

**Impact Assessment on a potential housing allocation situated on
land adjacent to Daubney's Farmhouse, The Street, Sheering
Essex.**

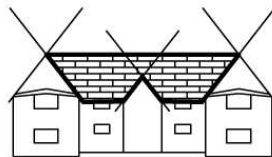
Prepared for:

Sworders

Surveyors, Planners & Architects

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nicolaas Joubert, Historic Buildings Consultant was appointed by Sworders to consider the impact posed by an allocation for a housing development (SHR.R1) on the setting of the Street in Sheering and the listed buildings in the vicinity of the proposed development site.
- 1.2 The allocation is located on a field historically associated with the Grade II* listed Daubney's Farmhouse, The Street, Sheering. It is located to the south of the farmhouse and fronts onto the Street.
- 1.3 Planning and listed building consent, Re: EPF/0753/17, was granted on the 8th May 2017 for the conversion of two redundant agricultural barns to residential dwellings within the setting of the Grade II* listed farmhouse. These are located to the rear of the proposed development site. The application was a renewal of planning consent EPF/0714/14 and LB/EPF/0715/14.
- 1.4 Sheering does not form part of a conservation area.

2. Statutory Designations

Below is the Listed Building Description of Daubney's Farmhouse and the listed barn approximately 30 metres south west of Daubney's Farmhouse. The descriptions are accessible at:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1111369>

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1147135>

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1111372>

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1147156>

Daubney's Farmhouse

Details

TL 51 SE SHEERING THE STREET, (North Side), 3/2 Daubneys Farmhouse

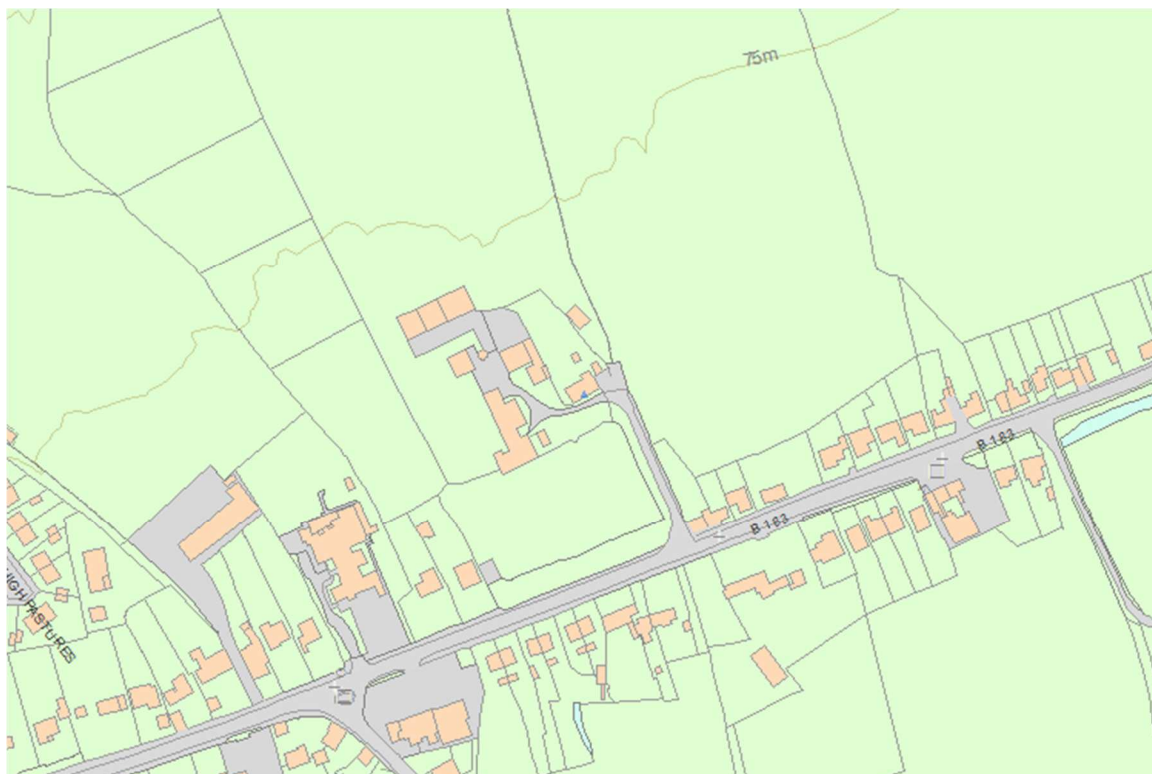
GV II* House, mid-C16, extended in C19 and C20. Timber-framed, plastered, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. 4 bays aligned approx. NE-SW, of characteristic medieval plan with service end and cross-entry at NE, parlour and solar at SW. Internal chimney stack immediately NE of central tiebeam, against SE wall, leaving cross-entry unobstructed. Additional axial chimney to NE of cross-entry, arching over to join main stack at roof level, C19. Internal chimney stack at SW end, C17/18. Tiled gabled wing to NW, probably built as a stair tower, with single-storey lean-to extensions each side. 2 storeys. SE elevation, glazed door and 3 metal casement windows, 4 more on first floor, all C20. Hipped

