

6.127 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing settlement boundary will be discouraged to prevent coalescence between Copford and Marks Tey to the west and between Copford and Copford Green to the south along School Lane. Development will also be discouraged in the north of the village to protect local open spaces and to avoid land at risk from flooding, to the east to discourage growth in areas where the character is more rural/or is open countryside and to the south to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities and to help protect the setting of Copford Green Conservation Area.

<http://colchester.jdi-consult.net/localplan/readdoc.php?docid=3&chapter=6&docelemid=d210#d210>

6.130 Development of land to the west of Hall Road represents a sensible and logical extension to the settlement development boundary to the south of London Road. Only a single access point will be supported off Hall Road. Development will need to provide a suitable pedestrian access from the site into Copford. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and to protect the setting of Brewers Cottage which is Grade II Listed. The land to the south of this site is in agricultural use, therefore suitable screening / landscaping will also be needed to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development and to minimise any visual and landscape impacts and to .The proposed site is of potential archaeological significance. It is, therefore, likely that heritage assets of archaeological interest will be found, i.e. below-ground archaeological remains.

6.132 There is a Water Recycling Centre located to the east of Copford village. Anglian Water however has indicated that there are significant water supply and waste water infrastructure capacity issues in Copford. To address this waste and water treatment from new developments in Copford will be directed to Colchester's Water Recycling Centre. As a precautionary approach, development of these sites cannot come forward until there is sufficient water supply, network capacity, waste water treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to cope with the 2 developments. Where this cannot be demonstrated it will be necessary to seek further advice from Anglian Water.

Monument Name

British Resistance Hideout, Gravelpit Wood, Copford

SMR Number

21143

Summary

British Resistance Hideout

Media

None Available

Associated Media

None Available

Description

In Gravelpit Wood, known also as Copford Pits Wood, are the remains of a World War Two British Resistance hideout. Its existence has been known locally for many years and in 1974 it was photographed, whilst still in a reasonable and very recognizable state of preservation. Copies of two of these photographs are in the SMR archive. <1> <2> The site was dug out of the top of a steep embankment and then re-covered. The 1974 photos show a winding trench around an oak tree, probably the collapsed entrance tunnel. This leads to the open entrance of the main chamber very clearly seen in the photos. This is some 3 feet below the level of the top of the embankment which is grassed over. The entrance is framed in, typically for such hideouts, corrugated steel Anderson shelter sheeting, rusted but still intact at that time. Beyond the length of the chamber, perhaps 15 feet long, the trench continues. Like the entrance tunnel, this is probably where the escape tunnel, standard for such sites, had collapsed. In 2004, the site was re-visited and re-photographed. <3>. By now, the main chamber itself had collapsed leaving a long, wide gully in the top of the embankment with the narrower entrance and escape gullies at each end. Covered with fallen twigs, leaves and light bramble the site was by now somewhat difficult to recognise from the clear intact remains seen 30 years earlier. However, the oak tree is an unchanging recognition point. One major change is the addition of a wooden footbridge across the gully formed by the collapse of the entrance tunnel, alongside the oak tree. This was erected by Copford Pits Wood Trust, with a grant from Rural Action, some time before December 1993. <4> Visited as part of the World War Two Defences of Rural Colchester project in February 2007, the site is approached via a gateway on the W side of Hall Road at TL 9316 2337. Immediately inside, a wide pathway leads straight into the wood with a high embankment on the right-hand side. After 50 yards, there are wooden steps up the embankment at the top of which is the bridge. The remains of the bunker lie to the left. The widest part of the gully, formed mainly by the collapse of the main chamber, is very approximately 30 feet long x 10 feet wide, about 3/4 feet deep. The remains of some of the corrugated steel sheeting still stick out of the ground. It is probable that 90 percent of it still remains below ground. Interestingly, some of the ceramic piping which would have been used as a flue for the stove still remains sticking out of the side of the gully. No brick walling was found at the time of the site visit. The end walls were often made of brick but in this case, as can be seen in the 1974 photos, they were clearly formed from straight lengths of corrugated steel sheeting. The roof would have been made of the same material but curved. Although the entrance and escape tunnels have been assumed it is not known how long these were, nor exactly where the entrance/exit hatches were. Thirteen photos of site. <5> SITE ASSESSMENT: All British Resistance sites are interesting; all are important in the assessment of World War Two defence archaeology. Although this site survived well up to at least 1974 it is now deteriorating rapidly and nothing should be done to increase this deterioration. Interest in WWII remains has grown considerably in recent years. It is recommended that alongside the wooden bridge, erected to enable local people to further enjoy walks through the woodland, an interpretative board should be erected outlining the history of the British Resistance "Auxiliary Units" during World War Two and the significance of the remains at Copford Pits Wood.

