

Guidance on preparing  
**HERITAGE STATEMENTS** for  
listed building consent applications



An old photograph of The Nook in Bradwell-on-Sea. The cottage, once known as Bottlestick Hall, was built on 'waste of the manor' of Bradwell Hall between 1754 and 1769 by William Aylett, Yeoman. It survives in a well preserved state to this day, and is listed grade II.



This guidance was originally prepared by the Essex Conservation Officers' Forum for use in the county. Some additional information and illustrations relevant to the Maldon District have been included in this version.





**FIG. 1:** Examples of listed houses of different ages in the Maldon District

**1a: TOLLESBURY HALL**

Dating from around 1270, this is the oldest house in the Maldon District. It was built as an aisled open hall. The right-hand crosswing is a 15th century replacement. The house is listed grade II\* because of its great age.



**1b: HEYBRIDGE HALL COTTAGE**

The right-hand crosswing dates from c1400 and the rest of the building dates from the 18th century. It is the medieval wing that is of most interest, but the Georgian elements are also of considerable value. Having evolved organically over time, the house has a picturesque character. It is listed grade II.



**1c: SHEEPCOATES, SOUTHMINSTER**

Dated by dendrochronology to 1615. This is a remarkably large and well-preserved lobby-entrance house. The current windows on the front elevation are later but correspond with the positions of the original lead-glazed mullion windows. It is listed grade II.







**1d: Custom House, Maldon**

This early-18th century house incorporates the remains of a 16th century house, and was altered early in the 19th century. The high quality of its classical brick façade and numerous internal period features justifies its listing at grade II\*.



**1e: Cameo Cottage, Purleigh**

This house was built in 1778 by James Bowles, husbandman. It is a classic example of a gambrel-roofed Georgian cottage, of which there are many examples across the district. The two-storey range and lean-to in the distance are early 20th-century extensions and, as such, are of little significance. The building is listed grade II.



**1f: 7&9 Gate Street, Maldon**

This is a mid-19th-century pair of semi-detached cottages. While such houses survive in considerable numbers, this is a very well-preserved example of its type, both internally and externally, and shares group value with other similar buildings in the street. It is listed grade II.





# INTRODUCTION

The requirement for a statement which supports the case for a listed building consent is not a new concept. Planning Policy Guidance 15 (1994), which provided guidance on listed buildings and conservation areas under the terms of the 1990 Planning Act, said that local planning authorities ‘should expect developers to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special interest of the site or structure in question, and to provide such written information or drawings as may be required to understand the significance of a site or structure before an application is determined.’

Today the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) says that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets or listed buildings affected by the proposed works, such that it is possible to understand the impact they may have on that significance (para. 128). Local authorities are required to consider the impact of the application on the significance of the building when determining the application (para. 129).

In conformity with the NPPF, applications for listed building consent should be supported by a Heritage Statement, which identifies the significance of the building and the impact of the works upon it. All Essex local planning authorities include a Heritage Statement amongst their validation requirements for listed building consent. Such applications should be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement setting out the thinking on the design process behind the scheme. Current guidance recommends that the Heritage Statement be included in the Design and Access Statement. Maldon District Council’s emerging Local Plan also emphasises the need for heritage statements in support of applications which affect the historic environment. The preparation of a heritage statement should not be an afterthought; it should be an integral part of the design process. An early appreciation of what makes a listed building special can lead to a more sympathetic scheme.

Comprehensive current guidance on applications relating to listed buildings and indeed all heritage assets can be found in Historic England’s 2015 advice note Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/> ).



# THE FORMAT OF A HERITAGE STATEMENT

The information submitted should be proportionate to the works proposed. It is not expected – in most cases – to be a piece of original research or a full building record.

For applications with a minor impact on the listed building, two or three pages should be sufficient.

The following template is suggested for the contents of a Heritage Statement:

- Background to the application, what it's about etc
- The list description
- A brief history of the building in so far as it is known, including planning history
- Key elements of the building which contribute to its significance
- The statement of significance
- List of key elements affected by the application, ideally identified visually through plans and photographs etc
- Assessment of impact on significance and measures taken to mitigate this



