

Boxted Bridge Heritage Assessment



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Essex Highways

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Boxted Bridge

Heritage Assessment

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Place Services for Essex Highways. This document provides an assessment of heritage significance for Boxted Bridge ('the Site'). The location and extent of the Site is shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Location Plan (Google Earth)

- 1.2. This report provides a baseline summary of the significance of known heritage assets within the Site and its environs based on documentary research and a site inspection. The aim is to assess the significance of these heritage assets to inform and manage change.
- 1.3. This assessment follows best practice procedures produced by Historic England^{1,2,3,4}, and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists⁵ and is designed to meet the requirements of heritage planning policy contained in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).⁶

¹ Historic England, July 2015. *The Historic Environment in Local Plans - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1*.

² Historic England, July 2015. *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2*.

³ Historic England, December 2017. *The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*.

⁴ Historic England, 2019. *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*

⁵ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, January 2017. *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*.

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government, 2019. *National Planning Policy Framework*.



- 1.4. Planning policy, legislation and guidance relating to the historic environment (see **Appendix A** for detail) highlights the need to consider all elements of the historic environment to inform the planning process, including, where appropriate, measures to mitigate adverse impacts from proposed developments.

The Site

- 1.5. The Site comprises of Boxted Bridge, Essex County Council bridge no. 59, a steel girder bridge at the joining of Wick Road, Lower Farm Road and Sky Hall Road in Boxted, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TM 01249 34426. The Site is located to the north of Boxted (settlement) and crosses the River Stour.
- 1.6. One designated heritage asset is located within the environs of the Site to the south west, the Grade II listed Boxted Mill (List Entry ID: 1238742).
- 1.7. The Site comprises the bridge and area to the north-east, east and south-east of the existing bridge; it is currently accessed from Lower Farm Road to the south and Wick Road to the north.
- 1.8. The existing bridge was constructed in c.1900 and replaced an earlier eighteenth century bridge.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. This report provides an assessment of the potential impacts on the heritage assets arising from a development within the Site.
- 2.2. The brief for this Heritage Assessment requires the following tasks to be undertaken:
- a. A review of relevant policies and guidance;
 - b. Identification of heritage assets potentially affected by development;
 - c. Assessment of the significance of heritage assets; and
 - d. Recommendations to reduce potential impact.
- 2.3. In line with the above tasks, this assessment has included the following:
- Identification of any designated or non-designated heritage assets potentially affected by future development;
 - Research to obtain information from historic maps, documents and secondary sources relating to identified heritage assets;
 - Consultation of Historic England's National Heritage List;
 - A walk-over survey of the Site and the surrounding area;
 - Assessment of the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets, including the contribution made by setting to significance;
 - Assessment of the potential impacts, both direct and indirect (due to change within an asset's setting) that development (as known) will have on the significance of the heritage assets;
 - Production of recommendations for additional field investigations or mitigation in line with statutory requirements and best practice guidelines; and
 - Consultation of local and national planning policy and guidance pertaining to heritage.
- 2.4. The relevant legislation and policy context are set out in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 2.5. Statutory designation descriptions are reproduced in **Appendix B** of this report.
- 2.6. The Site and Study Area were visited in August 2020. The aim of the Site walkover was to identify any features of heritage merit. Roads were walked through the Site. A photographic record of the visit was made. A number of the resultant images are reproduced in this report.
- 2.7. In order to assess the significance of a heritage asset, arising from change within its setting, this assessment has followed the four steps set out in Historic England's guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets*.⁷ These steps are as follows:

⁷ Historic England, December 2017. *The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*.



- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
 - Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
 - Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
 - Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.
- 2.8. Section 3 of this report identifies any heritage assets potentially affected by future development, as well as providing an overview of the historical development of the Site and its surroundings.
- 2.9. An analysis of the existing Site conditions, based on the Site inspection, is presented in Section 4.
- 2.10. Section 5 provides an assessment of the significance of the heritage assets potentially affected by future development. To assess the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets, this report has drawn guidance from Historic England⁸ which recommends making assessments under the categories of: Archaeological interest, Architectural and Artistic interest, and Historic interest.
- 2.11. Section 6 provides recommendation for potential development within the Site.
- 2.12. Section 7 concludes with a summary of the results of this assessment and provides recommendations for future development.

