

Boreham Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

EB7 Boreham Housing

Boreham is an interesting mix of different styles of housing developments. Each reflects the fashion of the time it was built. From the bigger spaces round the older houses to the closely packed most recently constructed buildings, the density has shown a markedly increase.

Present day Boreham village is a mix of very old, not so old and very new Houses. It is fortunate in being surrounded by open countryside, a benefit that is much appreciated by residents. The village is approximately triangular in shape formed by A12, Church Road and Plantation Road. Housing development throughout the village is either one or two storeys and generally have brick or rendered walls and tiled and pitched roofs.

Boreham has various Grade II Listed Buildings located within the village envelope and in the wider Parish. Remnants of the architectural styles and building materials such as timber framing with pastel coloured render, red brick and red clay roofing tiles can be seen on the older buildings within the Parish. The 1960s and 70s saw an increase in residential development in the Parish of mixed design.

The Parish has a population of 3,970 people (based on the 2021 census) with a bias towards the over 65s which represent 18.7% of total residents. The proportion of detached homes in the Parish (45%) is higher than the national average of 22.5% with the majority of housing being owner occupied (71.5%) of households. There is a higher than average car ownership in Boreham (89.2% of households having one car or more. (2021 Census)

The main strength of Boreham is that it remains a separate village, surrounded by agricultural land, which provides its residents with an individual identity distinguishable from the urban expansion of Chelmsford. Boreham has outstanding views to the south over the Chelmer Valley. In spite of the scale of housing development that has taken place in recent years, it has retained many attractive open green spaces. It has good communication links with the rest of Essex. It is the extremely strong sense of community and identity, which the villagers are most anxious to retain.

Its principal weaknesses are that the substantial housing development that has taken place within it has increased in density over the years, with increasing demand on infrastructure, healthcare and education as well as parking provision. The traffic noise from the A12 is intense and that Main Road, Waltham Road and Church Road are used as “rat runs” for through traffic.

The community has identified that there is a need for more options for the older population to downsize into bungalows or ground floor accommodation and starter homes for the younger population of the Parish. It is recognised that the provision of affordable housing is primarily achieved through a mix of housing types on larger sites. Meeting these housing requirements within the Parish, whilst difficult, will help stem the trend of outward migration, enhance the local economy and keep facilities in use. A thriving community relies upon a mix of ages and skills to be sustainable, with exchange of experience and knowledge.

Chelmsford's Local Plan adopted in 2020 identified that the City should deliver 9597 new homes per year between 2020 and 2036 to meet the objectively assessed need for new homes. Boreham was identified to provide 150 new houses to the east of Plantation Road. The Local Plan could be subject to change dependant on the delivery of new housing against the targets set in the Local Plan.

The following is a summary of the housing supply in Boreham against the various locations.

The Centre of the Village

The centre of the village contains a typical 1960's development originally planned (and marketed by the developers) as a Garden Village. Restrictive covenants require the frontages of all houses to remain open plan with limits on the heights of boundary fencing or walls. Originally, 216 houses were built and there was to have been one entrance to the estate between what is now The Larches and the parade of shops in Butterfield Road. Houses vary between detached, link-detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. Most houses are two storeys but there are some bungalows in Hulton Close. Some green open spaces were incorporated into the design of the Garden Village in Seabrook Gardens and Butterfield Road.

At the same time, a small estate of 48 council owned properties was built at the eastern end of Juniper Road and a second entrance to The Garden Village was created. The majority of these are terraced houses but there are also a number of bungalows that were built for occupation by senior citizens. Green open spaces, garaging and parking bays have also been incorporated into this development. Some of these terraced houses face onto footpaths without vehicle access to the front door.

St Andrews Road was extended in 1976 to provide an extra 53 dwellings of detached, semidetached and terraced style houses. Many gardens here have been paved over to provide additional off-road parking. The poorly maintained garage blocks create an eyesore.

In 1975, The Willows estate of 47 houses was built to the south of the central area. Some houses feature white board cladding. The development has retained a pond surrounded by willow trees, which has become a small wildlife area.

The Holmans Estate was built in 1994 on the site of the former Buxted chicken factory. This development of 56 houses is of detached, link-detached, semi-detached and terraced properties. A green open space incorporating a fenced off children's play area is a feature of this development. The footpath on the eastern edge of this development has a line of fine mature trees at its Main Road end.

A small development of six larger detached houses was built after the closure of the Boon's coach company depot in 1999 this cul-de-sac is Boon's Close. There has been some limited infilling over the years. All the houses in the centre of the village are of brick construction with concrete tiles on pitched roofs. The vast majority of houses have single garages.

