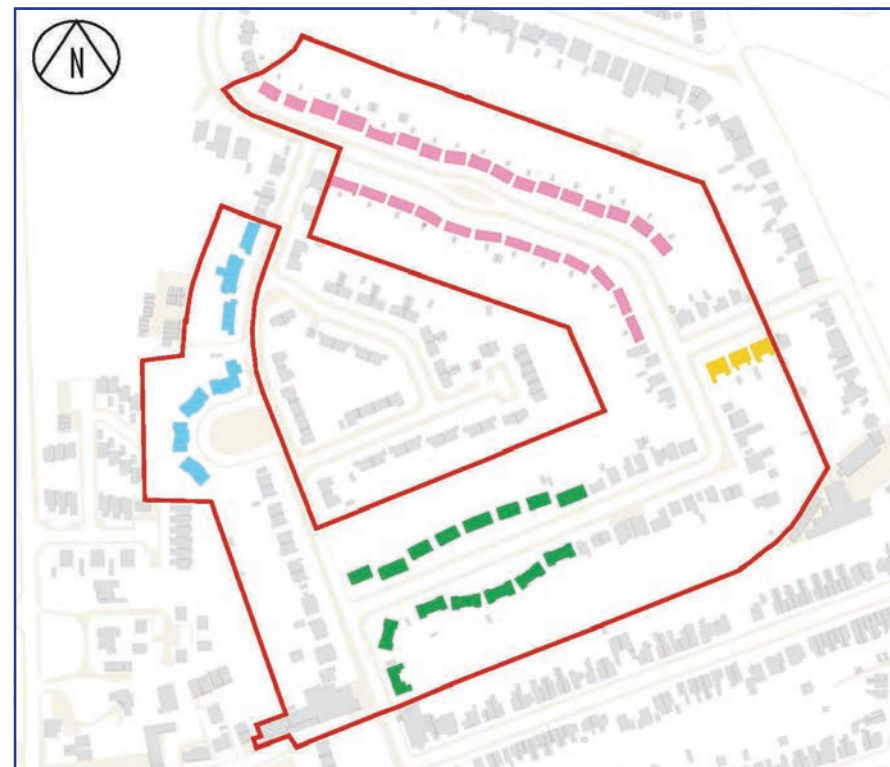




## 6 Significant features

### 6b.) Housing groups

- 6.8 Groups of dwellings which exhibit a cohesive architectural and landscape character make a significant contribution to the significance and character of the conservation area.
- 6.9 As was explained in the chapters, the moulding of buildings to frame and enclose street pictures and landscape features was a fundamental element of Raymond Unwin's approach to residential layout and these ideas had a strong influence on the character of the area.
- 6.10 Housing groups in the conservation area provide discrete elements of townscape. The symmetrical composition of a street picture is achieved through the careful layout, orientation and design of building facades, projections and roofscape features and their strong relationship with other unifying landscape elements such as hedges, lawns, verges and street trees.



- 6.11 The character of housing groups is strengthened by shared architectural features such as gables, pitched roofs, chimneys and a shared palate of building materials and colours. The harmony of groups of dwellings is enhanced where they share unifying landscape features such as hedges and lawns.
- 6.12 Alterations to the front of dwellings within these groups should to be sensitively managed as unsympathetic changes to important, unifying architectural and landscape features on the front of homes can upset the balance and visual harmony of the whole group. Examples of this would be where the whole of a front garden hedge is removed to provide vehicle access and parking, where unsympathetic building materials or colours are used on a façade or roof or where incongruous architectural features such as porch extensions are introduced. Care should be taken to ensure new features are sympathetic and do not erode the character of a group.

## 6 Significant features

### 6c.) St John's Avenue (housing group)

- 6.13 Numbers 4 to 30 (evens) and 7 to 37 (odds) St John's Road are the most readily identifiable and prominent housing group in the conservation area. These properties and their landscape setting make a significant contribution to the character and overall significance of the area.
- 6.14 Important original elements of the built form which are unifying features and help to generate the group value are summarised in the table below:

<b>Building materials and brick render</b>	- Consistent beige pebble dash
<b>Roofs</b>	- Steep pitched roofs - Reddish tiles - Prominent projecting gables on south side properties - Some homes on the northern side of the street have hipped roofs and sweeping gables.
<b>Chimneys</b>	- Regularly spaced tall, rectangular brick chimney stacks and terracotta pots
<b>Front garden landscaping</b>	- Boundary hedges and wooden gates - Grass lawns
<b>Doors (original)</b>	- Bright colours - 6 or 9 pane glass windows on doors
<b>Windows</b>	- 6 and 8 pane casement windows