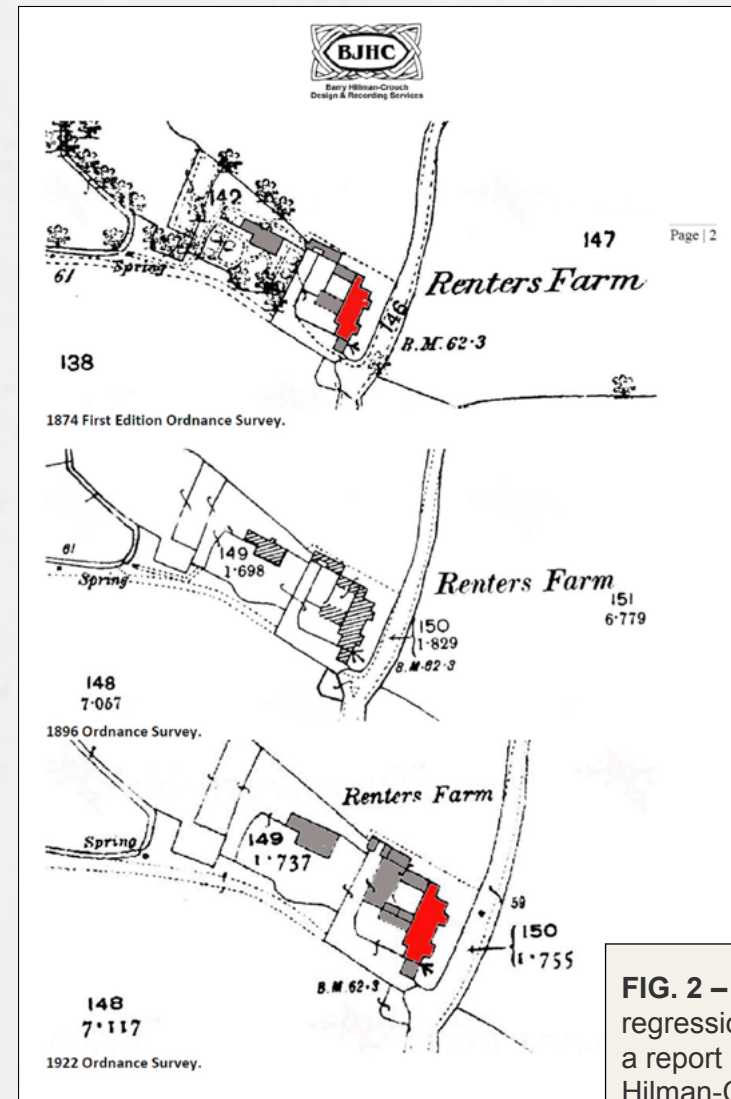
## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Current guidance says that at a minimum, the Historic Environment Record (HER) should have been consulted. The Essex HER can be accessed on-line through the Heritage Gateway or Unlocking Essex's Past, or consulted at County Hall. In many cases it will not contain much more than the list description.

Map regression (i.e. comparing a sequence of old maps) is usually necessary and will generally require a visit to the Essex Record Office, though some of this material can be found on line (FIG. 2).

Other possible sources of information are the Essex Pevsner (i.e. the latest volume in the Buildings of England series published by Yale University Press), books on local history, and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) and Victoria County History volumes for the county, now available on line.

The original RCHM survey notes and photographs are in the Commission's archive at Swindon, copies of which can be provided for a small fee on request ([archive@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:archive@HistoricEngland.org.uk)) (FIG. 3). More detailed Heritage Statements will require consulting the Essex Record Office. The Record Office's SEAX catalogue is online (<http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk>) and can be searched to see if there is likely to be useful material amongst its holdings.



**FIG. 2 –** Map regression from a report by Barry Hillman-Crouch



**FIG. 3** — An example of a RCHME Record Card, made in 1914, reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive.

The record cards often include sketch plans, drawings and photographs which can be particularly valuable sources of evidence.

The Commission only surveyed buildings thought to pre-date 1714.

**B.**

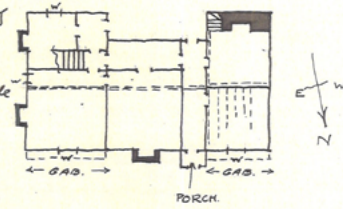
**RECORD CARD FOR SECULAR MONUMENTS.**

(N.B.—Detail of special interest is to be entered here, but described fully on a separate card.)

1. **Name and situation of Monument** (with owner's Name and Address). *Raven's Farm, 1500 yds N.W. of church. Two tenements.*

2. **General appearance:** (a) No. of storeys. *Two*  
 (b) Building materials. *Plastered timber framing.*  
 (c) Roofs. *Tile.*

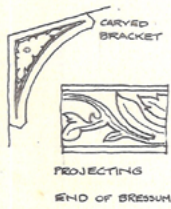
3. **Historical development** (with dates and small sketch plan).  
*The house was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and had a one storied central hall and two wings projecting towards the south. Late in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a first floor was inserted in the hall, and the roof above was heightened. Various alterations have been made recently with a view to adapting the house to suit two tenements.*




4. **Special features** (if any).