Main Road

Main Road, part of the old Roman Road from London to Colchester, is the main access to and egress from Boreham. It is a busy straight road with houses on both sides. However, it has many green spaces and verges lined with bushes, hedges and trees. The footpath width is good but restricted by hedging in some places. Many driving through Boreham will only see Main Road, which does not represent the whole character of the village.

Houses to the north of Main Road are mostly set well back from the road. Only about a quarter of the houses adjacent to Main Road have access directly onto it.

There are a number of listed buildings along Main Road, the Limes Cottage on the North side and the conservation Area on the South side at the junction with Plantation Road. This Conservation Area contains among others the timber framed Clockhouse, which dates back to the 16th century and is adjacent to the thatched Maltings Cottages and Maltings House, which were probably staff quarters for those working at the Clockhouse. Forming a triangular focal point with Maltings House at the junction of Main Road and Plantation Road are established businesses, the butchers that once had its own slaughterhouse and the Six Bells pub/restaurant. This started out as a small two-room pub, which has been enlarged since the seventies using the cottages that abutted the pub.

Since the new A12 was built in 1971 the strip of land between it and Main Road has been filled with houses, in cul-de-sacs, between existing dwellings or as replacement for houses on large plots of land. Two-storey Cleves Court, built in the 1980s for older people, consists of 43 flats with a single-storey common room. Each of the cul-de-sacs off Main Road has its own individual character, the later ones being influenced by the Essex Design Guide.

Greens have been incorporated into most developments. There is a particularly fine large landscaped green between Boleyn Way and Main Road, an attractive central open grassed area with trees in Armonde Close and an open garden and play area at Dukes Wood Close.

Entering the village from the west, The Lion Inn is immediately prominent and a good marker for the entry to the village. The area between the Lion Inn and Church Road infilled by a three storey development in 2010 to provide 10 residential apartments over three levels and associated parking.

Apart from a Co-Op grocery store near Dudley Close, small shops only exist at the historic intersections of Main Road with Church Road and Plantation Road.

In 2016, Dukes Wood Close development was undertaken to provide 28 houses with open spaces on land previously used for waste recycling. This has proved to be an attractive development with open space, which has helped to tie in the eastern end of Main Road to the village.

The Cock Inn is towards the eastern end of the village is an old timber framed coaching inn dating back to the fifteenth century. It was also the dropping off point for the mail coach to deliver letters before Boreham had a Post Office. It was established as an inn in the 16th century. The General Court Baron and the Customary Court of the Lord of the Manor were also held here. The building is listed and is the original timber framed construction consisting of two gable ended wings which are linked by a central hall and was converted to 2 residential in 2017 with the addition of 3 extra units in the gardens and car park of the listed property.

The area north of Main Road between The Cock Inn (Waltham Road) and Damases Lane in the east is has been included into the Boreham Defined Settlement Boundary with the adoption of the Chelmsford Local Plan in 2020. This was an important improvement in planning terms being the eastern gateway and has a clear identity of its own. Pre-war housing extends in a linear fashion to the east of The Cock towards Hatfield Peverel including 16 semidetached council built houses known as Orchard Cottages. In 2018, four additional semidetached houses were added at the easterly end. On the south side of the road are older individual houses in large plots with open fields to the rear giving clear views towards the Chelmer Valley.

Church Road

Church Road runs from its junction with Main Road, through the southern Conservation Area and down to the Chelmer Blackwater Canal at Black Bridge.

Church Road North West

The majority of the length of Church Road North-West has greens or verges to one or both sides. These provide a valuable social and visual feature.

This whole area is an interesting mix of old and new buildings ranging from the picturesque 17th century thatched cottages (No's 13 and 15 are Grade 2 Listed) near Main Road to the carefully designed two-storey block of four maisonettes built in 2004 near the shops and adjacent to a large eucalyptus tree.

Opposite the access to Butterfield Road and the main village shops is Cooper's Green planted with trees and shrubs. This was previously the site of an old people's complex known as Coopers. This site was redeveloped in 2008 by the local Housing Association to provide eight affordable homes.

The houses in the Chase were built by the Council at various times in 1950s and 1960s council built housing estate. In the 1990s, the Airey houses in Church Road were demolished and new houses and maisonettes built to a greater density, some without front gardens.

Trelawn, an attractive development, consists of two blocks of flats with dark stained timber windows. It has a well landscaped front communal garden.

Many properties have boundary hedges, but some newer houses have open plan front gardens. A few houses in The Chase still have their original chain-link boundary fencing. Lodge Crescent bungalows have low diamond-shaped wooden rails on posts. Garage blocks are provided for The Chase and Old Forge Road, unlike the dwellings with individual garages.

