

TENDRING

Wivenhoe Quarry

COLCHESTER

Sunnymead

A69

Lufkins Farm

A68

A88

A67

Alresford

Alresford Creek

A71

A74




Thorington

Fingringhoe Quarry

Brightlingsea Quarry

BRIGHTLINGSEA

Legend

-  Call for Sites
-  Active sites
-  District boundary

<i>Candidate Site Reference</i>	<i>Candidate Site Name</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Existing use</i>	<i>Site Area (ha)</i>	<i>Potential Yield (million tonnes)</i>
A88	Gurnhams Farm	Tendring	Agricultural and partly developed golf course	61	2.2

The Site is promoted as a new Site at Church Road, Little Bentley, Colchester. The Site area is approximately 61 ha and is proposed for 2.2 million tonnes of materials for sand and gravel extraction over an estimated life cycle of 10 years. If Site A69 is allocated the Site would be worked in sequence following A69. Additional infrastructure needed on site includes a processing plant and associated stocking area. The adjoining uses include agricultural fields, woodland, the A133 Colchester Road, and residential and commercial buildings. The village of Weeley is south east of the Site. The Site is promoted as accessible via Church Road to A133 Colchester Road. See Appendix J for a detailed map of the Site.

Summary of RAG Assessment

The results of the technical and desktop RAG assessment are detailed below.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Biodiversity	Historic Buildings	Archaeology	Flooding	Transport	Access	Public Rights of Way	Geo-Environmental	Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Drainage	Air Quality	Soil Quality	Services & Utilities	Health & Amenity	Green Belt	Airport Safeguarding Zones
Amber	Red/Amber	Red/Amber	Amber/Green	Amber	Red/Amber	Red/Amber	Red/Amber	Green	Amber/Green	Green	Amber	Amber/Green	Red	Green	Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a moderate number of distinct characteristic features including straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows matrix of hedgerows with specimen hedgerow trees. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- High Barn Wood and Shair Wood abut the Site boundary and are designated Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland. Both demonstrate a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity.
- Site A88 is in a moderately sensitive location. It is just within the Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone for Weeleyhall Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located 2.8 kilometres southeast. Additionally, the Site is 5.1 kilometres from the Colne Estuary SSSI, Special

Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation and the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach, and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone. The Colne Estuary is one of the most important areas for overwintering waterbirds in the UK and is of international importance for several breeding bird species. The Site is 5.8 kilometres from Hamford Water SSSI, SPA, SAC, Ramsar and National Nature Reserve (NNR). Similar to the Colne Estuary, Hamford Water is an important area for overwintering waterbirds in the UK and is of international importance for several breeding bird species. There is a moderate potential for significant effects to the integrity of the SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites which need to be considered further through the plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment and any subsequent planning application.

- The Site may act as functionally-linked land for birds which are qualifying features of the Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Hamford Water SPA and Ramsar site. This potential would need to be tested with appropriate surveys at application stage.
- The Site is within the Holland Brook catchment, which discharges to the sea at Holland on Sea. Holland Haven Marshes SSSI (7.1 kilometres from the Site), Upper Holland Brook LoWS (4.7 kilometres from the Site) and Great Holland Pits LoWS (7.8 kilometres from the Site) are all located along Holland Brook. The pollution pathways from the nearby watercourses to the Holland Haven Marshes SSSI and nearby LoWS would need to be assessed. Any watercourses in these locations are likely to feed into the Holland Brook catchment. Therefore, they could result in cumulative impacts upon water quantity and quality to the Holland Haven Marshes SSSI. Due to the location of the Site and relevant catchments, Hamford Water and Colne estuary are not expected to be impacted directly or indirectly by pollution pathways.
- Two ancient woodlands border the Site to the south and east. There are mature trees present across the Site and within the Site's hedgerows. Ancient woodlands are classed as irreplaceable habitats.
- Two Local Wildlife Sites are adjacent to the Site, both of which are listed as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority habitat and ancient woodland. There are a number of Hedgerows Priority habitat adjacent to the Site boundary and within the Site.
- The Site is graded Red-Amber because ecological impacts are likely to be major and it is likely to require high levels of mitigation to make the Site acceptable. Detailed studies combined with a Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) would be required to assess whether the Site would have a major impact upon the Colne Estuary and Hamford Water and their associated international and national designations and whether the adverse effects on the integrity of internationally important wildlife sites could be avoided with appropriate mitigation to the satisfaction of Natural England. This includes impacts to water quality of the Colne Estuary and other tributary watercourses via surface and ground water; disturbance to breeding and wintering birds for which the Colne Estuary SSSI, SPA and