roof with gablet at each end. 2 diagonal shafts and one plain shaft on main chimney stack. Some framing exposed internally. Close studding with some brick infill. Jowled posts, straight tiebeams with arched braces. Despite the medieval plan the house was built in 2 storeys from the outset, the floor beams framed round a timber-framed chimney which is still partially present, although bricked in in the early C17. The original mantel beam is elaborately roll-moulded and embattled, with a later rack for 5 spits. There is a Tudor doorhead at the rear (NW) end of the cross-entry, carved with a cross and circles with intersecting arcs. There were twin doors opening into twin service rooms NE of the cross-entry, now blocked by the C19 chimney stack, but their positions marked by light mouldings above. The partition between the service rooms has been removed, the empty mortices in the axial beam covered by a plank. There were twin unglazed windows in the NE wall, their positions occupied by C20 windows, the sills still present. At the SW end of the 'hall' the original parlour door is still present, composed of radially cut wedge-shaped planks rebated together on ledges, a rare survival, with a Tudor doorhead similar to that already described. A strip of oak panelling, late C16, forming the back of a fixed seat is still present, the seat removed. This too is a rare survival. Axial beams plain-chamfered with step stops, joists plastered to the soffits, many original rebated floorboards. On the first floor there is a blocked unglazed window in the NW wall of the service end, and shutter grooves for others replaced by C20 windows. All the present metal casements occupy the positions of original windows and conform to the same dimensions. Edge-halved and bridled scarf in NW wallplate. Original ceiling over first floor, with axial beam and joists of square section plain-chamfered with step stops, supported on clamps a little above wallplate level, an unusual feature. No access to roof space. This is an exceptionally interesting building, transitional in type between the true medieval hall house and the later 2-storey forms, retaining an unusual number of original features. Parallels exist at Colville Hall, White Roding, and the Pavilion of Felsted School, which last has doorheads of similar profile. RCHM 7.

Listing NGR: TL5083614061

National Grid Reference: TL 50836 14061

Map



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Barn approximately 30 metres south west of Daubney's Farmhouse.

