

HERITAGE WARDEN REPORT

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HERITAGE WARDEN FOR HATFIELD PEVEREL PARISH COUNCIL

Friday 29th July 2021

‘WITHOUT PREJUDICE’

Application: 21/02085/FUL. Erection of 1X4 bedroom two-story detached dwelling house with associated landscaping and parking. Land adjacent to Priory Farm Cottages, Sportsmans Lane, Hatfield Peverel, Essex.

This application site - rural in nature - enhances the historic understanding of Nounsley’s social, cultural and economic past. The *Braintree District Historic Environment Characterisation Project* (2010) identifies Nounsley as having a ‘well preserved ... historic settlement pattern’. The LPA’s own published advice acknowledges that the area is ‘highly sensitive to change’.¹



John Chapman & Peter André, *Map of the County of Essex*, 1777²

The starting point is the *National Planning Policy Framework* or NPPF (July 2021). Paragraph 190(b) sets out that planning strategies:

‘... should take into account ... the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring’.³

The Tithe Map, 1841 shows that the application site (411) was occupied by John Gardner for ‘arable’ use or crop cultivation.⁴ The census return (also 1841), shows that a John Gardner, aged twenty years, was living at Red Robins Farmhouse, Nounsley. It is interesting that John’s occupation was listed as that of ‘gardener’ and not agricultural labourer.⁵

¹ Essex County Council, *Braintree District Historic Environment Characterisation Project* (ECC, 2010) p 200.

² Courtesy of Tim Fransen, Digital map of Essex (2019) taken from Essex Record Office, *A reproduction of a map of the county of Essex by John Chapman and Peter André* (ERO, Essex, 1950).

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG, July 2021) p 55.

⁴ Kemble, James ‘The placenames of Hatfield Peverel’ in *Essex placenames project*, *Essex Society for Archaeology* (e-book, 2014).

⁵ Census for Nounsley, 1841 in *The Genealogist*.



Tithe Map, 1841⁶

John Gardner seems to have been an industrious young man. He may well have toiled hard to improve his social and economic standing in the community. By 1845 John was recorded as also occupying a 'nursery garden and land' at nearby Nounsley Green.⁷ The 1851 census shows a John Gardner of Nounsley with an occupation - elevated to 'grocer'.⁸

John Gardner died a young man on 8th November 1858.⁹ Through John's life and work we see that the development site - and immediate environs - were historically cultivated for crops. The produce of the land was grown and sold for local consumption.

The application site lies within close proximity of The Sportsmans Arms PH. Correspondence from Place Services in respect of past planning application - 18/01553/FUL - is worthy of attention. The Heritage advice points to The Sportsmans Arms as being 'of local historic significance [and] located in a sensitive heritage area'.¹⁰



The Sportsman's Arms PH, 1922¹¹

⁶ Courtesy of Essex Record Office, *Tithe Map*, 1841.

⁷ 'Nursery garden and land for sale' in *The Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 21st November 1845.

⁸ Census for Nounsley, 1851 in *The Genealogist*.

⁹ 'Deaths' in *The Essex Standard* Friday 3rd December 1858.

¹⁰ Letter from Paul Skeet (on behalf of Nicolas Page) to the planning officer, Braintree District Council, heritage advice regarding The Sportsmans Arms, 28 Sportsmans Lane, 18/01553/FUL, 17th October 2018.

¹¹ Private photographic collection, picture postcard of The Sportsman's Arms PH, 8th December 1922.

