LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES
EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

EpG12 Temple Cottage Puddingstone

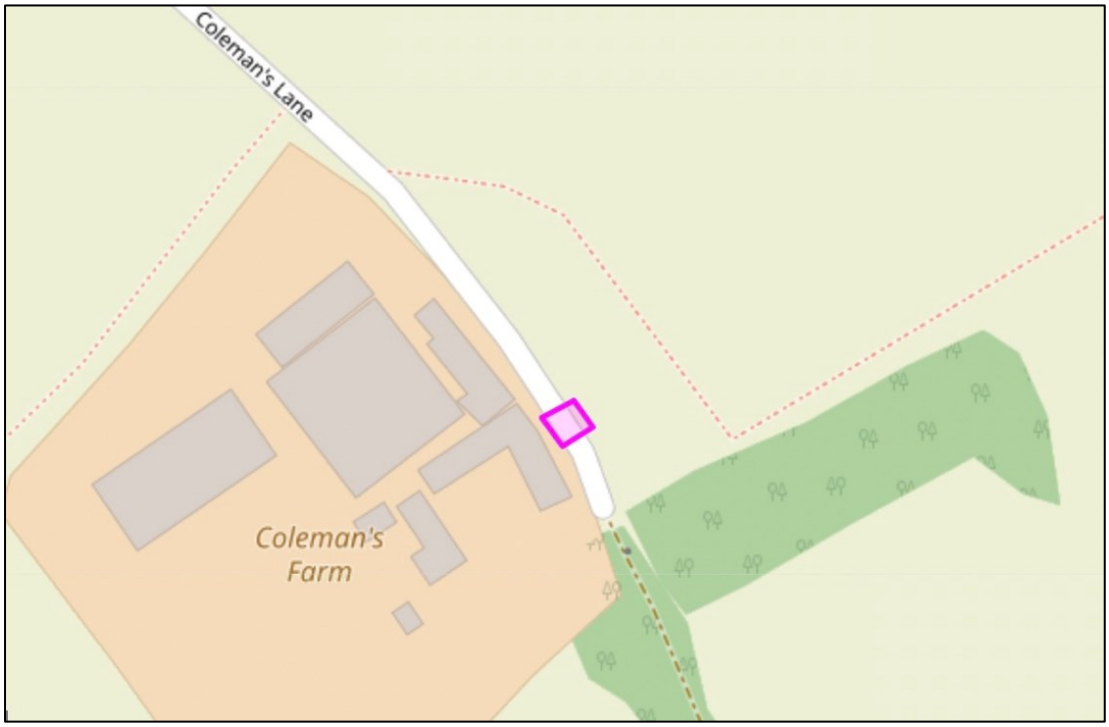
Site location: Temple Cottage, Colemans Lane, Stanford Rivers, Essex

Grid Reference: TL 5285 0185

Status: Public – accessible at all times

Summary of the geological interest:

A large boulder of Hertfordshire puddingstone (120cm x 45cm x 30cm in size) outside Temple Cottage on Colemans Lane. Usually obscured by vegetation. Last cleared in 2011 with the assistance of the landowner.



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.*

Access

Temple Cottage lies on the east side of the Coleman's Lane running SE wards from Clatterford End. The puddingstone lies on the grass verge by the NW corner of the cottage, by a telegraph pole.

Site visited June 2025

Scientific interest and site importance:

Hertfordshire Puddingstone was formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of pebbles beneath the surface of the ground became cemented with quartz. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They originated in Hertfordshire, hence the name, and were probably carried to Essex by the River Thames when it flowed north of its present course. However, the distribution and abundance of Hertfordshire puddingstone in parts of Essex suggests that some occurrences may have a local Essex source.

The formation of silcretes (which includes sarsens and puddingstones) has been the subject of recent scientific debate. 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.

The Temple Cottage Puddingstone in 2011.
Photo: G. Lucy

The Temple Cottage Puddingstone behind vegetation.
Photo: P Allen August 2025

Site visited June 2025

The puddingstone was completely overgrown but could be located by poking into the vegetation.

References

LUCY, G. 2003. Essex erratic boulders: a gazetteer. *Essex Naturalist (New Series)* No. 20. 115-134.

SALTER, A.E. (1914) Sarsen, basalt and other boulders in Essex. *Essex Naturalist.* 17: 186-199.