- 6.15 A particularly high degree of architectural similarity exists between numbers 4 to 30 (evens) St Johns Avenue. All of these properties have identical steep pitched roofs which slope down to eaves height just above the ground floor window. Prominent gabled elevations project forwards on the flanks of each pair of dwellings.
- 6.16 Dwellings are staggered in a curve to create a pleasing street picture which is defined by projecting gables, steep pitched roofs and chimneys. A number of these dwellings also exhibit colourful, original doors and this significantly enriches the visual character of the area.
- 6.17 A greater degree of architectural variation is present on numbers 7 to 37 (odds) on the opposite side of the road. However, the shaping of dwellings to mirror the curved building line on the southern side of the road and consistent roof and façade render and building materials means that they are clearly part of the same housing group.
- 6.18 The cumulative, 'group value' of this collection of dwellings is derived from these important unifying features. It is desirable to preserve the degree of unity present by restricting unsympathetic or negative alterations that would erode this sense of homogeneity and character.





## 6 Significant features

### 6d.) Manor Road (housing group)

6.19 Curving lines of pastel coloured dwellings along Manor Road comprise a highly distinctive and unique housing group. The cohesive character of this group is achieved by the following elements:

- a roofscape of steep pitched roofs punctuated by sweeping gable façade elevations and square brick chimney stacks
- consistent rows of hipped roofs on the western side of the street
- consistent ground floor brick render
- consistent roof tile materials and colour
- front garden hedges
- tiled canopy porches
- the layout of dwellings in a crescent around a central landscape feature



6.20 Particularly significant architectural elements are the sweeping gabled properties on the eastern side and central chimney stacks on steep pitched roofs. These regular features help to draw the eye along the street creating a strong sense of unity and rhythm.

6.21 A typically garden village character is created by staggering back dwellings in a curve around a central landscape feature and the strong visual presence of hedges as boundary features. Careful layout, roofscape elements and hedge boundaries all combine to frame a picturesque and rather bucolic street picture which was evidently an original design intention.

6.22 A vibrant palette yellow, pink, white, brown and beige coloured facades helps to create visual interest and variety. Orientated to face south-west, colourful sweeping gabled dwellings are illuminated in the midday sun, creating highly attractive views along the street. The street's high aesthetic quality is derived from the visual interplay between more rustic and earthy colours found on tiled roofs and brick rendered ground floors with pastel coloured sweeping gable facades.



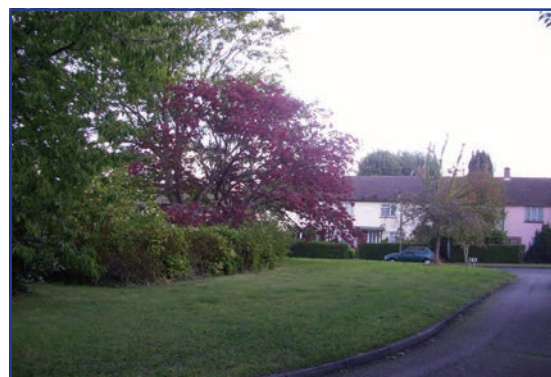


## 6 Significant features

### 6e.) The Hill (housing group)

6.23 Dwellings around the green on the Hill provide attractive close and exhibit a distinctive garden village character. Though the housing group also includes dwellings along the Hill, the architectural and landscape character and group value is strongest on the four properties which front the green. The group value and garden village character is derived from the following features:

- steep pitched roofs which slope down to low eaves on the ground floor
- prominent projecting gable elevations painted in bright white and pastel colours
- consistent roof tile materials
- tall chimney stacks
- well maintained garden hedges
- dwellings arranged to visually enclose a central green and set against a backdrop of tall trees which ensures a strong relationship is formed between the built form and the landscape.





## 6 Significant features

### 6f.) St John's east (housing group)

- 6.24 A small housing group is present between numbers 58 to 68 (odd) St John's Avenue which exhibit a high degree of architectural similarity. Attractive unifying features are consistent brick render, decorative lintels, arched open porch entrances and chimney pots. Though very few front garden hedges remain in place, where they are present they significantly contribute to the group's garden estate character. Regular street trees and grass verges also create a high quality public realm and draw the wider landscape into the residential area.



### 6g.) Distinctive dwellings

- 6.25 Within the conservation area there are also a number of highly distinctive individual dwellings which do not constitute part of a greater housing group and significantly enhance the character of the area.
- 6.26 Particularly attractive are bungalows at number 3 and 5 St John's Avenue and number 53 St John's Avenue which exhibits pargetting - a decorative form of building plastering which is common to Essex.



