

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

BRAINTREE DISTRICT



BraG22 Spains Hall Sarsen Stone, Finchingfield

Site location: A large sarsen boulder adjacent to a wall near cottages in the grounds of Spains Hall Farm.

Grid Reference: TL 6788 3408

Status: Private – inside the grounds of Spains Hall Farm.

Summary of the geological interest:

A large sarsen boulder (1.9 metres x 0.9 metres x 0.3 metres in size), lies adjacent to a wall surrounding cottages in the grounds of Spains Hall Farm.



Site Assessment. Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

Scientific interest and site importance:

Sarsens are extremely hard boulders of sandstone that are often used as boundary or entrance markers having been dragged from nearby fields. They formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of sand beneath the surface of the ground became cemented with quartz. Research has compared the conditions under which sarsens and puddingstones may have been formed with the present day climate in the Kalahari Desert and parts of Australia. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They were weathered out of the geological strata where they were formed – the Lower Tertiary Upnor Formation, which outcrops further north. This boulder may have been transported by the ice-melt swollen ancestral Thames that flowed across this area of Essex.



Spains Hall Sarsen Stone (photo provided by Spains Hall Farm 2023)



Spains Hall Sarsen Stone (photo provided by Spains Hall Farm 2023)