Details

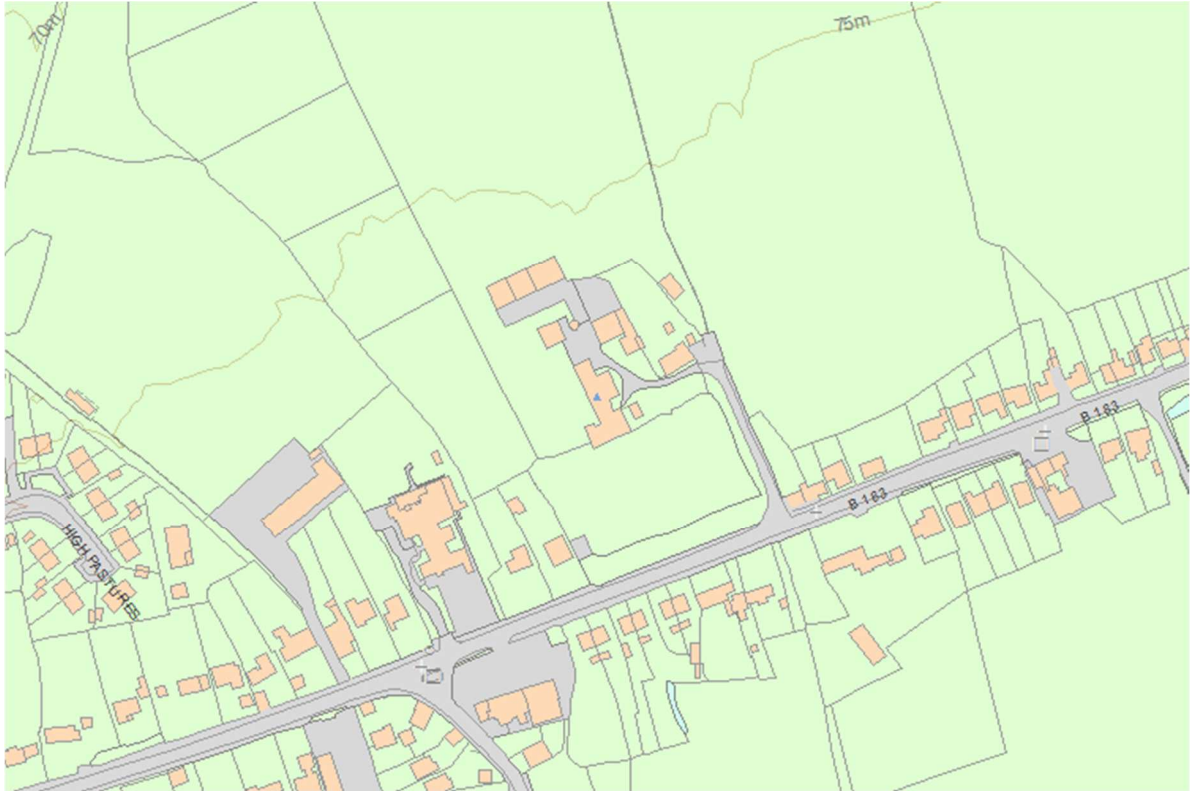
TL 51 SW SHEERING THE STREET (North side) 3/3 Barn approx. 30 metres SW of Daubneys Farmhouse GV II

Barn, c.1600. Timber framed, weatherboarded, roofed with corrugated asbestos. 5 bays aligned approximately NW-SE, aisle to SW only. Half-hipped at both ends. Jowled posts, arched braces from posts to tiebeams and arcade plate, Kentish shores in aisle, queen strut roof, clasped purlins, face-halved and bladed scarfs.

Listing NGR: TL5080214048

National Grid Reference: TL 50802 14048

Map



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Meadowcroft and Thatched Cottage

Details

TL 51 SW SHEERING THE STREET (South Side), 3/12 Meadowcroft and Thatched Cottage GV II