Local research-based knowledge shows The Sportsmans Arms trading as an inn as far back as the mid-nineteenth century. It is believed that Aaron Royce took on the public house in 1837 and was succeeded by Robert Turnage in 1862.¹² In 1896 a local newspaper reported on the ‘transfer of the Sportsmans Inn, Nounsley Green, [as being] granted to WE Claydon’.¹³

The Parish Council maintains that The Sportsmans Arms ought to be on a local list of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA).¹⁴ It is noted that in recent times the building itself enjoyed the status of an asset of community value (ACV).¹⁵ It is fitting for the LPA to identify The Sportsmans Arms as a NDHA as part of its decision-making in respect of this application. The Parish Council believes that this is in accordance with planning policy guidance (PPG).¹⁶

The application site contributes to the significance of The Priory (grade II*); Hatfield Priory registered parklands (grade II); and the buried Medieval scheduled monument. The site provides a degree of separation between The Priory and properties along Sportsmans Lane. That degree of separation is vital to the understanding and experience of The Priory house and its registered parklands.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF makes crystal clear that damage can occur by encroachment of urbanisation into the setting of a heritage asset.¹⁷ The Priory and registered parklands are indeed screened. The presence of vegetation however ought not to be a determining factor in terms of impact.

Setting is more than just visual effects and includes other factors such as - noise, lighting, dust and vibration. The Priory is surrounded by vegetation (to a greater or lesser extent) but this alters over time and between seasons. Historic England’s guidance note - *The setting of heritage assets: historic environment good practice advice in planning note 3* or GPA3 – clarifies the point:

‘... screening can only mitigate negative impacts ... ephemeral features, such as hoardings, may be removed or changed during the duration of the development ...’.¹⁸

The application site abuts the entrance to footpath PROW 20, rural in character with trees either side. The footpath also plays a part in that necessary degree of separation. Whilst the footpath is not a heritage asset in its own right, it helps with the historic understanding of: The Sportsman’s Arms (NDHA); The Priory house (grade II*); Hatfield Priory registered parklands (grade II); and the Parish Church of St Andrew’s (grade II*). Other designated heritage assets within the vicinity also merit consideration in this instance.¹⁹

¹² Anonymous, Independent local research of The Sportsmans Arms.

¹³ ‘Transfer of The Sportsmans Arms Inn’, in *The Essex Chronicle, Chelmsford edition* Friday 24th April 1896.

¹⁴ Historic England, *Local heritage listing: identifying and conserving local heritage* (HE, Swindon, 2021).

¹⁵ Letter from Hayley Bennington, solicitor, Braintree District Council to Sarah Gaeta, parish clerk, Hatfield Peverel Parish Council, 24th September 2018, Ms Beddington mentions that: ‘The Sportsmans Arms ... was listed as an Asset of Community Value by Braintree District Council on 16 September 2013 [and that] the listing expired on 16 September 2018.

¹⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Guidance: Historic environment, advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment* (London, MHCLG, 23rd July 2019).

¹⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG, July 2021) p 55.

¹⁸ Historic England, *The setting of heritage assets, historic environment good practice advice in planning note 3* or GPA3 (HE, 2017) p 14.

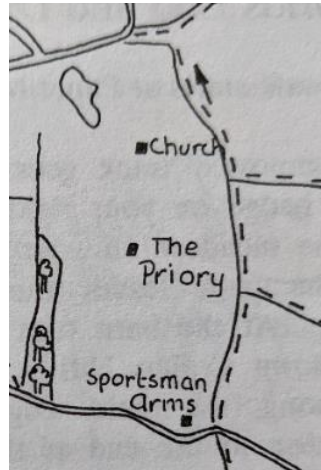
¹⁹ The Priory house, grade II* (1308731); Hatfield Priory park and garden, grade II (1000206); Hatfield Priory scheduled monument (1002150); Parish Church of St Andrew, (1308736); Lightfoots house, grade II (1123434); White Gates house,

In her book *Nine walks around Hatfield Peverel*, Catherine Voysey reminds the reader that:

‘The footpaths are routes of ancient use and are part of our countryside heritage’.²⁰

Footpath PROW 20 provides a historical and physical link - by foot - between the rural hamlet of Nounsley and the Parish Church of St Andrew. Indeed the track is marked on the Tithe Map, 1841.²¹

PROW 20 served as a corpse path (or coffin path) along which the casket was carried *en route* to its final resting place. A memorial tribute was documented ninety-one years ago which illustrates the track’s function as a corpse path.