⁸ Historic England, 2019. *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets: Historic England Advice Note 12.*

3. Heritage Baseline

Heritage Assets

Designated Heritage Assets considered relevant to the assessment

- 3.1. The only designated heritage asset relevant to this assessment is Grade II listed Boxted Mill (List Entry ID: 1238742) which is located to the south west of the Site.
- 3.2. The listing description of the designated heritage asset is reproduced in Appendix B.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets considered relevant to the assessment

- 3.3. Island Cottage to the south east of the Site has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset. The cottage is two storeys, red brick with painted render under a slate roof, with weatherboarding to the rear. A low red brick boundary wall encloses the cottage garden to the west, abutting the road Sky Hall Hill and Lower Farm Road.
- 3.4. The bridge itself may also be considered a non-designated heritage asset.

Historical Overview

- 3.5. There is no record of any ancient road bridges on this location which crossed the Stour into Suffolk.⁹
- 3.6. The location of the Site can clearly be seen in the Chapman and Andre Map of Essex, 1777 (**Figure 2**). There is no bridge depicted on the map, which shows that the road passed to the south of the river without crossing it. The mill and some buildings on this road are evident on the map at this time, along with the island within the River Stour to the north of the mill.

⁹ 'Boxted: Introduction', in A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10, Lexden Hundred (Part) Including Dedham, Earls Colne and Wivenhoe, ed. Janet Cooper (London, 2001), pp. 54-59. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol10/pp54-59>.

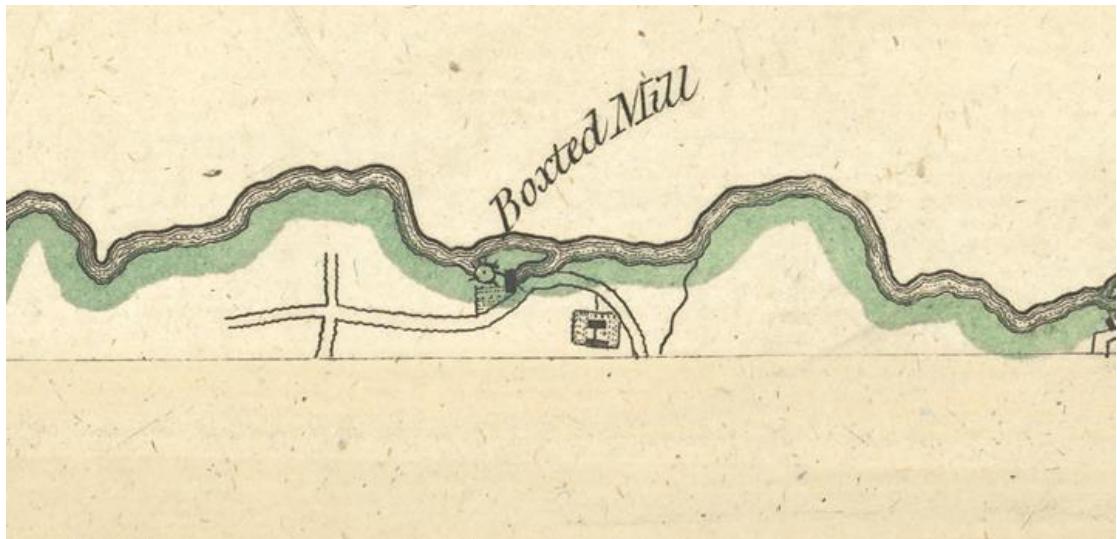


Figure 2 Chapman and Andre Map of Essex 1777

- 3.7. A footbridge was rebuilt at Boxted Mill in 1788 by the River Stour Navigation Co. Ltd. This can be seen on the Tithe Map of 1836 (**Figure 3**).¹⁰ The bridge is depicted on the tithe as a fairly wide crossing, indicating its potential function as a road bridge, without an accompanying apportionment number. The bridge joined at the junction between Lower Farm Road and Sky Hall Hill, heading north over the Stour and into Suffolk. The Tithe Map also highlights the mill to the south west of the bridge, (named as 'Boxstead Mill Yards') and the 'Cottage and Garden' to the south. These plots were owned by Hannah Freeman at this time, a local landowner of Rivers Hall.