53 St John's Avenue - pargetting



3 St John's Avenue



5 St John's Avenue

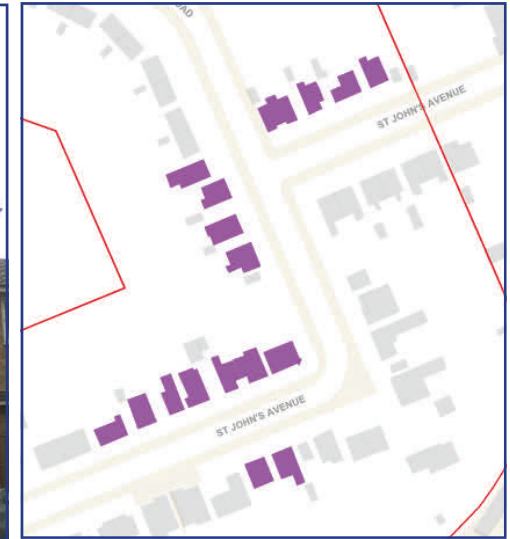
## 6 Significant features

### 6h.) Gable fronted early 20th century homes

- 6.27 A number of detached dwellings along St John's Avenue (eastern side) have a different character to the garden village housing groups previously mentioned and more resemble gable fronted Edwardian dwellings on Bury Road which are in the Old Harlow Conservation Area. These dwellings are shaded purple on the map, left.
- 6.28 In this particular area dwellings are situated in narrower plots and narrower gable ended facades and shallower building set backs creates rather intimate and varied character as one turns the corner of St John's Avenue and moves through to the wide open space at Old Road. Plot and building widths and architectural features help to create a strong vertical visual emphasis.
- 6.29 In contrast, garden village estate dwellings are characterised by wide plots, relatively deep set-backs, spacious frontages and roof and façade elements such as sweeping gables and which create a strong horizontal visual emphasis.
- 6.30 Although narrow gable fronted homes in this area mark quite a clear departure from the predominant character of the conservation area, they reflect the character of the Old Harlow and are worthy of conservation area status. Their individuality, colour and distinctive presence creates an attractive transition between more uniform housing groups and this adds to the richness and sense of place present in the area.
- 6.31 Attractive features are projecting ground floor bay windows, fenestration details, and veranda porches. Of particular significance is Layston Cottage which exhibits original sliding sash windows, wooden gabled porch, bay windows and flemish bond brickwork and brick lintels. A key characteristic of this collection of dwellings which should be encouraged is the variety of colour and fenestration details. The distinct character of this area should be recognised in the development management process.



Layston Cottage



Gable fronted early twentieth century homes





## 6 Significant features

### 6i.) Landscape street features

- 7.32 Street trees, road side verges and front boundary and frontage landscape features are vital component of the garden village character of the conservation area. As highlighted in the chapter on design principles, the greening of streets and ensuring buildings formed a close relationship with their landscaping setting were fundamental objectives in the masterplanning and marketing of the estate.
- 7.33 Where they are present, front boundary treatments in the form of garden hedges are important elements of the estate's character and are visually prominent and unifying features of the street scene. Boundary hedges play a key role in framing verdant street pictures by providing strong horizontal and linear emphasis in views and clearly demarcating areas of private property from the public realm.



- 7.34 Though there is pressure to remove garden hedges in order to provide vehicular access to on-plot parking areas, it is important that this access is achieved whilst maintaining as much of an existing hedge line as possible.
- 7.35 Mature lime trees along St John's Avenue planted on grass verges are a distinctive feature of the character of the area, providing an attractive, linear canopy.
- 7.36 Although tree planting is not as formal in other streets, Manor Road and the Hill benefit from having a number of important street trees and these combine pleasantly with garden hedges, frontage landscaping features. Important green spaces at the centre of both streets also act as strong focal points.
- 7.37 Grass verges and garden lawns are also attractive elements within the street scene, though due to car parking these areas have the potential to become untidy. Where garden lawns are well-maintained, they combine with hedge boundaries to generate a highly attractive environment and this was the original design intention of the estate.





## 6 Significant features

### 6j.) Street pictures

- 7.38 The creation of a series of street pictures was an original design intention of the garden estate and this objective was heavily influenced by the writings and design precedents established by Raymond Unwin.
- 7.39 Street pictures are small, intimate areas in the conservation area in which sets of dwellings and landscape elements have been purposely laid out in order to frame an attractive and picturesque visual environment. Street pictures create the most attractive views in the area. They were also intended to ensure as many dwellings as possible enjoyed the benefit of having an attractive and green outlook.
- 7.40 A key feature of street pictures is the close relationship between relatively homogenous architectural and landscape elements. These regular features combine to create a highly attractive and cohesive environment.
- 7.41 Three main street pictures exist on each of the three streets in the conservation area, as shown on the map, right. On Manor Road and the Hill small greens are surrounded and enclosed by dwellings; on St John's Avenue buildings curve around a line of tall street trees.