5. **Elevations:** (Beginning with the main front, and mentioning, in the following order:—(a) Walls; (b) Gables; (c) Doors; (d) Windows; (e) Chimneys; (f) Rainwater heads and pipes.)


*The upper storeys of the E and W. wings project on the N. side. The end of the bressumer to the overhang of the W. wing projects into the modern porch sufficiently to show that it is carved and moulded. Elsewhere it has been covered with modern cement facing. It is supported by a carved and shaped corbel. The chimney stack on the N. side is very high and apparently elaborate, but is so covered with ivy that it is not possible to see the outline. The stack in the N. end of the E. wing has two conjoined rectangular shafts. The stack adjoining this is modern.*



*At the N. end of the W. wing is a 17<sup>th</sup> century window frame with moulded mullions and a sliding shutter running in grooved slots on the inner side.*



6. **Grounds:** (a)



F.H. 154.

T.O.

County. *East Devon*

Parish. *Tordisland Tordisland*

Sub-Commission. *Secular*

No. of Monument. *9.*

(89,102). Wt. 33,946—47.  
 (97,153). " 5821—53. Owp. 072w. "



If old photographs, drawings or paintings of the building are available, it may be useful to reproduce these in the statement (FIG 4a). Photographs taken during re-rendering of timber-framed buildings are particularly valuable sources of information (FIG. 5).

For later and higher status buildings, architect's and surveyor's drawings might survive (FIG. 6). Local historians may be willing to help, particularly if the opportunity to study the building or old deeds aids their own research.

Finally, it may be worth contacting the Council's Conservation Officer, who may already have information on the building that could be shared.



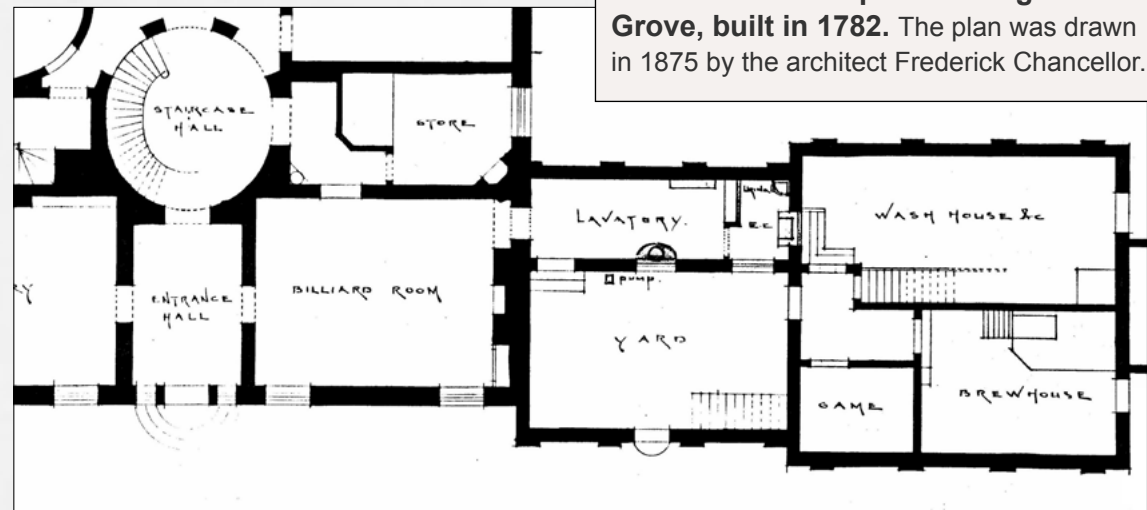
**FIG. 4a: The Officers' Mess at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome** photographed in 1918.

**FIG. 4b: The Officers' Mess at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome** photographed in 2016, now listed grade II\*. Consent has been granted to restore this elevation in accordance with the old photograph.



**FIG. 5:**  
**16th-century timber-framed structure exposed during re-rendering at Bridge Farmhouse, Tollesbury.**

Temporary exposure of the structure of an old building can provide a valuable opportunity to learn about its history.



**FIG. 6: Detail of a plan of Langford Grove, built in 1782.** The plan was drawn in 1875 by the architect Frederick Chancellor.

# THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Buildings are listed according to the following selection criteria:

- Architectural interest
- Age, rarity. All before 1700, most 1700-1840  
Key exemplars of 20th century buildings over 30 years old
- Historic interest
- Close historical associations

These are all factors which are likely to contribute to the building's significance. The NPPF says that 'in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest'. A simple approach to assessing the significance of a building is to identify its key elements and their relative importance. These are likely to comprise the following:

- The general appearance of the building, and the impression it makes on the casual observer
- Its architectural character and style
- Its landscape or townscape setting (FIG. 7)
- Its layout or plan
- Special features such as staircases, fireplaces, doors and windows (FIG. 8)
- Surface finishes and materials, such as bricks, roof coverings, plaster and floorboards (FIG. 9)
- Links to well-known people or events



**FIG. 7:**  
**Lock House in Heybridge Basin.**

The adjacent canal is a vital element to this grade II listed building's setting and significance





The simplest way of explaining this information is the use of plans illustrating the suggested age of different parts of the building, and indicating the survival and extent of special features and such things as old plaster (FIG. 10). Simplified sketches can also be a quick and useful way of explaining the development of a multi-phased building (FIG. 11). Dating old houses is a specialist subject, but FIG. 12 provides several clues that may be useful.

Significance can also be assessed by reference to the values (historical, aesthetic, communal and evidential) identified in English Heritage's publication Conservation Principles (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment>). The survival of historic fabric is a major contributing factor to the importance of a building, and is often used as a measure of significance.

**FIG. 8 (a - n): Examples of special features in listed buildings in the Maldon District**



**8a:** This is a late 15th-century crosswing. Although the render and Georgian sash windows are much later, they are nonetheless important components of the building's history and significance.

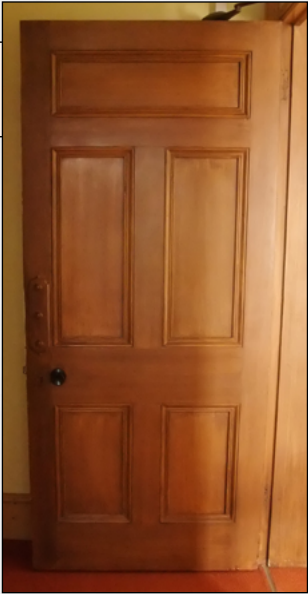
**8b:** These lead-glazed casement windows are original to this cottage, which was built in 1799. Lead-glazed windows were common in Georgian cottages, but they rarely survive. Because of their rarity, these windows are of considerable significance.



**8c:** An original doorway in a 15th-century crosswing. It has a gothic, 4-centre arched head. The door itself has been lost, but a rebate and hinge pintles show how it was fixed.

**8d:** An 18th-century internal door. Most old doors were always intended to be painted, and it may therefore not be appropriate to strip the paint off to the bare wood.





**8e:** An original panelled door in a high-status house dated 1880. It has been painted to appear like exposed wood.



**8g:** An original bedroom fireplace incorporating hobgrate in a Georgian cottage of c.1760.

**8f:** A fine 'eared' fire surround and overmantle with a broken pediment. This is the centrepiece of a panelled room in a townhouse of c.1740. It is the best example of its type in the Maldon District. Great care must be taken not to disturb this joinery through work such as re-wiring.



**8h:** The interior of a Brewhouse attached to a listed farmhouse. In the back of the fireplace can be seen the doors to a bread oven. To the left-hand side is a warming copper. Such features provide a valuable record of the routine activities which structured life in vernacular houses.

**8i:** Stair bannisters in a grade II listed cottage dating from the late-17th or early-18th century. The splat balusters are of an unusual ovolo-moulded design, and may be recycled. The rustic character of this feature reflects the humble status of the cottage.





**8j:** Staircase in 63 High Street, Maldon, a town house built c.1770 for Edward Bright, a grocer. Shaped tread ends, turned balusters and a sinuously curved handrail are characteristic features of staircases of this period, of which this is a handsome example.



**8k:** The interior of a room in the Officers' Mess at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, which is listed grade II\*. Abandoned after the war, the original plan chest, shelves, window and paint finishes are highly evocative features.

**8m:** An elaborately carved and moulded ceiling joist in a 16th century house which is listed grade II\*. Internal decoration flourished in this period, when cheaper window glass enabled the creation of warmer and more brightly lit interiors. Nonetheless, carving of this quality is quite rare and always of considerable significance.

