

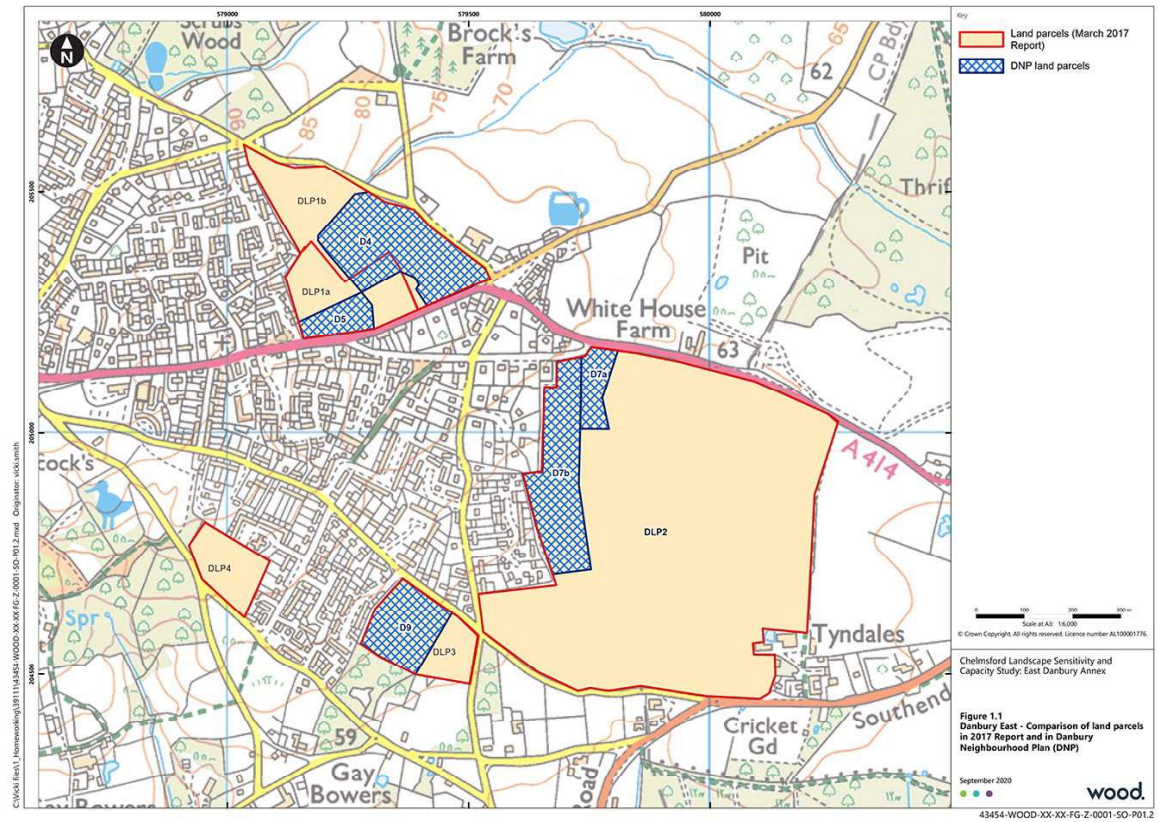
Technical note:

Addendum to the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for Revised Land Parcels at Danbury East

1. Purpose of this Addendum

This addendum sets out the appraisal of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of four areas (land parcels) on the eastern edges of Danbury. The appraisal has been commissioned by Chelmsford City Council in response to changes to the boundaries of the land parcels that were appraised in the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment that was produced in March 2017 (the 2017 Report) to inform the then emerging Local Plan. The changes to the boundaries of the land parcels appraised in the 2017 Report have arisen as a result of ongoing refinement of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan by Danbury Parish Council.

Figure 1.1 Comparison of land parcels in 2017 Report and in the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan



4. DNP Land Parcels

Land Parcel D4 – Land south-west of Runsell Lane

View north-west from southern end of Runsell Lane



View south-east from northern section of Runsell Lane



Local Landscape Character Description

D4 formed the eastern two thirds of Land Parcel DLP1b in the 2017 Report. D4 consists of a medium scale, irregular-shaped, arable field located in the angle between the A414 and the southern end of Runsell Lane at Runsell Green. D4 shares some characteristics with the host LCA F5 such as its hillside landform and relatively open arable farmland that fringes the outer patches of woodland.