Footpath PROW 20²²

In May 1930 Richard Seaborne Old was laid to rest in St Andrew’s churchyard. Richard’s funeral service was touchingly recorded in a local newspaper. It was reported that:

‘The body was conveyed to the church from his house at Nounsley Green by the footpath through the park, the widow [Harriet] being wheeled in her chair’.²³

The funeral procession must have been a poignant scene. A sombre sight of pallbearers laden down as they carried Richard’s coffin. Mourners marched solemnly along the footpath that lies adjacent to The Priory parklands. A path worn bare by parishioners past and present.

The Reverend DB Barclay officiated at the service and recalled Richard’s ‘useful life and work’. Born in Dorset in 1854, Richard settled in Nounsley where he worked locally as a gamekeeper. It is believed that he was employed by the Reverend Townsend at Berwick Place and then Collingwood Hope KC at Crix.²⁴ Richard Seaborne Old was one of the original members of the Hatfield Peverel Conservative Association, formed in 1882.

grade II (1147126); 28 Sportsmans Lane house, grade II (1123432); Barn approximately 15 metres west of Priory Farmhouse, grade II (1123433); Byre and shed approximately 25 metres south-west of Priory Farmhouse, grade II, (1147125); and Priory Farmhouse, grade II (1147123).

²⁰ Voysey, Catherine, *Nine walks around Hatfield Peverel* (Chelmsford, Essex County Council, 1993) p 3.

²¹ See p 2 of this document.

²² Courtesy of Voysey, Catherine, *Nine walks around Hatfield Peverel* (Chelmsford, Essex County Council, 1993) p 7.

²³ ‘Funeral notice’ in *The Essex Chronicle, Chelmsford edition* Friday 30th May 1930.

²⁴ ‘Death notice’ in *The Essex Chronicle, Chelmsford edition* Friday 23rd May 1930.



Photograph of Richard Seaborne Old's gravestone. Richard's coffin was carried along the footpath from Nounsley Green to the burial ground of St Andrew's Church, 1930.²⁵

Application 21/02085/FUL will urbanise the atmospheric entrance/exit to footpath PROW 20. The track has long provided a degree of separation between The Priory house (grade II*); Hatfield Priory park and garden (grade II); and The Sportsman's Arms (NDHA). Nearby designated heritage assets also play a key role in interpreting the historic experience.²⁶

The footpath invites the walker to engage with heritage buildings and parklands in the grandeur of their open setting. When two or more people converge along the track events are recalled, stories are exchanged and bygone days are brought to life. The route provides an opportunity for storytelling, commentary and research. In his book *The old ways, a journey on foot*, Robert MacFarlane eloquently conveys the message:

'The eye is enticed by a path, and the mind's eye also. The imagination cannot help but pursue a line in the land - onwards in space, but also backwards in time to the histories of a route and its previous followers'.²⁷

²⁵ Courtesy of Margaret Freeman, Private photographic collection.

²⁶ The Priory house, grade II* (1308731); Hatfield Priory park and garden, grade II (1000206); Hatfield Priory scheduled monument (1002150); Parish Church of St Andrew, (1308736); Lightfoots house, grade II (1123434); White Gates house, grade II (1147126); 28 Sportsmans Lane house, grade II (1123432); Barn approximately 15 metres west of Priory Farmhouse, grade II (1123433); Byre and shed approximately 25 metres south-west of Priory Farmhouse, grade II, (1147125); and Priory Farmhouse, grade II (1147123).

²⁷ MacFarlane, Robert, *The old ways, a journey on foot* (London, Penguin, 2013) p 15.



Map showing Nounsley Green 1777 georeferenced to the present-day OS map. The image illustrates that the settlement pattern has changed very little from 1777 to 2021. The map image confirms the area as having a 'well preserved ... historic settlement pattern' as per the *Braintree District Historic Environment Characterisation Project*.²⁸

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²⁸ Geo-referenced map showing Nounsley Green 1777 to 2021, uses Tim Fransen, 'Digital map of Essex' (2019) taken from Essex Record Office, *A reproduction of a map of the county of Essex by John Chapman and Peter André* (ERO, Essex, 1950).