Church Road East

This area is a major focus for medieval settlement with significant below ground archaeological potential. The Southern Conservation Area encompasses much of Boreham's early architectural history. The Church, originally a small Saxon building is regarded by many as the heart of the village. Close to the Church stands The Queens Head, part of which dates back to the 16th century and the adjacent McMillan's Cottages. Within a stone's throw of the Church and facing each other across Church Road are the Old Vicarage with an 18th century frontage and the Old Rectory with its 15th century timber framing. Opposite the Church are a pair of 18th century timber framed cottages, Ebenezer Cottage and Coppers, and further to the east is Babylon originally a 15th century timber framed house renovated in the 20th century and the impressive 18th century Boreham Manor. With its fine sash windows and brick façade it never housed the Lord of the Manor, nor has it been the site of one of Boreham's Manors. A unifying feature of this area is the low brick walling such as that alongside Boreham Manor and the Church. To the Eastern end of Church Road, before it turns down the Chelmer There is Shottesbrook and Old Hall Farm.

Viewed from any direction, the greens at the junction of Church Road and Plantation Road make a strong impact. The chestnut trees are large and mature and provide a shady canopy in summer and are under-planted with daffodils, which give a brilliant display in spring. The surrounding houses greatly benefit from this attractive setting.

The houses to the south of the eastern end of Church Road are a mix of individually designed two-storey houses; some have roof rooms with dormer windows. They have been built at various times and there has been some infill development. These houses are relatively large. Most have rendered walls in pastel shades but some have red

brick ground floor walls and chimneys. There are some outbuildings with black painted weatherboarding. Most roofs are pitched and tiled and mainly have gabled ends. Rainwater pipes generally match the colour of the rendering. Some of the older houses have timber sliding sash windows and many windows are divided into small panes. Front boundaries have either brick walls of varying heights backed with planting, hedging or stained timber open vertical slatted fencing. Some have no front gates and almost all have trees in their front and back gardens. Part of Bowers is 17th century. The end house on the corner is Shottesbrook, which in part dates from the 16th century. It has a Georgian frontage. Old Hall, once a 15/16th century Manor House, has a Victorian extension to the south.

River Cottages is a linear development of eight pairs of two-storey council built houses with central brick chimneys. Most have privet hedges to the front boundaries behind a grass verge and are some of the first houses seen when entering the village from the south.

Plantation Road

Plantation Road is one of the main routes through the village and is a bus route. It is one of the more attractive roads in the village because the majority of houses are set well back from the road creating a feeling of space.

There is a mix of bungalows, detached and semi-detached houses. Most early buildings on the west side were built originally in the 1930s and on the east side in the 1960s with open plan front gardens. Haselfoot Road is an un-adopted road of bungalows; it has no street lighting. Allens Close was built in 1969 and Sussex Close in 1975.

All dwellings are of masonry construction with red and yellow stock bricks being used. This is complemented with a range of materials as feature panels including stained or painted timber, render and pebbledash of various colours. All roofs are pitched and covered with either tiles or slates. The range of ages of the dwellings has resulted in the windows and doors in a variety of styles as individuals have stamped their own personality on their homes. There are timber, metal or UPVC windows either as sash, Georgian, leaded or plain in style. At the northern end of Plantation Road one side of the recreation ground abuts the footpath.

The latest housing development of 150 units sits to the east of Plantation Road facing onto open countryside. This development was opposed by the local community due to the lack of school and healthcare infrastructure to support it but was overturned at Appeal. The development of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses of mixed unit sizes was completed in 2021 and is now fully occupied. However, questions have been raised about the lack of footpaths in a village setting and the lack of clarity as to division of pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Beyond the Defined Settlement Boundary

Beyond the defined settlement boundary of the village of Boreham there are numerous other properties usually detached in style and sited on larger plots. These properties are largely situated along Waltham Road through to Runsell Green and Bird Farm Lane, Generals lane to the West and Dameses Lane to the East. They are individual plots often isolated without immediate neighbours situated along the routes of these roads and without public utilities of gas and mains drainage.

The majority of these individual buildings appear to have been constructed in late Victorian the first half of the 20th century. Very few of these building have been built in the last 50 years albeit some have had significant upgrades to bring them to modern day standards. These larger houses are various in style and largely of brick or timber construction with pitched roofs.in recent times many have changed in their outward appearance through renovation.

A number of these buildings away from the Village are listed. These included Great Holts and Little Holts, Brent Hall, Wallace's Farm and Bird Farm in Waltham Road and Bulls Lodge Farm, Mount Maskells and New Hall in Generals Lane.

Generally, development outside the Defined Settlement Boundary of the village has been deterred by the local planning authority hence there has been very little change in recent years.