Visual Context and Characteristics

D4 is an open land parcel, especially when viewed in close distance views to the west and south-west from the adjoining Runsell Lane. Its openness is due to its lack of vegetation and gently sloping landform that falls north-east from upper ground that is occupied by the properties on Runsell View and Little Fields on the eastern edge of Danbury. D4 is consequently prominent or discernible in peoples' views from Runsell Lane and a section of A414 as well as in partly filtered, more distant views from the wider countryside to the east within LCA F6. In these views the field that forms D4 is part of the open countryside located to the east of Danbury, although its openness facilitates partial views through to the properties that currently form the eastern built edge of Danbury. Whilst it adjoins the eastern built edge of Danbury, D4 is judged to form a part of the eastern visual setting of Danbury

Private views are available to residents at the properties on Runsell View and Little Fields in Danbury to the west and alongside a section of A414 to the south-west. These views are partly screened in summer months by one or, in some cases, two, intervening hedgerows. In winter months these views will continue to be at least filtered. More open private views are available to residents in properties alongside A414 to the immediate south and at isolated properties alongside the southern section of Runsell Lane to the east. Views from other, more extensive residential areas further to the east (i.e. in Danbury) and south (north of Mill Lane) are screened by the aforementioned, intervening properties and vegetation within their curtilages.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

As noted above, D4 shares some elements and features in common with its host LCA F5, whilst the noted presence of adjoining modern residential development to the east and south (fencing, walls and buildings) exerts a detracting influence across D4. The sloping landform and relatively open arable farmland that fringe the outer patches of woodland are representative of LCA F5's character. Overall, D4 retains aspects of a recognisable and intact character. The evidence of decline with hedgerows is most notable on its eastern boundary with Runsell Lane and in the surrounding area many hedgerows are fragmented, unmanaged or have been removed leaving occasional remnant hedgerow trees. D4's northern boundary was planted with a line of trees about a decade ago and these have become well-established providing moderate screening and filtering of inward views from the north. Overall ditches, hedgerows and remnant hedgerow trees are the only semi-natural habitats within or close to D4. In addition, the combination of field enclosure, hedgerow patterns, ditches, as well as the winding and narrow Runsell Lane and its isolated residential properties, provide some sense of time-depth. Overall, D4 is judged to be of moderate-low landscape character sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Due to a combination of the absence of internal vegetation (D4 being a single arable field) and south-east sloping landform, D4 is open in character with high levels of inter-visibility. There are open views from the east and the immediate south, with partly screened and/or filtered views from the north and the west i.e. from the edge of Danbury. It is assessed that D4 is a component in a moderate number of public and private views. Development within this sloping and open area would be uncharacteristically conspicuous, in the manner shown in views west from a section of Runsell Lane that extend across the similarly open field to the north of D4 towards some of the properties on the aptly named Runsell View. This situation accords with the issue of visibility of potential new settlement edge development noted for LCA F5 in the 2006 Landscape Character Assessment. Overall D4 is judged to be of high visual sensitivity.

Landscape Value

D4 is judged to be of moderate value. This is an area of ordinary non-designated landscape and whilst it has a partly recognisable and intact character, there are minimal nature conservation interests (associated with hedgerows and ditches) and, other than the northern hedgerow tree line, it is showing evidence of decline as a result of the removal and under management of hedgerows. Whilst there is no public access, the area is viewed from Runsell Lane and from a short section of A414 entering Danbury, as well as from some private properties and their curtilages on the eastern edge of Danbury. D4 is judged to possess moderate or ordinary aesthetic appeal (with attractive views towards woodland and across open countryside to the north and east) with some detracting features (associated with open and unscreened properties on the eastern edge of Danbury) and the adverse influence upon tranquillity generated by the A414 as noted in the 2006 Landscape Character Assessment.

Table 1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel D4

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – contains some landscape elements/ features that are representative of typical character.
2 Condition of elements and features	Low to Moderate– elements/ features (hedgerows within fields and along Runsell Lane) are predominantly in poor and declining condition, with some exceptions such as northern field boundary tree line
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate - gently sloping and simple natural landform; with shallow upper valley on its northern edge.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate –medium scale landscape with simple pattern.
5 Historic features and sense of time-depth	Low to Moderate – limited presence of historic landscape elements/ features associated with field enclosure, hedgerow patterns, ditches, nearby isolated properties and rural lane (Runsell Lane) to the east; time-depth undermined by the presence of modern development on eastern edge of Danbury and A414.
6 Presence of natural elements	Low– limited presence of semi-natural habitats associated with hedgerows and ditches.
7 Type of existing development	Low – modern residential development on settlement edge close to the west and south has a strong detracting influence.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate – managed A414 roadside hedgerow forms clearly defined boundary along the settlement edge to the south. The western boundary of D4 is marked by a combination of managed hedgerow with occasional trees and more dense tree line, west of which there is an absence in vegetation along the edge of Danbury formed by properties on Runsell View and Little Fields (typically rear garden fencing with occasional mature trees and short sections of remnant hedgerow) providing an inconsistent boundary feature.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	High – D4 is open to inward views from the north and east (due to lack of vegetation and sloping landform that continues to fall away to the east and north-east towards woodland and long reaching open views across open countryside to the east (including adjoining LCA F6). Inter-visibility gradually diminishes with increased distance due to the presence of intervening vegetation. D4 has a strong visual relationship with the settlement edge close to its west and south.
2 Views available	High – high numbers of public views are available from Runsell Lane and the A414 where views of open countryside are of moderate importance. Private views available to residents associated with the settlement edge on Runsell View, Little Fields and Maldon Road (A414) and isolated residential properties along Runsell Lane. D4 has a contributory role in the views of westbound travellers entering Danbury along A414.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – development (low rise, moderate density residential and employment) would initially be locally conspicuous, although it could be gradually partly visually mitigated if a sympathetic layout were adopted with suitable types and extents of planting were to be established alongside all boundaries, especially the Runsell Lane boundary. Nevertheless, the sloping landform and seasonal leaf loss would ensure that any development would be readily discernible within views from Runsell Lane and A414 and that the open nature of current views across D4 would be lost

Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Low to Moderate – contains limited landscape/ features that are typical of LCA F5, but which are not likely to be particularly valued and are not supported through designation.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low to Moderate - whilst character is recognisable and partly intact; the landscape condition is generally weakening with many elements/ features in poor and declining condition and would benefit from enhancement. The 2006 Landscape Character Assessment Management Guidelines recommend conservation.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low to Moderate - moderate or 'ordinary' aesthetic appeal (attractive views across open countryside with dominance of woodland in views to east); with modern residential development on the edge of Danbury to the west and south having a strong detracting influence, partly due to the hard visual edge of this development. Aesthetic appeal adversely impacted by the adjacent A414.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low - Few nature conservation features (hedgerows in varying conditions, small number of hedgerow trees, and ditches), Listed Buildings to the east off Runsell Lane.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low - no recreational value as no public access.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low to Moderate – interruption associated with noise levels (busy A414) and visual intrusion from the edge of Danbury (decreasing eastwards due to separation distance and lowering landform).

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Landscape character sensitivity is judged to be low to moderate but visual sensitivity is judged to be high due to the land parcel's openness, sloping landform and location close to the settlement edge. Landscape value is judged to be low to moderate. These judgements combine to produce a low to medium landscape capacity. Hence the specified types of development: approximately 50 two/three storey dwellings, would be relatively difficult to accommodate due to D4's relatively open character and contribution to the setting of the settlement. Long-term landscape capacity could potentially be increased through the adoption of careful development design and siting within D4: setting development well away from the eastern and southern boundaries; the retention/ implementation/ enhancement of hedgerows and hedgerow trees; and establishment of small copses and possibly ponds (as present at the junction of Runsell Lane and A414). All landscape planting and elements introducing or encouraged through long-time management would have to be in keeping with the characteristics and strategy, planning and management guidelines listed for LCA F5. A paramount consideration would be to avoid the extension of the hard visual edge of Danbury that is a current local landscape characteristic. Key characteristics / qualities to be safeguarded, recommendations for mitigation and guidelines:

- Hedgerows – retain and strengthen existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees within new development as has been achieved on the northern edge of D4;
- Residential properties at the adjoining edges of Danbury (to the west and south) – implement physical and green buffers to minimise impact on residents' views (whilst acknowledging that current openness of these views will be reduced);
- Detailed consideration of the setting of any Listed Buildings alongside southern section of Runsell Lane; and
- Provide positive new settlement edge (softened and well-integrated into the countryside).

Table.2 Summary Table for Land Parcel D4

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
DNP D4	Low to Moderate	High	High	Low to Moderate	Low to Medium

Land Parcel D5 – Land east of Little Fields

View east from southern end of Little Fields, Danbury



Local Landscape Character Description

D5 formed the western half of DLP1a in the 2017 Report. D5 consists of the western half of a small-medium scale, triangular-shaped, field located to the north of the A414 (Maldon Road) and east of the southern end of the Little Fields cul-de-sac. The view shown is from the field's entrance on Little Fields with D5 extending halfway to the eastern field boundary that is marked by the prominent, dark, rounded, hedgerow tree in the middle distance. D5 shares some characteristics with the host LCA F5 such being relatively open arable farmland, although at the scale of less than a single field many of LCA F5's characteristics cannot be directly applied.

Visual Context and Characteristics

D5 is an open land parcel, especially when seen in close distance views to the north from the adjoining A414 and briefly from the west on Little Fields (in the manner shown in the above view). It also forms a component of the wider western views to Danbury's eastern edge that are available from the southern section of Runsell Lane and a longer section of A414. Its openness is due to the absence of vegetation within the field, however its western part that forms D5 is enclosed along its northern boundary by an overgrown section of hedgerow. Likewise, a sense of visual enclosure is provided to the west and south, not so much by the managed boundary hedgerows, but by the nearby residential properties fronting onto the closest section of A414 and tree and vegetation cover present within their curtilages.

In views from the east such as from Runsell Lane, the field of which D5 is a part, makes a minor contribution to the open countryside located to the east of Danbury. Whilst immediately adjoining the eastern built edge of Danbury, D5 is judged to form a minor part of the eastern visual setting of Danbury.

Private views are available to residents at some of the properties on Little Fields and at properties alongside the adjacent section of A414 to the south. The former views are partly screened in summer months by the, intervening overgrown hedgerow. For the latter properties' residents, the hedgerow alongside the A414 is trimmed and contains a single hedgerow tree consequently offering little screening. Views available to