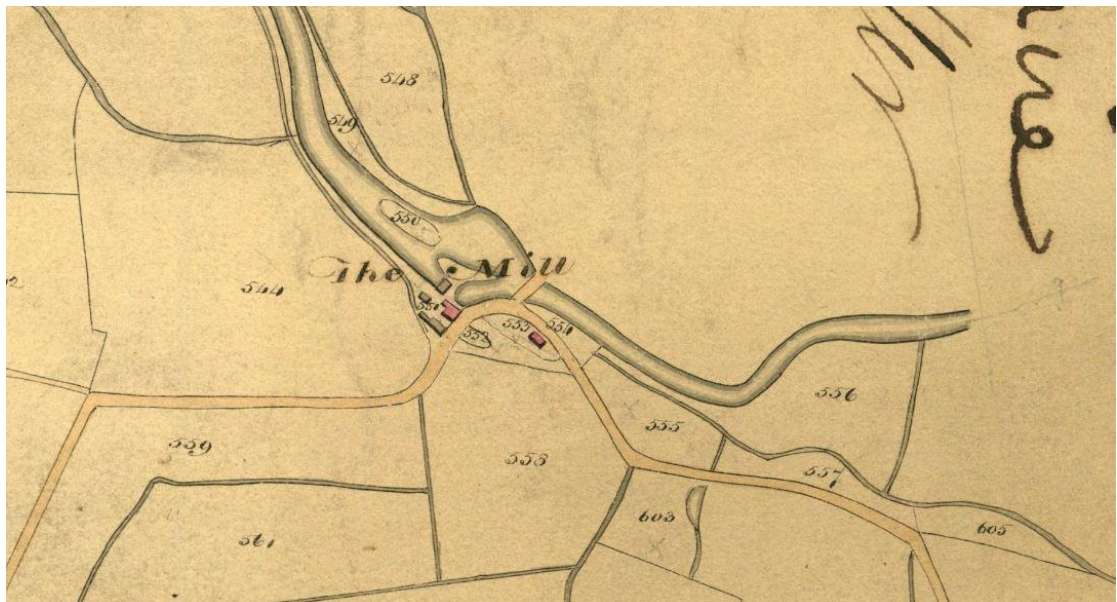


Figure 3 'Boxstead' Tithe Map 1836

¹⁰ E.R.O., T/A 200/1

- 3.8. The Tithe Map also highlights extensive water meadows within the area. Drainage ditches along the River Stour date from at least the 1640s, however flooding of the meadows persisted as late as the 1870s.¹¹
- 3.9. There appears to be little change to the bridge between the 1830s and 1870s, which is again depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey Map (**Figure 4**). However, the map shows greater detail of the buildings and structures associated with the mill, and the dense tree planting surrounding the cottages which stretched to the west, the plot bounded by a stream to the south.