Monument Type(s)

AUXILIARY HIDE (Dated 1939AD to 1945AD)

Monument Class(es)

SUBTERRANEAN FEATURE

Period

1939AD to 1945AD Modern

Status

Not Known

Administration Area

COPFORD, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

National Grid Reference

Square: TL92SW

Ref: 931233

Finds

None listed

Events

WWII defences in Colchester Borough - visits by F. Nash feb 2007

Sources

<1> Photograph : British Resistance Hideout, Gravelpit Wood, Copford (Moore, D)
2 frames Dated : 1974

<2> CORRESPONDENCE : British Resistance Hideout, Gravelpit Wood, Copford
(Moore, D) Feb 2004 Dated : 2004

<3> Photograph : British Resistance Hideout, Gravelpit Wood, Copford (Moore, D)
5 frames, Feb 2004 Dated : 2004

<4> Desc Text : Rural Action for the Environment (Rural Action) Dec 1993 Dated :
1993

<5> Photograph : British Resistance Hideout, Gravelpit Wood, Copford (Nash,
Fred) 13 frames, Feb 2007 Dated : 2007

http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/custom_pages/monument_detail.asp?content_page_id=89&monument_id=1038697&content_parents=48

1.6 Defra recommends the use of a standard name: 'Local Wildlife Site' (LoWS) for all non-statutory sites of biological interest, which is adopted in these criteria. Similarly, those sites of geological interest (which might previously have been referred to as Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological sites, RIGS) can be referred to as Local Geological Sites. The use of the word 'Local' might seem to devalue sites previously referred to as being of 'County' importance. However, this change ensures consistency with national guidance and associated policy documents such as Planning Policy Statement 92 (PPS9), but does not alter their value which remains unchanged: 'LoWS are Wildlife Sites of County Importance'.

https://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Environment/local-environment/Wildlife-and-Biodiversity/Documents/Essex_LoWS_Criteria_Jan_2010.pdf

Why are Local Wildlife Sites important?

Local Wildlife Sites support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the Essex or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP), which sets out strategies for the conservation of much of our most vulnerable wildlife. Together with statutory protected areas, LoWS represent the minimum habitat we need to protect in order to maintain the current levels of wildlife in Essex.

Local Wildlife Sites complement SSSIs and nature reserves by helping to maintain links between these sites. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving such places, so that wildlife can survive in the wider countryside, outside of nature reserves.

How are sites protected?

Local Wildlife Sites are protected within the local planning system. They are a 'material consideration' in the determination of planning applications, and this should ensure that there is a general presumption against development upon them. It should be stressed that notification does not confer any rights of access either for the general public or nature conservation organisations; it is simply recognition of a site's nature conservation value.

<http://www.essexwt.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/local-wildlife-sites>

Co44 Pits Wood, Copford (5.0 ha) TL 931234

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Situated in old gravel pit workings, this wood has an undulating topography and sandy underlying substrate. It supports a diverse canopy and scrub composition with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), including some large standards, alongside Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) standing over Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice within the understorey.

The developing woodland flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg), with Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) dominant on the higher banks to the woodland margins. Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) are found mostly near the woodland paths. Ponds forming in the hollows have a variety of marginal species including Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*).

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. There is public access via a footpath that crosses the wood diagonally, although an unofficial circular route is regularly frequented by dog walkers.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England:

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection criteria:

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale:

The site is not ancient, but satisfies the definition of the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Habitat of Principal Importance in England.

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Management Issues

Selective coppicing would benefit the woodland structure, but given the relatively small size of the wood, this should be limited to targeted compartments. Some small scale planting has been carried out recently within the north- eastern corner of the wood.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1991

Reviewed: 2008; 2015 (no change)

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=21564&p=0>

Historic Landscape Character: The geology comprises Kesgrave sands and gravels with head and exposure of London Clay on the valley sides and varying bands of alluvium on the valley floor. The built up urban fringe of Colchester and Stanway forms the northern boundary of the area for much of its length, with the 40 m contour approximately demarcating the southern edge. The Roman River meanders naturally. The fieldscape is ancient in origin with current and former valley bottom pasture, irregular fields, and areas of 19th-20th century plantation woodland.

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8326&p=0>