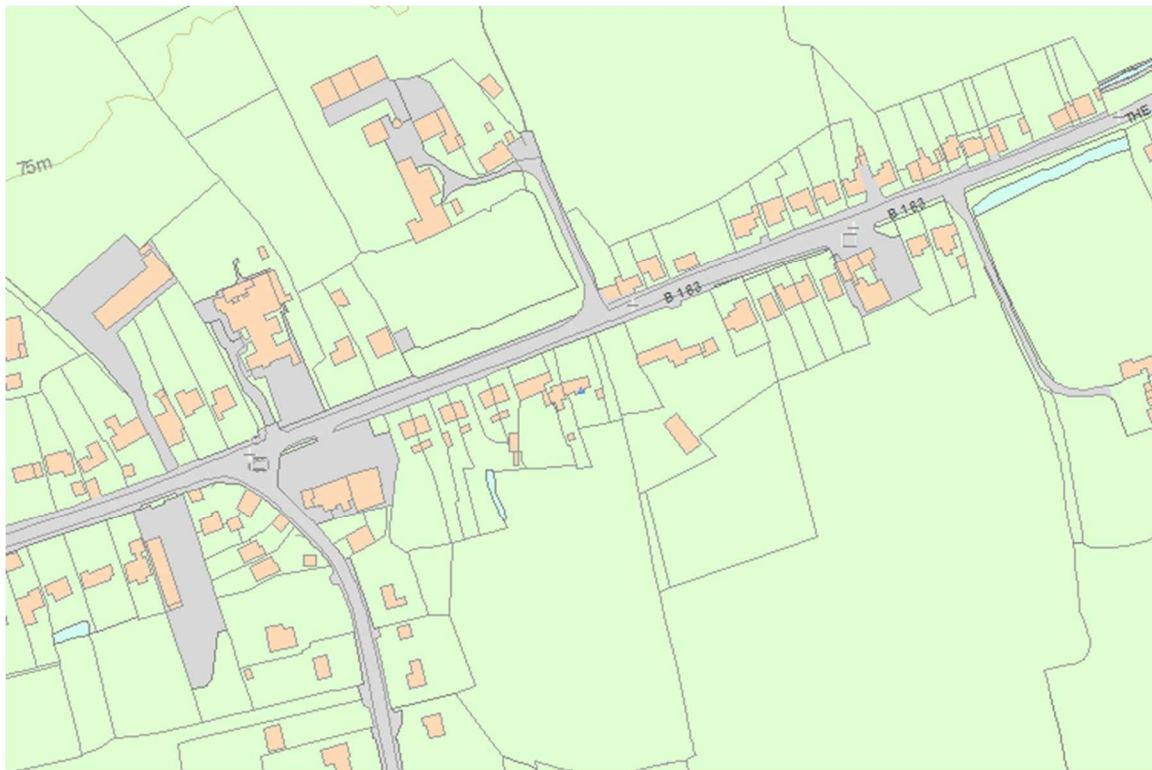
Small hall house, C16, converted to 2 cottages in early C19, extended in C20. Timber framed, plastered and weatherboarded, roof thatched. 2 bay hall aligned approx. NE-SW with integral storeyed service end at SW, integral storeyed parlour/solar end at NE. Inserted axial chimney stack immediately SW of middle of hall, and inserted floor in hall, c.1600. External chimney stack at SW end, early C19. Flat roofed, single storey extensions to NE, SE and SW, C20. Weatherboarded dado, plastered above. Ground floor, 4 C19 cast iron casement windows, boarded door with leaded light, 2 C20 fixed lights, one french window, C20 fixed lights, one french window, C20. No first floor windows at front. Half-hipped. Some framing exposed internally. Jowled storey posts, heavy studding, curved tension bracing, outside studs where visible. Cambered central tiebeam of hall with arched braces, undisturbed by insertion of chimney stack. Original floor at NE end, consisting of lodged joists of horizontal section, unchamfered, arranged longitudinally, raised approximately 30 cm above original position. Inserted floor in hall consisting of plain chamfered axial beam with step stops and

plain chamfered joists with step stops, c.1600. Original unglazed window at SW end above tiebeam, with 2 diamond mullions and rebate for hinged shutter, blocked by external chimney, with C19 cast iron casement to one side. Similar rebate at NE end indicates the former existence of a similar window there. Some original floorboards. Another C19 cast iron casement in inserted dormer in SE pitch of hall roof, early C17. Doorway from hall into parlour in original position, and inserted doorway above contemporary with the insertion of the floor in the hall. This small hall house is of unusual interest, retaining its essential structure and many features of its C19 conversion to cottages. The precise dating within the C16 may be confirmed by further examination, but it may be about the middle, when the clasped purlin roof construction was coming into use, but was still accompanied by unglazed windows in the storeyed ends and the use of an open hearth in the hall, superseded fairly soon afterwards by a chimney and an inserted floor and dormer window.