## Appendix A - Bibliography

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## Appendix B - Glossary

**Accessibility:** The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities

**Active frontages:** Street elevations that are enlivened by visible activity either within or outside the building.

**Article 4 Directions:** Designations imposed locally which restrict some of the permitted development rights which householders would otherwise enjoy under the General Permitted Development Order. Where an Article 4 Direction is in place, applicants would need to submit a planning application and obtain planning permission before carrying out any of the development referred to in the Direction.

**Bargeboard:** A timber piece fitted to the outer edge of a gable, sometimes carved for decorative effect.

**Building line:** The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street.

**Bulk:** The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings.

**Character assessment:** An area appraisal identifying distinguishing physical features and emphasising historical and cultural associations.

**Conservation areas:** Areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by local authorities in order to protect and enhance their appearance.

**Hipped roof:** A type of roof where all sides are sloped, similar to a tent.

**Conservation area character appraisal:** A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest which warranted the area being designated.

**Density:** This relates to the intensity of development. Residential densities are normally measured as the number of dwellings per hectare.

**Desire line:** An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

**Dead Frontage:** A building frontage lacking in animated entrances and windows which does not generate activity or natural surveillance of the street; the opposite of an active frontage.

**Elevation:** The external facade of a building.

**Enclosure:** The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

**Façade:** is generally one side of the exterior of a building, especially the front, but also sometimes the sides and rear. The word comes from the French language, literally meaning “frontage” or “face”.

**Fenestration:** The arrangement of windows on a facade.

**Flemish Bond Brickwork:** A type of brick bond in which headers and stretchers are laid alternatively in each layer of bricks.

**Gable:** The vertical part of the end wall of a building contained within the roof slope, usually triangular but can be any 'roof shape'.

**Garden City Movement:** The Garden City Movement was a utopian town planning movement arose out of a reaction to the growth of industrial cities proposed a new way of thinking about town planning in which housing developments were planned with the wellbeing of their occupants in mind. Homes were laid out close to parks and areas of the countryside, with each home having its own garden. Landscape features and the architectural quality were also priorities.

**Human scale:** The use within development of elements which relate well in size to an individual human being and their assembly in a way which makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

**Landmark:** A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.



## Appendix B - Glossary

**Layout:** The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

**Legibility:** The degree to which a place can be easily understood and moved through.

**Local distinctiveness:** The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

**Massing:** The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

**Mixed uses:** A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

**Natural surveillance:** The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

**Node:** A place where activity and routes are concentrated often used as a synonym for junction.

**On-plot parking:** Parking within a building's site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

**Pargeting:** The use of external lime plaster in a decorative manner with incised or moulded surfaces, especially timber-framed houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**Permeability:** The degree to which a place has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it. A permeable urban area has plenty of streets and it is possible to move through the area by a variety of routes.

**Permitted Development:** Small scale, often domestic, development which does not require formal planning permission provided it complies with criteria set out in Government legislation.

**Public realm:** The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks. Also called public domain.

**Public Realm:** All external space to which the public have access including parks, streets and squares.

**Scale:** The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person.

**Sense of place:** Local characteristics which give a place identity.

**Plot:** An individual piece of private land surrounding a building.

**Rendering:** The covering of outside walls with a uniform surface or skin for protection from the weather.

**Rhythm:** The pattern of the height and proportions of a building or group of buildings e.g. vertically or horizontally.

**Roofline:** The line formed by a building or group of building's roofs.

**Roof pitch:** Relates to the slope and angle of a roof elevation.

**Street furniture:** Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting, railings and signs.

## Appendix B - Glossary

**Topography:** A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**Townscape:** The character and appearance of the built environment, including its underlying landform, natural features and ecology, colours and elements and the way these components combine.

**Urban grain:** The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks, plots and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

**Urban form:** Urban form refers to the physical layout and design of development. It takes into consideration the arrangement of streets and public spaces as well as the overall pattern, scale, density and use of buildings and plots.

**Street Frontage:** Is the area of land found between the building line of a property and the public highway.

**Frontage development:** Refers to the buildings which front and enclose streets and public spaces.

**Sash window:** A window that slides vertically on a system of cords and balanced weights.

**Street furniture:** Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting and signs.

**Urban Blocks:** These are the areas between the streets in the street grid. An urban block will normally be occupied by a number of individual buildings.

**Urban Fabric:** A general term referring to all of the buildings of a city and the extent to which they relate to the public realm.

**Vista:** An enclosed view, usually a long and narrow one.

**Visual clutter:** The uncoordinated arrangement of street furniture, signs and other features.



