

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT



UfdG21 Hazel End Sarsen Stone

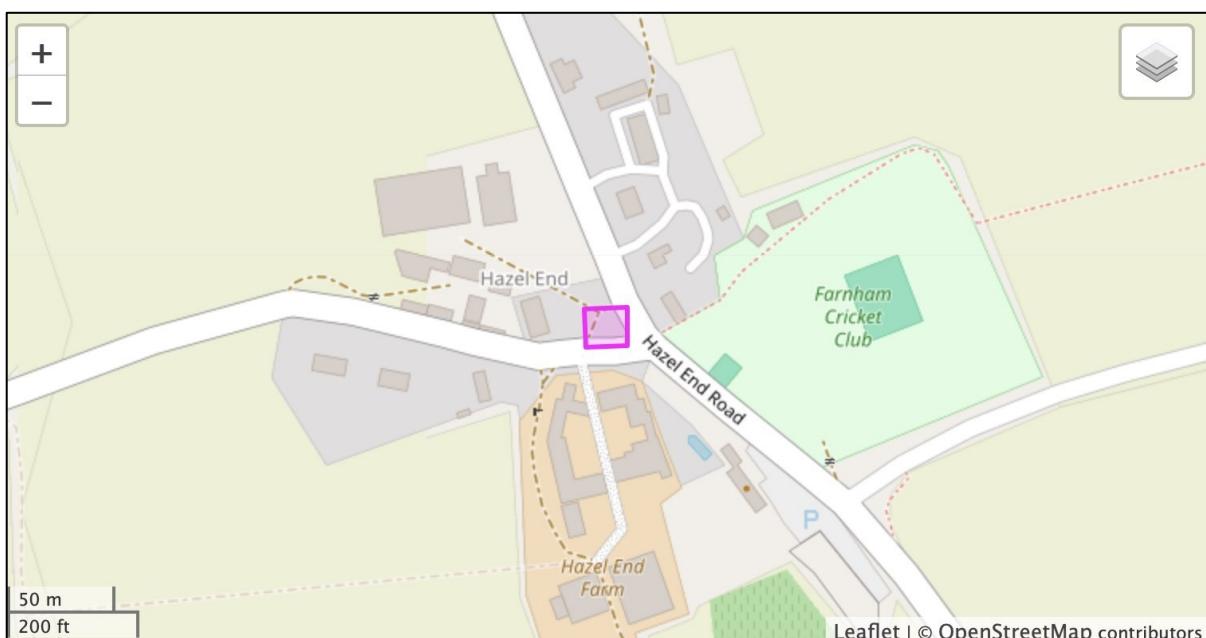
Site location: At the side of the Hazel End Road near the road junction

Grid Reference: TL 4950 2441

Status: Publicly accessible

Summary of the geological interest:

At Hazel End, at the side of the Hazel End Road near the road junction, is a large sarsen stone with a thick band of pebbles running through the centre. It is an unusual sarsen stone in a prominent position.



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

On the grass in the centre of Hazel End is a large sarsen stone 1.30 x 1.1 x 0.5 metres in size with a thick band of pebbles running through the centre. This stone was originally positioned by the roadside closer to Farnham, having been recovered from a farmer's field in the 1990s. It was moved to this position at Hazel End around 2017. It now stands upright with about 30 centimetres of the stone beneath the ground. A few yards away, by the pond, is another sarsen stone (1 x 0.74 x 0.25 metres in size) lying flat on the grass and containing a root hole.

Sarsens are extremely hard boulders of sandstone 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. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They originated on the chalk downland north and west of Essex and were carried here by rivers and glaciers. After retreat of the ice they became concentrated in river valleys.

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 Hazel End Sarsen Stone.

Photo: Mike Howgate