**8l:** Doors on the grade II listed, 18th-century barn at Hales Farm, Little Braxted. The horizontal leap boards below the doors were used to manage the draught of air that passed through the barn for winnowing. These features have significance as they express the building's original function.



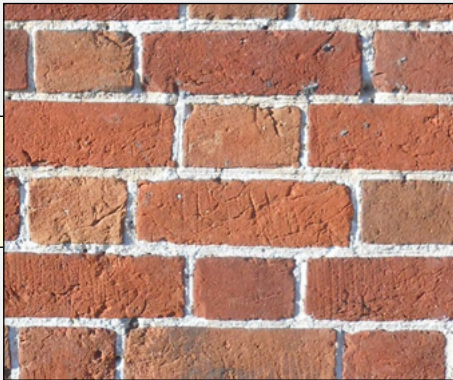
**8n:** This ceiling joist has flat chamfers with lambs-tongue stops. It is in the former workhouse on Market Hill, Maldon, which was erected in 1719, and is now listed grade II. Lambs-tongue stops first appear in the second half of the 16th century and are commonly encountered in buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries.





**FIG. 9 (a - I):**

Examples of valuable materials and surface finishes found on listed buildings in the Maldon District



**9b:** Georgian, Flemish-bond brickwork. The original white lime mortar – which has flush penny-struck joints – is probably original and is almost as valuable as the bricks themselves.



**9d:** Detail of an early-17th century fireplace with the remains of an original 'ruddled' finish. Ruddling involved coating the bricks with a mixture of red ochre and size and then painting thin white lines to convey the impression of much finer brickwork. It was very common on medieval, Tudor and 17th-century brickwork but has often been removed by people in ignorance of its significance.



**9f:** A lath and lime-hair plaster wall in a late 17th-century cottage. The undulations of the plaster's surface make a very important contribution to the historic character of the interior. The wall was patch-repaired using lime-putty.

**9a:** Double-cambered clay plain tiles. The varied hues and irregularities of the tiles impart warmth and texture to the appearance of the building. The use of locally sourced materials reflects the building's vernacular character.



**9c:** Tuck-pointed brickwork on a house dated 1798. This is a particularly sophisticated treatment found on Georgian and early Victorian brickwork, intended to emulate the appearance of fine rubbed and gauged brickwork whilst using cheaper bricks. The stopping mortar matches the red colour of the bricks. Thin strips of white lime mortar were applied to create the impression of much finer mortar joints.



**9e:** Late-medieval studwork exposed during re-rendering. The infill in between the studs is original wattle and daub with a thin, lime plaster finish. These infill panels are almost as important as the timber structure itself. In this instance appropriate care was taken to retain and repair the infill.





**9h:** Detail of an original rafter in the 13th-century roof at Bradwell Hall. The surface is thickly encrusted with soot from the fire which burned for two or three centuries on the floor of the open hall below. This soot blackening is important evidence of the building's age and function.

**9i:** Historic graffiti, such as on this door in Maldon's Moot Hall, can evoke a very tangible connection with past users of the building.



**9j:** It is a peculiar phenomenon that flame-shaped burn marks can be found in most timber-framed houses predating c1650. Traditionally interpreted as accidental, it has more recently been argued that such marks were made deliberately by superstitious builders. These examples are on a fireplace bressumer, which is a common location for such marks.



**9j:** Tared weatherboarding on a grade II listed barn. This surface finish and the boards' irregular profile contribute to the building's patina of age.