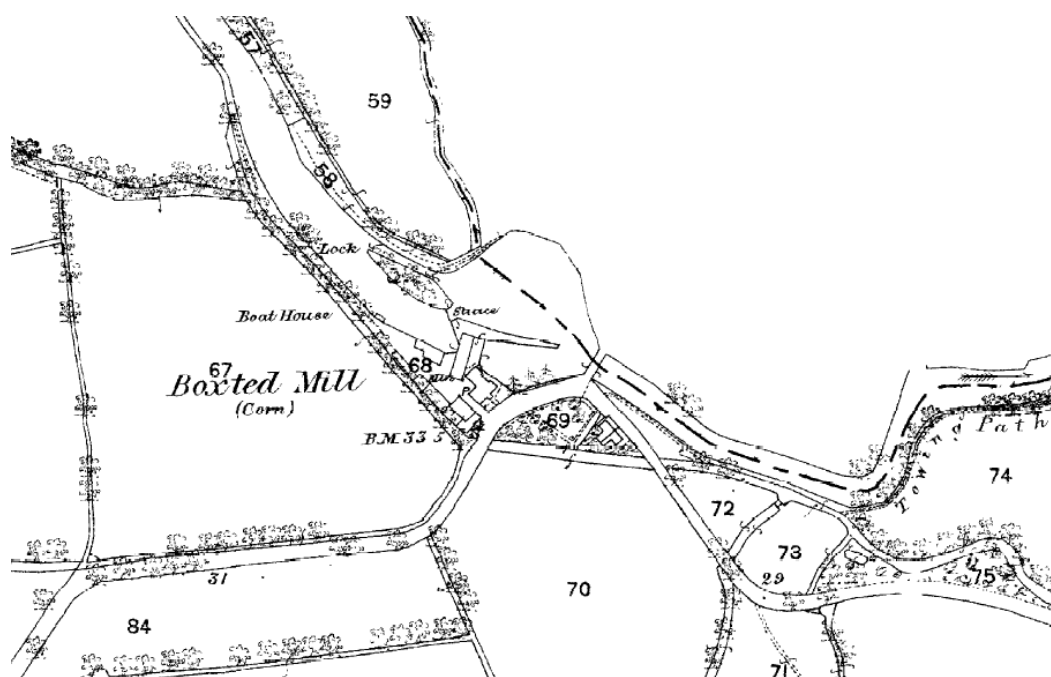


Figure 4 Ordnance Survey Map 25inch, 1870s

- 3.10. In 1895, responsibility for the bridge was taken over by Essex County Council and West Suffolk Council, records highlight the condition of the bridge at this time and pressure to replace it.¹² Boxted Bridge was first recorded in January of 1895, after a petition was sent to West Suffolk and Essex County Councils asking them to replace the old bridge with a new one. The Lexden and Wintree Union offered £100 towards the cost of this replacement if the Counties took over ownership of the bridge. In October the Managing Director of the company stated that Boxted and Wormingford bridges were in need of repair; the Wormingford bridge fell in during the Winter of 1895, increasing pressure to rebuild the Boxted Bridge before it too further deteriorated.¹³ In 1900 a new steel girder

¹¹ 'Boxted: Introduction', in A History of the County of Essex, op. cit.

¹² Grace's Guide to British Industrial History, < https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Boxted_Bridge>

¹³ Proceedings of the SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY For 1972 (Volume 32, part 3 - published 1973).

bridge was built on the site of the former bridge by Lexden and Winstree Union over the Stour at Boxted mill.¹⁴

- 3.11. There appears to be no change to the Site in the early 1900s, as shown on the second edition Ordnance Survey Map (**Figure 5**), demonstrating that the new bridge was built to the same footprint as the earlier structure.