Listing NGR: TL5087213963

National Grid Reference: TL 50872 13963

Map



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Crown House

Details

TL 51 SW SHEERING THE STREET, (South Side) Crown House (formerly listed under 3/10 Sheering Street South Side) 20.2.67 GV II

House, early C17, extended in C19 and C20. Timber framed, roughcast rendered, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. 4 bays aligned approx. SW-NE, with axial chimney stack between 2 NE bays and external stack at SW gable. Rear wing, C19 or C20, and C20 extension in E angle extending to NE. Lean-to extensions at NE end, and to rear of SW chimney stack. 2 storeys with attics. 3 window range of C20 casements, 6-panel door in trellised porch with concave lead roof. Recessed panel with round-arched head in front of shaft of SW chimney stack. Chamfered beams with lamb's tongue stops over SW lower room. Joggled butt purlin roof, incorporating some smoke-blackened timbers from a medieval hall house. Dog-leg stairs rising to first floor and attic mainly C17, with C20 balusters.

Listing NGR: TL5090813979

National Grid Reference: TL 50908 13979

Map



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3. Setting and Significance

- 3.1. Daubney's Farmhouse is located in the village of Sheering to the north-east of Harlow. The Parish of Sheering is divided into two settlements namely; Sheering and Lower Sheering to the south. Sheering is the main and older of the two settlements and was named in the 1086 Domesday Survey as Sceringa.
- 3.2. As illustrated on the 1840 Tithe Map of Sheering (Figure 1), the village has a linear settlement pattern which extends east and west along The Street. Several ditches are shown on either side of the Street and on the boundaries of some fields. These are typically found on the edges of waste land and greens or common land, and are associated with drainage. Some of the ditches in Sheering appear to have formed part of earlier moated sites, and a good example of this are the ditches to the front of Daubney's Farmhouse. However, there is no historical evidence supporting the presence of a former moated site in this location and therefore the ditches are clearly associated with drainage. Many of the historical ditches in Sheering were filled in during the 20th century.
- 3.3. During the 19th century much of the roadside waste land was inclosed, and many new dwellings were constructed along the Street. This is particularly evident on the road frontage opposite Daubney's Farmhouse. Several historic outbuildings and dwellings in Sheering were lost during the 19th century and later. Between 1840 and 1980 the number of dwellings in the Street increased from 66 to over 100 (Figures 1-4).
- 3.4. Historically, arable farming seems always to have predominated and was the main source of employment in Sheering. Pastoral farming increased from the 14th century onwards and sheep farming played a large role in Sheering. From the late 16th century, barley became particularly important due to Sheering's maltings industry. Returns of 1866 recorded 680a of cereals for the Parish. This figure was dominated by wheat and barley. By 1840 there were eleven farms; five of 50–100a., four of 100–200 a., and two of over 200 a. By 1977 there were only five farms, excluding smallholdings.
- 3.5. Unlike the linear pattern of the rest of the dwellings along the Street, Daubney's Farmstead is set back from the street scene of the village. The farmstead is accessed via a long drive on the east side of a paddock which forms the frontage of the property to the Street. The historical strip of waste land between the property and the Street is now lawned and screens the farmstead from the Street with a mature natural hedge. The hedge defines the north boundary of the historical waste land on the Street. Very little of the waste land as shown on the Tithe Map has survived on the street scene of Sheering.
- 3.6. Field 115 as shown on the Tithe Map was a pastoral field used for grazing, currently used for the same purposes.