Ramsar site and Hamford Water SSSI, SPA, SAC, Ramsar and NNR are designated; and loss of functionally-linked land e.g. for Brent Geese. Additionally, the proposals could have a serious impact upon the natural environment including Priority habitats and species. This includes the direct impact to the nearby Local Wildlife Site and ancient woodland, which is an irreplaceable habitat, mature trees, as well as potential hydrological impacts to retained habitats, and loss of and disturbance to habitats for Priority farmland species.

- In addition, the Site could have major impacts upon irreplaceable habitat, the Site is adjacent to two ancient woodlands. Hedgerows and Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodlands which are Priority habitats could be affected directly and indirectly by the proposals. Substantial buffers between the Site, adjacent ancient woodlands and the hedgerows and nearby waterbody are likely to be needed. Activities which have the highest potential to generate dust, such as haul roads and mineral stockpiles, should be located away from watercourses, There should be the prevention of disturbance to breeding and non-breeding birds using the River Colne and Hamford Water which are designation features of those SSSI, SPA and Ramsar sites, woodlands, and the other existing habitats.

The loss of irreplaceable habitat, with regard to the adjacent ancient woodland is not permitted within the Government's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric and bespoke assessment and compensation would be required to be agreed with the MPA. Any bespoke compensation would be outside the BNG Metric calculations (The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide, 2023); bespoke compensation would be required, which could not count towards any Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. Compensation would also be required for the loss of farmland Priority species habitat.

- The allocation of the Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at a mid-level to the significance of Grade II listed Gurnhams (List UID: 1169294) through a change within its setting.
- The impact to Grade II listed Fisher's Farmhouse (List UID: 1111417) is likely to be a low level of 'less than substantial' harm due to the intervening presence of the A133 and established vegetation.
- The impact on Grade II listed Warren's Farmhouse (List UID: 1308683) is likely to be the lowest level of 'less than substantial' harm due to the distance from the Site.
- The undeveloped, agrarian landscape of the Site contributes to the setting and significance of these assets and the fundamental change in land use and land character would undermine the ability to understand and appreciate their significance.
- The Site lies within an area which contains extensive cropmarks, those within the Site comprises a track way and linear features.

- To the north and north-east of the Site a wide range of enclosures are recorded from aerial photography tentatively interpreted as being of prehistoric date.
- The historic field pattern has suffered considerable boundary loss since the late 20th century.
- The Site is assessed as having a 'medium' potential for surface water flood risk as identified within the SFRA.
- The Site has been identified as having a 'low' groundwater flood risk.
- The Site is entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1 and therefore is not at risk from fluvial flooding.
- Access proposed via an existing access off Church Road which is classified as a Secondary Distributor in Essex County Council's Development Management Route Hierarchy. This accords with (iii) in the methodology (see Appendix G Transport for full methodology):
- Where access to the main road network in accordance with (i) and (ii) above is not feasible, road access via a suitable existing road prior to gaining access onto the main road network will exceptionally be permitted, having regard to the scale of the development, the capacity and form of the road and an assessment of the impact on road safety.
- Immediately north of the existing access, Church Road a 17-tonne environmental weight limit is in place so all HGV movements would have to exit south to the junction with A133.
- There are highway concerns about the operation of the junction of Church Road with the A133 as there has been a high accident record in recent years. However, for the most recent 3-year period (01/04/2018 to 31/03/2023) there have been two injury accidents recorded, 1 slight just north of Church Road junction (Sept. 2020) and 1 serious south of the Church Road junction (July 2021) although accidents are recorded in the vicinity of the junction due to the proliferation of the access on a busy main road.
- The situation may be compounded by the close proximity of the Church Road/A133 junction to the petrol station and vehicle trade centre.
- The existing vehicle movements on the A133, particularly in the peak periods and the proposed increase in the number of slow turning HGVs in/out of the Church Road/A133 junction would make it difficult for HGVs to access the A133 safely without mitigation measures, particularly right turning movements onto the A133.