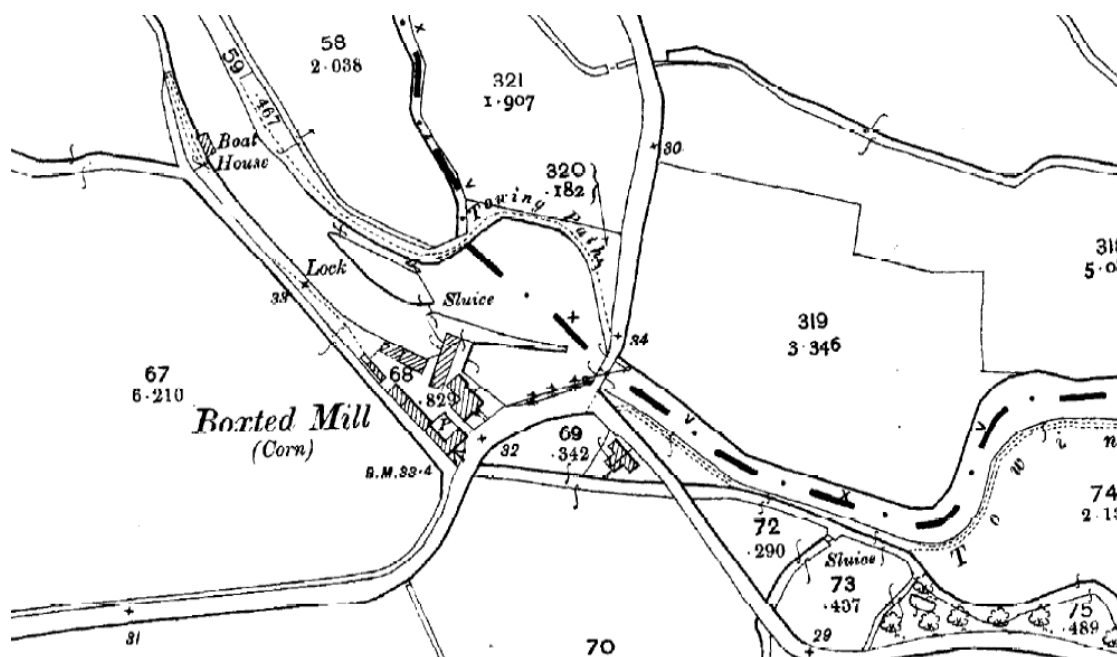


Figure 5 Ordnance Survey Map 25inch, 1900s

- 3.12. The newly constructed bridge can clearly be seen in historic imagery of the Site dated from 1908 (**Figure 6**). The bridge was a prominent feature of the landscape at this time, due to the low-lying ground and sparse planting. The bridge sits off centre in this image, reflected in the River Stour, appearing picturesque in its surroundings. To the north of the bridge were a line of trees marking Wick Road; to the south the cottages are dominant and can be seen overlooking the bridge and Stour. Behind the cottages, the mill is also visible through tree coverage. Two children stand on the grass bank in the foreground of the image, in front of a gravel pile. A woman stands in the doorway of each cottage, looking out towards the bridge. The image depicts the scenic qualities of the River Stour, and the rural setting of the bridge at this time.

¹⁴ 'Boxted: Introduction', in A History of the County of Essex, op. cit.



Figure 6 Boxted Bridge, 1908

- 3.13. Further imagery depicts the historic setting of the bridge in greater detail. **Figure 7** depicts the bridge as part of the group of buildings to its south: the Mill and cottages. The mill and its associated buildings are dominant in the image and central in the photograph, the cottages and bridge flank either side of the mill. Trees and grassed banks stretch from the cottage and bridge to the foreground, with the River leading the eye towards the built structures within the image.



Figure 7 Boxted Bridge and Mill

- 3.14. Historic mapping highlights that there was little change to the bridge and its surroundings in the early twentieth century, with the third edition OS Map (**Figure 8**) showing no change to the bridge and minimal changes to its surroundings. Notably, Boxted Mill is marked as disused by this time.

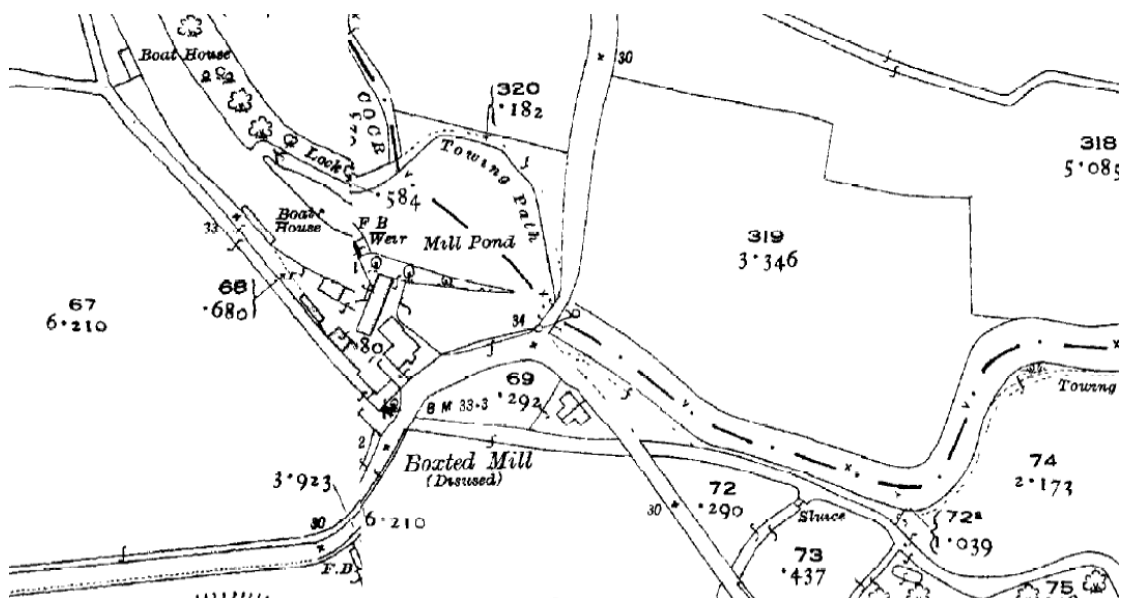


Figure 8 Ordnance Survey Map 25inch, 1920s



3.15. There has been little change to the bridge over the twentieth century. Ordnance Survey mapping shows some very minor change in the setting of the bridge, most notably the removal of the long barn within the mill complex. This building was located to the north of the mill and is visible in **Figure 7** as a large weatherboarded building overlooking the river. This building was removed by the 1960s. A small outbuilding to the north east of the cottage was constructed by the 1960s.