- 3.7. Figures 1 – 4 illustrate the historical alterations to the site of Daubney's Farm between 1840 and 1920.
- 3.8. After 1840, Daubney's Farmhouse was subdivided into two tenements. During the 20th century, after 1920, this alteration to the original arrangement of the house was reversed. The mid-16th century Grade II* farm house is of significant interest. The survival of a high proportion of its original features and fabric enables a clear interpretation of its plan form and character. It is described as *'transitional in type between the true medieval hall house and the later 2-storey forms.'* and worthy of a thorough study and recording.
- 3.9. It is suggested that the Grade II listed barn to the west of the farmhouse dates to c.1600. The aisled barn is entirely complete as constructed, and of good carpentry detail. Although aisled barns are not rare in Essex, this barn has some interesting features such as the Kentish shores in the rear aisle and the queen strut roof structure which is a later derivative of the queen posts roof structure type which dominated within South Norfolk and North Suffolk during the 15th and part of the 16th century. Some rare examples are found in Essex.



Figure 1: Extract from the Tithe Map of the Parish of Sheering, dated 1840.

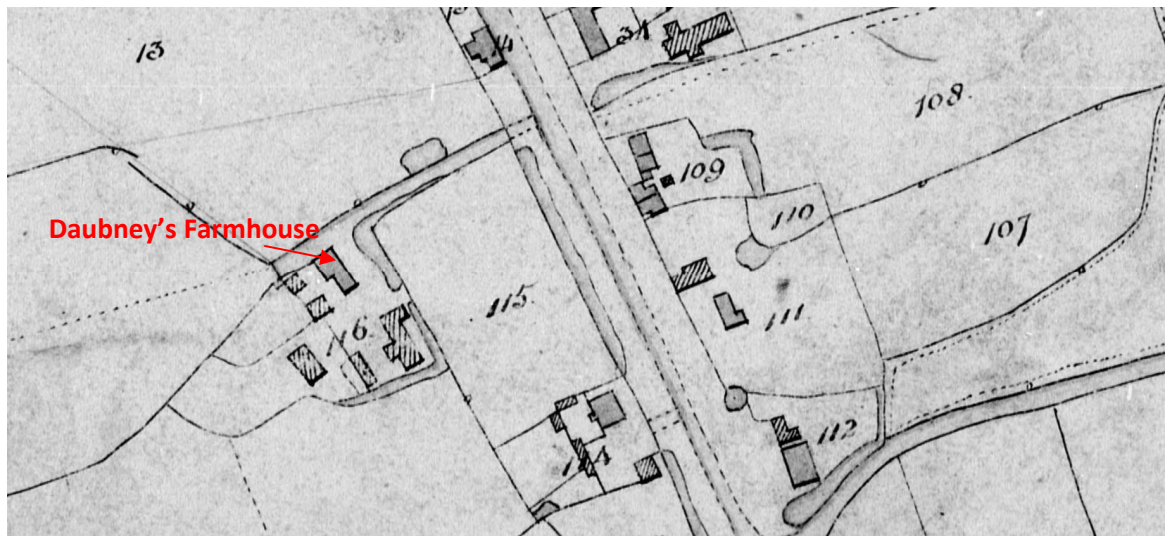


Figure 2: Enlarged extract illustrating the site of Daubney's Farmhouse, Sheering.