- Access proposed via an existing access off Church Road. This access has been used previously by HGVs in connection with minerals extraction and will require mitigation to bring it up to an appropriate standard.
- Church Road is subject to the National Speed Limit of 60mph, appropriate site access and forward visibility splays will need to be demonstrated. The existing access is constructed with kerb radii and narrows down to a width of 5.8 metres, localised widening of the access would be required. South of the existing access Church Road is approximately 6 metres wide to its junction with the A133.
- The existing access is approximately 70 metres north of the junction with the A133 a Strategic Route in Essex County Council's Development Management Route Hierarchy.
- Immediately north of the existing access, Church Road a 17-tonne environmental weight limit is in place so all HGV movements would have to exit south to the junction with A133, localised widening of the road would be required.
- Existing right turn lane on A133 serving Church Lane requires further investigation in terms of its ability to accommodate right turning HGVs whilst maintaining through traffic.
- 3 Public Rights of Way cross the Site. 4 Public Rights of Way are within 100m of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be needed to mitigate potential impacts on these Public Rights of Way and high levels of mitigation may be required which is likely to include diversion especially with regard to those Public Rights of Way crossing the Site.
- The Site is within Zone III - Total Catchment Groundwater SPZ and has unproductive/low/medium to low groundwater vulnerability. The Site is likely to have a minor impact on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate potential impacts on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage.
- The Site contains Grade 2 quality soil (very good quality agricultural land) and Grade 3 quality soil (good to moderate quality land), which is BMV land. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on soil quality and agricultural land – this is likely to include removal of soils for stockpiling prior to reuse, potentially in site restoration.
- Overhead Openreach BT power lines are within the Site boundary supplying the existing building. Utilities supplying existing on site buildings that may be demolished will be disconnected. Further investigation and consultation would be needed to determine whether mitigation measures are needed to avoid any impact on the power lines. Such mitigation may include diversion and/or protection.

- Two farm buildings are within the Site boundary. One residential building is outside the Site boundary less than or equal to 20m from the Site. One residential building, three commercial buildings and two farm buildings are more than 20m but less than or equal to 50m from the Site. Ten farm buildings, sixteen residential buildings, two commercial buildings and commercial activity (business park) are more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Given the proximity of sensitive receptors, mitigation would be required, however, the levels of mitigation required to ensure that there are no serious impacts on health and amenity would likely be difficult to achieve.