4. Site Assessment

- 4.1. A site visit was undertaken in August 2020. A visual assessment was undertaken of the Site and the heritage assets within it. During the site visit the weather was sunny and clear.
- 4.2. Access to the external sides of the bridge was limited due to plant growth and land access.
- 4.3. The existing bridge was inspected and apart from the relaying of the road surface, the structure has been subject to little or no alteration. The bridge walls are formed of metal which are supported by brick abutments on each side of the river. The accesses to the bridge are flanked by red brick piers with a decorative granite stone coping.
- 4.4. The bridge is located at the confluence of three roads. Island Cottage and Boxted Mill are in close proximity. Other unlisted historic features in the immediate environs include an early twentieth century road sign.
- 4.5. Views are afforded of the bridge from both the Mill and Island Cottage; views away from the bridge are toward the buildings. It is apparent that apart from the change in planting, very little has altered here since c.1900 both in terms of the bridge itself and the composition of the heritage assets placed around this road junction.



Figure 9: View of bridge from north side



Figure 10: View of brick and granite pier



Figure 11: View of bridge wall



Figure 12: View of bridge abutment



Figure 13: View of Island Cottage



Figure 14: View of Boxted Mill and weir from bridge

5. Assessment of Significance

Significance Criteria

3.16. The intrinsic significance unique to each heritage asset can be defined as the sum of tangible and intangible values which make it important to society. The significance of an asset or place may reflect its age, aesthetic, architectural quality or fabric, as well as intangible qualities such as associations with historic people or events.

3.17. To assess the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets, this report has drawn guidance from Historic England which recommends making assessments under the categories of: Archaeological interest, Architectural and artistic interest, and Historic interest.¹⁵ Together these attributes contribute to the overall significance of a place or site.

3.18. These attributes of significance are described as:

- **Archaeological interest**

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

- **Architectural and artistic interest**

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

- **Historic Interest**

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

¹⁵ Historic England, 2019. *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets - Historic England Advice Note 12.*

- 3.19. Setting also contributes to the significance of a heritage asset. The NPPF notes that setting is: *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*
- 3.20. As outlined in Section 2 of this report, this assessment has followed the steps set out in the Historic England Guidance document *The Setting of Heritage Assets*.¹⁶

Statements of Significance

- 3.21. The bridge has been assessed to be of significance and as such is considered a non-designated heritage asset under the National Planning Policy Framework. The principal significance of the structure is drawn from its architectural interest and the fact that it has been subject to little or no alteration, making it an exemplar example of this phase in the typology. The bridge walls, whilst functional, are considered to be of artistic interest. These, together with the granite-capped piers, clearly show the intent of the Council to construct a bridge that is of some artistic merit and not purely utilitarian in its design.
- 3.22. The bridge is also considered to contribute to the setting of listed Boxted Mill and the non-designated heritage asset of Island Cottage. The contribution of the bridge to the setting of these heritage assets is clearly shown on historic images. The confluence of roads at this junction has been subject to very little change. The bridge is still prominent in views to and from both heritage assets, reinforcing their position at this river crossing and permitting an appreciation of the setting which has been subject to almost no change since c.1900. The mill also has a functional relationship with the River Stour which can also be appreciated on views from the bridge as the weir and buildings can be seen.

¹⁶ Historic England, December 2017. *The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Place Services for Essex Highways. This document provides an assessment of heritage significance for Boxted Bridge to inform potential for future alteration.
- 6.2 Assessment has found that the bridge is considered to be of significance and is a non-designated heritage asset. The bridge also contributes positively to the setting of both the Grade II listed Boxted Mill and Island Cottage (a non-designated heritage asset). The significance of the bridge is drawn from its architectural interest as a complete and unaltered example of c.1900 bridge. This is also in a wider location which has been subject to very little change; the setting and experience of this heritage asset, and those adjacent, is considered to contribute to their respective significance.
- 6.3 Considering the above, the removal of this bridge will cause harm to it as a non-designated heritage asset and the setting of both a designated and non-designated heritage asset. As such it is recommended that a sequential approach is adopted, taking the best case/most sensitive scenario as a starting point and working forwards from this base as necessary. The approaches are outlined below, with approach 1 as the preferred.

Approach 1:

The bridge is fully retained, and sympathetic repairs are undertaken which do not detract from the architectural interest of the structure. Should this approach not be viable then it will need to be robustly justified. All other alternative approaches will result in harm to heritage assets.