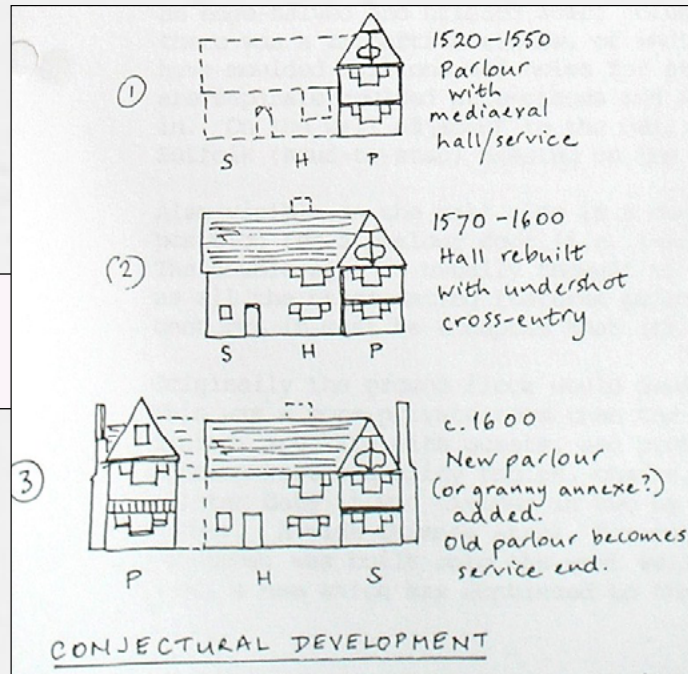
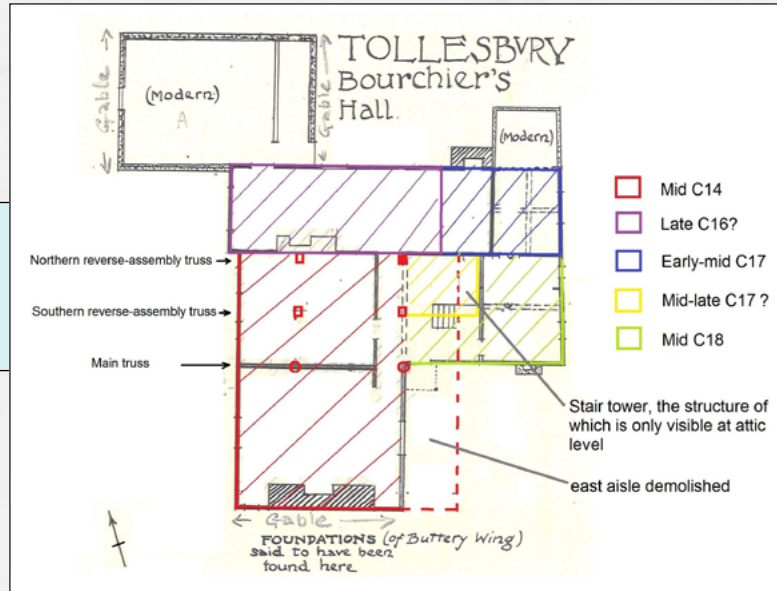
**9k:** The timbers in this 15th-century crosswing were painted yellow in the late-16th or early-17th century. It was quite common in this period for timbers to be painted like this. Other popular colours were grey, red and green. Such paint schemes can be quite subtle and have often been destroyed due to unawareness of their importance.



**9g:** Panes of original crown glass in a late 18th-century sash window. The subtle irregularities of handmade glass contribute much to the character and appearance of old houses. The skill required to manufacture crown glass was lost in the 20th century, which makes surviving examples all the more precious.



**FIG. 10:** A simplified annotated plan showing the conjectural phasing of a grade II\* listed building. Reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive.



**FIG. 11:** Simplified sketches illustrating the evolution of a multi-phased farmhouse. By Anne Padfield.



# THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The heritage statement should explain how the proposed works might affect the significance of the building.

Extensions can alter the historic character of a building dramatically, and also affect historic fabric. Loss of historic legibility, whether of the external appearance of the building or its plan form, is always damaging. Changes to materials such as roof tiles or render, and to windows, could have an aesthetic impact with the potential to alter the appearance of a building. Repairs to timber frames or brickwork could have a similar impact, particularly repointing brickwork, but also lead to a loss of historic interest. Ancillary buildings and landscaping will affect setting. The heritage statement should show that these considerations have been taken into account and the impact of the works mitigated accordingly.

Impact assessments can be laid out in table or matrix form, listing the sensitivity or significance of parts of the heritage asset, and the effect of change upon them, using standard terms of reference such as high, moderate and low. These risk becoming formulaic and disaggregating the features of the heritage asset so that the whole picture becomes obscured. This approach should therefore be used with caution, although it can be useful for some cases.

**FIG. 12 (a - r):** Some clues to dating vernacular houses in the Maldon District. \*to be used with caution since post-medieval buildings sometimes incorporate recycled material\*

**12a:** This is a late example of a crown-post roof. The crown post is the vertical timber standing on top of the tie beam. The top of the crown post and its two braces are connected to a central 'collar purlin'. Most houses dating from c.1300-c1550 had this type of roof.



**12b:** Crown-post roofs fell out of use during the second half to the 16th century, and were superseded by side-purlin roofs. This is an example of a 'clasped' side-purlin roof in a house dating from the late-16th century. Note the arched wind braces which were common before the 18th century.

**12c:** When each pair of rafters is separately jointed and pegged at the ridge, this is normally an indication the roof pre-dates c1800.