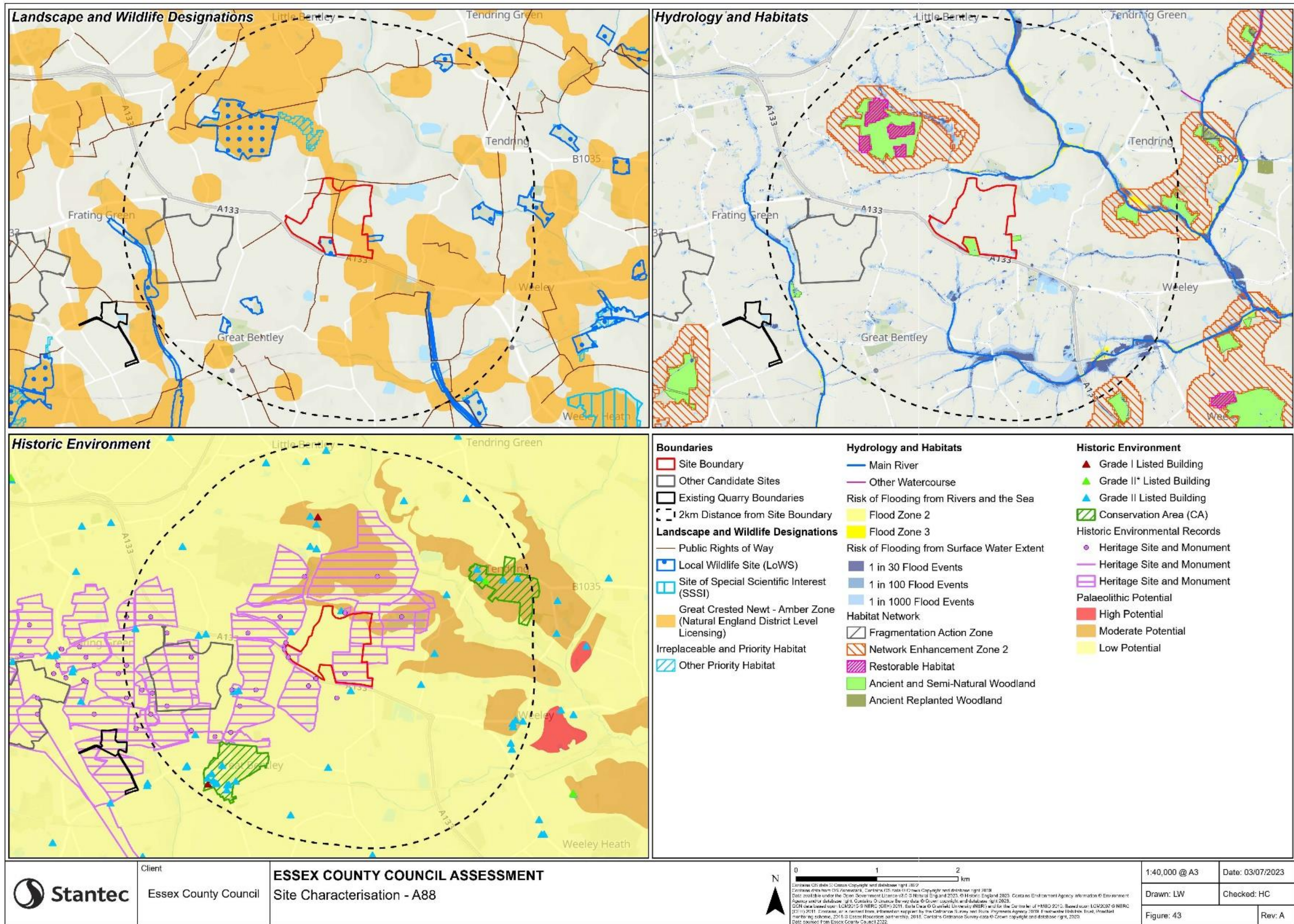


Figure 3.43: A88 - Gurnhams Farm

The information and maps above represent a summary of the site assessment. You are encouraged to view the methodology and more detailed assessment for each site within appendices B-I. These can be found on the Candidate Sites Assessment webpage on our consultation pages:

www.essex.gov.uk/minerals-review

Appendix B - Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

Appendix C - Biodiversity

Appendix D - Historic Buildings

Appendix E - Archaeology

Appendix F - Flooding

Appendix G - Transport

Appendix H – Access

Appendix I - Public Rights of Way, Geo-Environmental, Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Drainage, Air Quality, Soil Quality, Services & Utilities, Health & Amenity, Green Belt, and Airport Safeguarding Zones