Approach 2:

Should the structure not be retained in-situ, all alterations should be fully justified. Should the bridge require altering then principal features should be retained and reused where possible. These features include the flank walls, brick/granite piers and brick abutments. Should these features not be retained, this should be fully justified and features which are of same aesthetic and construction installed.

- 6.4 Depending on approach, a scheme of archaeological building recording will likely be required commensurate with either a 'Level 2 or 3' as outlined in Historic England Guidance *Understanding Historic Buildings*.¹⁷
- 6.5 All statements and recommendations in this document are subject to consultation and agreement with the local planning authority.

¹⁷ Historic England, 2016. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*.

7. References and Sources

Bibliography

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists	2017	<i>Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment</i>
Department for Communities and Local Government	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
Historic England	2015	<i>The Historic Environment in Local Plans - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1</i>
Historic England	2015	<i>Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice</i>
Historic England	2017	<i>The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)</i>
Historic England	2019	<i>Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets - Historic England Advice Note 12.</i>
British History Online	2001	<i>'Boxted: Introduction', in A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10, Lexden Hundred (Part) Including Dedham, Earls Colne and Wivenhoe, ed. Janet Cooper (London, 2001), pp. 54-59.</i>

Appendix A

Legislation & Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's national planning policies, including those on the conservation of the historic environment. The NPPF covers all aspects of the historic environment and heritage assets, including Designated Assets (World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefields) and non-designated assets. The NPPF draws attention to the benefits that conserving the historic environment can bring to the wider objectives of the NPPF in relation to sustainability, economic benefits and place-making (Paragraph 185).

The NPPF states that the significance of heritage assets (including their settings) should be identified, described and impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset should be assessed. The planning application should include sufficient information to enable the impact of proposals on significance to be assessed, and thus where desk-based research is insufficient to assess the impact, field evaluation may also be required. The NPPF identifies that the requirements for assessment and mitigation of impacts on heritage assets should be proportionate to their significance and the potential impact (Para 189).

The NPPF sets out the approach that local authorities should adopt in assessing development proposals within the context of applications for development of both designated and non-designated assets. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, and harm or loss to significance through alteration or destruction should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, Registered Parks & Gardens should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, Grade I and II* listed buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks & Gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional (Para 194). Additional guidance is given on the consideration of elements within World Heritage Sites and Conservation Areas (Para 200 and 201).

Where there is substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset a number of criteria must be met alongside achieving substantial public benefits (Para 195).

Where there is less than substantial harm the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development (Para 196). Balanced judgements should be made when weighing



applications that affect non-designated heritage assets (Para 197). The NPPF also makes provision to allow enabling development (Para 202) and allowing development which enhances World Heritage Sites and Conservation Areas (Para 200).

Where loss of significance as a result of development is considered justified, the NPPF includes provision to allow for the recording and advancing understanding of the asset before it is lost in a manner proportionate to the importance and impact. The results of these investigations and the archive should be made publicly accessible. The ability to record evidence should not however be a factor in deciding whether loss should be permitted (Para 199).



Appendix B

Designation Descriptions

Entry Name: Boxted Mill

Listed: Grade II

List entry Number: 1238742

Date first listed: 27-Jan-1982

Details

BOXTED LOWER FARM ROAD 1. 5214 TM 03 SW 4/1 Boxted Mill II GV 2. C19. Gault brick of 2 storeys with attics, and a range of painted brick at rear (east). Roof slated and hipped with 2 chimney stacks. Three window range of small sashes under flat brick arches on first storey. Front elevation in 3 bays with pilastered returns and narrow central bay; with eaves and first floor bands. Semi-circular bow window on centre of ground storey with small panes and entablature. Pairs sash window each side with gauged arches. Two flat, leaded dormers on front, and 2 each flank of roof all with small panes.

Appendix C

Glossary (National Planning Policy Framework) ¹⁸

<i>Archaeological interest</i>	<i>There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.</i>
<i>Conservation (for heritage policy)</i>	<i>The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.</i>
<i>Designated heritage asset</i>	<i>A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.</i>
<i>Heritage asset</i>	<i>A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).</i>
<i>Historic environment</i>	<i>All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.</i>
<i>Historic environment record</i>	<i>Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.</i>
<i>Setting of a heritage asset</i>	<i>The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.</i>
<i>Significance (for heritage policy)</i>	<i>The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.</i>

¹⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2019. *National Planning Policy Framework*