**12d:** From around the mid-18th century the tops of rafters are often nailed to a ridge plank.

**12e:** Before the early-17th century it is common to find wall braces which are trenched into the face of the studs. This is known as secondary bracing. Before c1550 it is most common to find such braces on the external face of outside walls. In the late-16th and early-17th century secondary braces are commonly found on the internal face of external walls. In timber frames predating the mid-17th century, the ends of most structural timbers are morticed, tennoned and pegged in place, whereas nailing becomes increasingly common in later structures.



**12f:** In later timber framing, wall braces are 'primary' in that they are as thick as the studs. In this example, in a cottage of c.1760, the top and bottom of the brace are jointed and pegged into the frame, with the studs above and below it nailed into place in separate sections. Most examples of primary bracing are 17th century and later although early examples occur in the late-16th century.



**12g:** Jowled posts are those which swell in size at the top to enable a connection with the tie beam as well as the wall plate. They normally point to a date before the early-18th century.

**12h:** Posts without jowled tops are occasionally found in medieval buildings, but they are a feature of all timber-framed buildings post-dating the early-18th century.







**12i:** Floor joists which are wider than they are tall (flat section) tend to date from before c.1620. The floor joists in this photograph are in a building tree-ring dated to c.1615. In the same building, the original attic storey joists are of vertical section but were intended to be hidden by plaster.

**12j:** Floor joists which are narrower than they are tall (vertical section) are first thought to appear in the late-16th century but they are normally a feature of 17th-century and later buildings.



**12k:** Most houses pre-dating the mid-16th century had unglazed windows with diamond-section mullions. These windows were originally served by internal shutters (sometimes hinged but more occasionally sliding) which never survive but are evidenced by rebates, grooves and hinge pintles. Such windows rarely remain intact but can be detected by diamond-section mortices for the mullions.

**12l:** Only houses which were particularly high status had glazing before the mid-16th century. The drop in the price of glass during the second half of the 16th century caused glazed windows to be used in common houses. This ovolo-moulded mullion window is in The Bell in Woodham Walter, which dates from the early 17th century. Ovolo-moulded mullion windows first appear around the third quarter of the 16th century and are common throughout the 17th century.





**12m:** A sash window of c1829. In the upper sash, the junction between the bottom rail and the stile has no 'horn'.



**12n:** A sash window of c1860. In the upper sash, the stile extends below its junction with the bottom rail to form a horn. The presence of horns on sash windows indicates a date after c.1850.

It is not uncommon to discover dates on buildings. Common locations are on roof timbers (12q), external brickwork (12r), rainwater hoppers and even scratched into window panes. They are worth looking for and noting. They often relate to the date of construction but can also commemorate a phase of alteration or some other event.