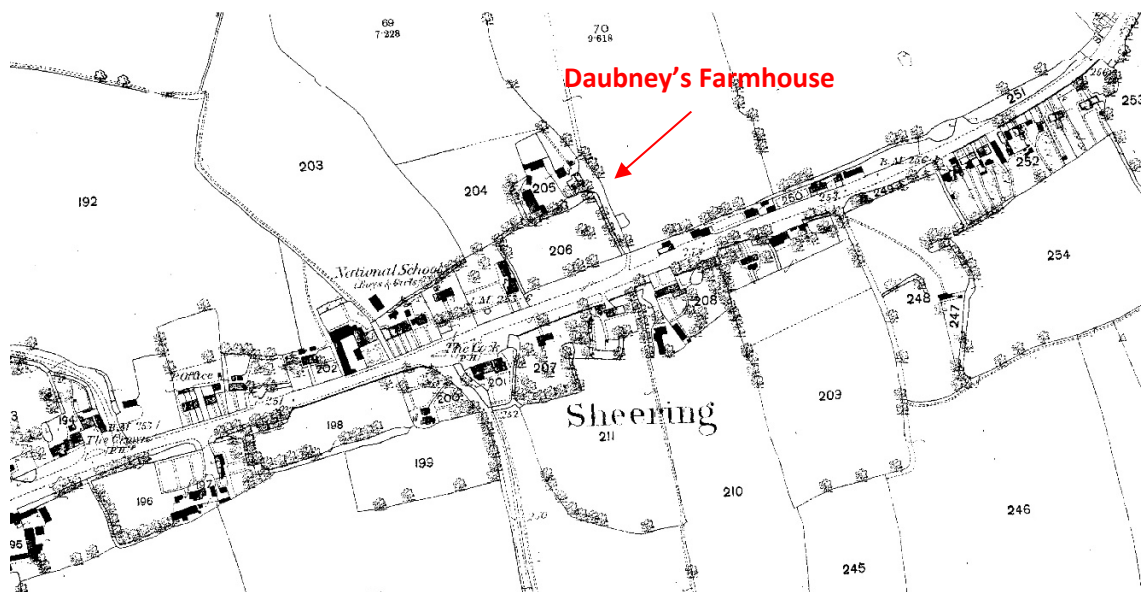


Figure 3: Extract from the OS County Series: ESSEX 1:2,500 1874-1890

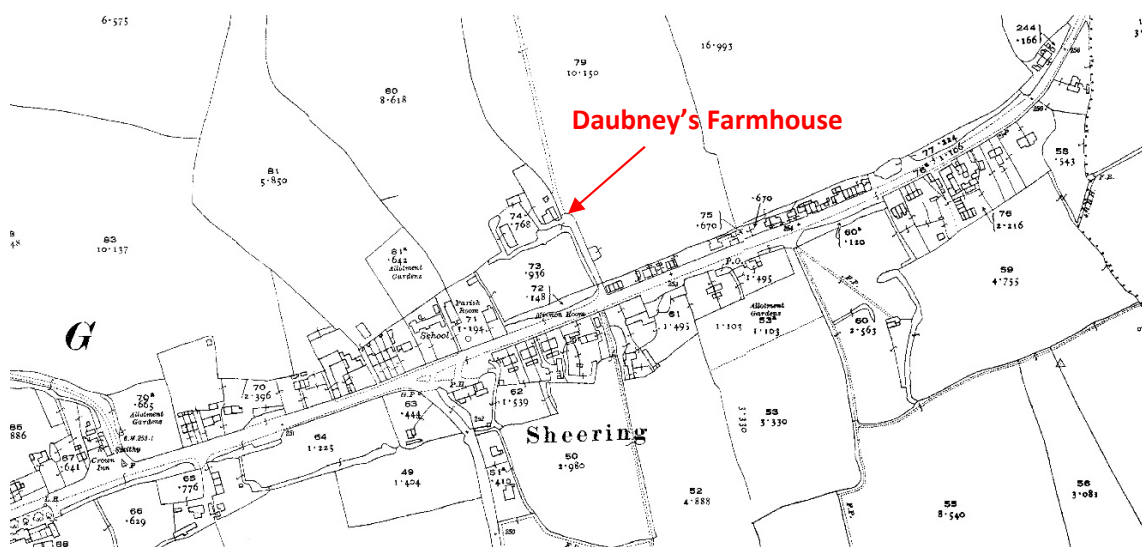


Figure 4: Extract from the OS County Series: ESSEX 1:2,500 1920-1921

4. Impact Statement

Refer to Site Plan SHR.R1

- 4.1. Sheering has not been designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest and is therefore not part of a conservation area. However, the site which is to be considered for an allocation to develop is within the vicinity of four listed buildings. Two of these buildings are located on the south side of the Street. These buildings are both Grade II listed and known as Meadowcroft thatched Cottage which is a 16th century hall house and Crown House which dates to the 17th century. Meadowcroft thatched Cottage is located directly opposite the proposed development site whereas Crown House is located further to the east. Both listed properties are set back from the Street.
- 4.2. There are two listed buildings to the north of the proposed development site. Both buildings formed part of the historical farmstead known as Daubney's Farm. The mid-16th century farmhouse is Grade II* listed and the barn to the west of the farmhouse is a Grade II listed building.
- 4.3. Planning and Listed Building consent was granted for the conversion of the Grade II listed and the secondary unlisted barn to residential units. Both barns are within the curtilage of the Grade II* farmhouse. Epping Forest District Council has considered the application to convert these barns not to pose a significant risk to the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II* Listed Building and its setting.
- 4.4. The proposed development site forms part of the historic farmstead of Daubney's Farm.
- 4.5. Paragraph 134 of the The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states; *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.'*
- 4.6. The NPPF identifies protection and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system (paragraphs 6, 7 and 14). The NPPF also states that the significance of listed buildings can be harmed or lost by alteration to them and development in their setting (paragraph 132) and that the conservation of heritage assets is a core principle of the planning system (paragraph 17).
- 4.7. As within many villages in England, local industries and shops have declined in number. This is due to several factors. As a consequence, the population of a high number of rural villages are now made up of retirees and a larger commuting population. However, the increase in the commuter

population has brought some benefits to the villages such as continued and increased support to the local pubs, shops, schools and churches.

- 4.8. As the availability of development land within cities and key development areas decline the pressure for new developments in more rural villages are on the increase. Sustainable development is therefore of great importance. New developments within the setting of rural villages can be particularly harmful to the character of such villages. Concern is raised by the neutral quality of many new developments which although they may not cause overt harm, are perceptibly diluting the architectural interest of rural villages. It is therefore important that developments must be of a scale, density and in materials and craftsmanship that reflect the local vernacular tradition of the area and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.9. As discussed Sheering has a linear settlement pattern. Therefore, back land developments can have a particularly harmful impact on the character of the village. In this case the proposed site for development is in close proximity to the Street and is in line with the linear character of the village. The site is set back from the Street which reflects the 'natural' traditional relationship with the Street as demonstrated by the two listed buildings opposite the proposed development site.
- 4.10. The Grade II* listed building has a different relationship to the Street. The farmhouse is separated from the main street scene by a pastoral field and a mature hedge to the front of the property. The farmstead is connected to the Street with a long driveway on the east side of the property. The vista down the driveway to and from the frontage of the farmhouse and rural landscape beyond is of significant interest. This vista not only demonstrates the historic relationship between the farmhouse and the Street/village but also the connection between the village and its countryside setting. If a proposed development to the front of the listed farmhouse retains this vista, and the prominence of the farmhouse within its setting, the impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed building should be at an acceptable level. The listed barn to the west of the farmhouse did not have a historical relationship with the Street as it functioned and looked 'inwardly' in the setting of the enclosed' farmyard. The proposed development does not pose an unacceptable impact on the barn as it will not interfere or confused the historic layout of the farmyard or the interaction between the barn and the farmhouse.
- 4.11. It is therefore considered that following prescribed conservation principals for development within the historic setting of Sheering, a development on the allocated land can deliver housing which respects and enhances the historical setting of the surrounding listed buildings and the

wider setting of Sheering. At worst such a development poses less than substantial harm.