**12o:** Before c1800 bricks often have diagonal pressure marks.



**12p:** After c1800 bricks often have horizontal pressure marks.



**12q:** Inscribed date in the roof of All Saints' Church, Maldon.



**12r:** Initials and inscribed date in the flank wall of a farmhouse in Wickham Bishops

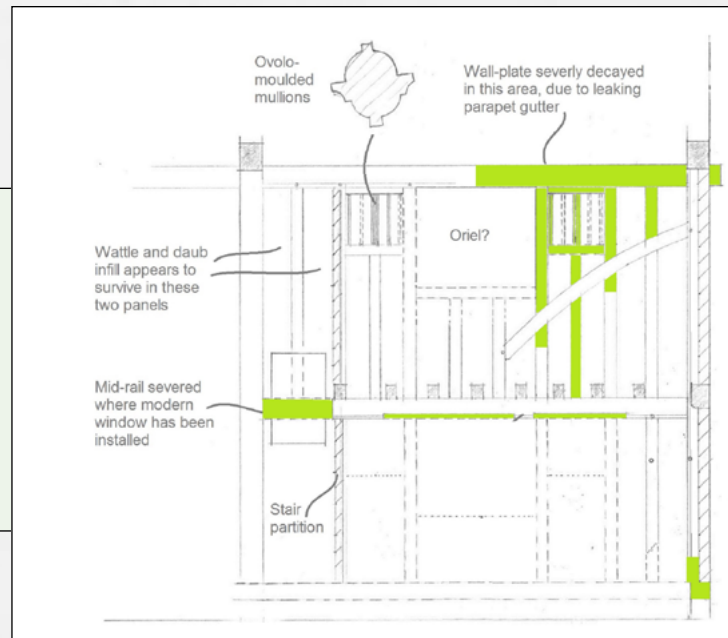
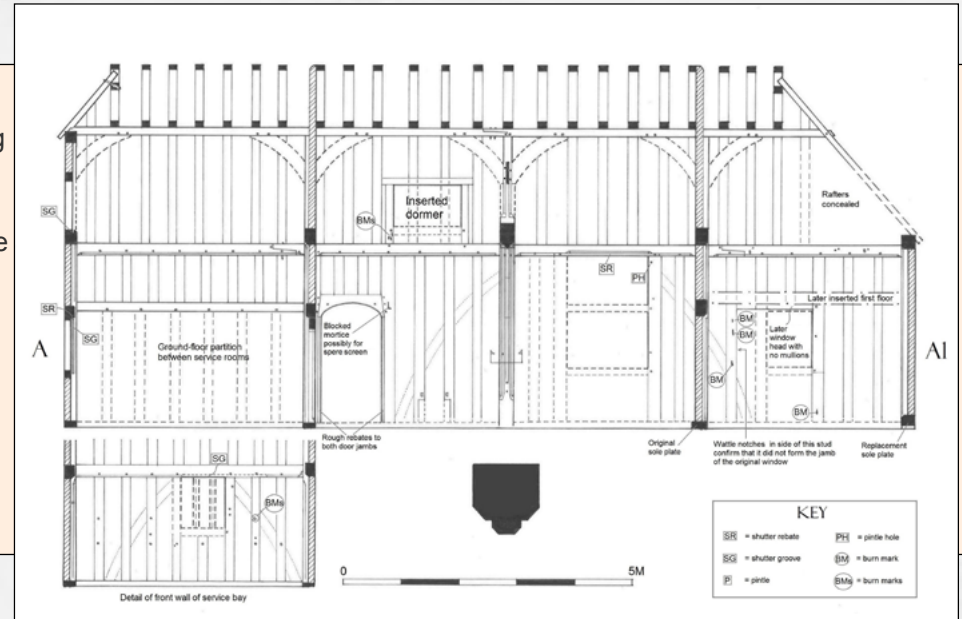


# BUILDING RECORDING

Building recording is not the same as a heritage statement, being much more detailed (FIG. 13). It is typically required where works have a major impact on the listed building, where fabric will be lost (thus ensuring preservation by record) or opened up revealing new information about it. It will generally be required where a building such as a barn or industrial building is being converted to a new use, establishing a baseline for our knowledge about it. Ideally it should accompany and inform the application, and not be prepared afterwards. Building recording drawings can prove useful in planning the extent of necessary repairs (FIG. 14).

**FIG. 13:**

A detailed survey drawing of a 15th century timber-framed house. It is a section through the house looking at its front wall from the inside. Missing original features are indicated by broken lines. For clarity most later alterations are omitted from the drawing. By Tim Howson.



**FIG. 14:** A detail of a draft survey drawing of part of an early 17th-century crosswing. The timber-framed structure was found during the course of work to be severely decayed. The survey drawing was used to agree the extent of replacement timber required. Sections highlighted in green required replacement. By Tim Howson



## REFERENCES

- Bettley, J. and Pevsner, N. 2007 The buildings of England, Yale University Press
- English Heritage 2008 Conservation principles, policies and guidance, <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/>
- Essex Historic Environment Record [http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/custom\\_pages/home\\_page.asp?](http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/custom_pages/home_page.asp?)
- Essex Record Office <http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk/>
- Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Essex 4 vols [www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/essex/](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/essex/)
- The Victoria History of the Counties of England [www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/)

## LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS

- Allen, I. and Chaplin, P.: Langford: an obscure Essex village transformed (2014)
- Ginn, G.: Maldon High Street – a history of every building (1999) [only available in Maldon Library]
- Maldon Archaeological Group: Underground Maldon: the cellars beneath the town (MAG, 1998)
- Petchey, W. J.: A prospect of Maldon 1500-1689 (Essex Record Office, 1991)
- Potter, S: Purleigh's Past in Old Photographs (1994)
- Ryan, P. M.: Woodham Walter: a village history (Plume Press, 1989)
- Smith, J. R.: The Borough of Maldon 1688-1800: a Golden Age (Brewin, 2013)
- Stenning, D. and Shackle, R.: Maldune: The 'Cross on the Hill', Vernacular Architecture Group 2003 Spring Conference booklet

These are just a small selection of local history books which provide particularly useful information relating to buildings. Other books found in the local history section of the library may also be helpful. There are many small books of old photographs covering the Maldon District, which are worth consulting but are too numerous to list individually.



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