

# CHAPTER 2

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## **CHAPTER 2**

# **Conservation and Townscape**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The Borough comprises a number of former villages and small settlements, such as Prittlewell, Leigh, Old Southend and Shoeburyness, which were absorbed by the rapidly expanding town of Southend during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period of expansion resulted mainly from the town's attraction as a seaside resort and as a residential area for people moving away from London. It established the broad pattern for development, with shopping and commercial centres based on the older settlements linked later by extensive housing areas, schools, parks and industrial estates.
- 2.2 Many features of the town's early development remain and provide a significant heritage of historic buildings and areas worthy of conservation. They often contain a quality of design and detailing which cannot easily be matched by modern development, and tangible economic benefits are provided in terms of their special attraction for tourism and leisure. Archaeological remains also provide an important irreplaceable record of our past. It is the Council's aim to preserve and enhance those buildings and areas with particular architectural or historic interest, and to protect areas of archaeological importance in accordance with the Environmental Charter, Circular 8/87 (Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas), Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16 - Archaeology and Planning, November 1990) and with policies in the Essex Structure Plan First Alteration.
- 2.3 The character of Southend's built environment is, however, not only a result of individual building design - it also involves the use of its buildings, streets, open spaces and planted areas and the way in which they relate to one another. Together these have a considerable impact on the Borough, especially in respect of its attractiveness for economic activity, its amenity value for residents and the impression it makes on visitors. Those parts of the town with a high public profile, such as the main traffic routes, the shopping centres, commercial areas and the seafront are especially important in setting the town's image. There are many aspects of good quality townscape in these areas but also features which need improvement. The policies in this chapter are, therefore, intended to ensure a high quality of townscape by conserving what is good, improving what is unsatisfactory and achieving a good standard of environmental design in new development.

### **Objectives**

(see Introduction, Aim 1)

- 2.4
1. To protect and enhance the historic character of the Borough, particularly Conservation Areas and those buildings of architectural and historic importance.
  2. To safeguard and protect from inappropriate development areas of local amenity value, including important urban open spaces.
  3. To protect areas of archaeological importance by ensuring their preservation or recording as appropriate.
  4. To promote and seek to secure a high standard of design in all development within the Borough.

5. To encourage and seek to secure improvements to the local townscape, particularly in the quality of street furniture, advertisements and shopfronts.
6. To preserve trees of townscape importance and secure appropriate landscaping in development schemes.

## **Ancient Monuments and Archaeology**

- 2.5 Four scheduled ancient monuments are situated in the Borough - Prittlewell Priory, Southchurch Hall, the Danish Camp at Shoebury Garrison and the Iron Age Camp at Fossett's Farm. The Council will support their preservation and discourage development likely to harm their architectural, historic or archaeological interest, or their setting. Other parts of the Borough may contain archaeological remains. It is only relatively recently that the historic environment has been subjected to large scale changes, and archaeology provides, in many cases, the only record of our changing society. It is necessary that future development should not obliterate important archaeological sites and monuments before they can be fully investigated, and proposals which are beneficial to their preservation and enhancement will be encouraged. Guidance on the archaeological implications of development proposals will be sought from the Council's Museum Service and, where appropriate, the County Archaeologist. In order to identify known sites of archaeological interest reference will be made to the sites and monuments records of Southend Museum and the County Council.

### **POLICY C1 - ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

**Where important archaeological sites and monuments, whether scheduled or not, and their settings are affected by a proposed development, there will be a presumption in favour of their preservation in situ. In situations where there are grounds for believing that the proposed development would affect important archaeological sites and monuments, developers will be required to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before the planning application is determined, thus enabling an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. In circumstances where preservation is not possible nor merited, development will not be permitted until satisfactory provision has been made for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording prior to the commencement of the development.**

## **Historic Buildings**

- 2.6 Listed Buildings (i.e. those included in the Secretary of State's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest) are given statutory protection against demolition and unsympathetic alterations. About 150 Listed Buildings are situated in the Borough (see Appendix 1, page 161) and further buildings may be added to the list from time to time. Other buildings not listed by the Secretary of State may, nevertheless, have local interest and contribute to the town's architectural and historic heritage. These are given special protection by inclusion in the Council's Local List of buildings of local architectural or historic interest (see Appendix 1). The Council will seek to preserve the character of the Borough's historic buildings and will promote additional listings where appropriate.

### **POLICY C2 - HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

**Listed Buildings and buildings on the Local List will be protected from demolition and unsympathetic development. Development proposals will be required to pay special regard to the preservation and restoration of internal and external features which contribute to their character, to the maintenance of their scale and proportions, to the preservation of their setting and to the use of appropriate materials.**

- 2.7 The best use for an historic building is normally the one for which it was designed. Whenever possible, continuation of the original use will be encouraged in order to preserve the building's original character. In cases where it can clearly be demonstrated that the original or current use is no longer practical, alternative uses will be encouraged but only where this ensures the preservation of the building's architectural or historic character and appearance. Permission will not be granted for changes of use which harm the character or appearance of the building.

### **POLICY C3 - CONVERSION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

**Permission may be given in exceptional circumstances for the conversion of Listed Buildings and buildings on the Local List to sympathetic alternative uses only where:**

**this is necessary to ensure the building's preservation or restoration;**

**it has clearly been demonstrated that the original or existing use of the building cannot be retained; and**

**the proposed use and any associated building alterations are sympathetic to its historic or architectural character.**

## **Conservation Areas**

- 2.8 As well as individual buildings, whole areas of townscape can have special architectural or historic interest. Such areas are designated from time to time by the Council as Conservation Areas in order to preserve and enhance their character and appearance, in accordance with guidance contained in Circular 8/87 (Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas). The Borough has twelve designated Conservation Areas. They are:-

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Clifftown*        | g) Milton*              |
| b) Crowstone         | h) Shoebury Garrison    |
| c) Eastern Esplanade | i) Shorefields*         |
| d) Leigh*            | j) The Kursaal          |
| e) Leigh Cliff*      | k) The Leas (Westcliff) |
| f) Leigh Old Town*   | l) Warrior Square       |

\*These areas are subject to Article 4 Directions - see para 2.38 (page 36).

Designation gives additional control over demolition proposals and the felling and lopping of trees. It also restricts some classes of permitted development. Development proposals, including those for advertisements and shopfronts, will be carefully controlled to preserve or

enhance, as appropriate, the traditional character and appearance of these areas. Planning applications or applications for Conservation Area Consent seeking the demolition of buildings which contribute to the traditional character or appearance of these areas will normally be refused. The Council will also seek to ensure that development adjoining Conservation Areas does not harm their character or appearance. Design guidelines set out in Appendix 2 will be taken into account when considering development proposals. These should be read in conjunction with Appendix 4. It is helpful in considering proposals in Conservation Areas if planning applications are submitted in detail, and where demolition is involved the Council may request detailed plans and drawings. The Borough Council will prepare enhancement schemes for Conservation Areas as resources permit.

#### **POLICY C4 - CONSERVATION AREAS**

**All buildings, open spaces, gardens, trees, views from public places and other aspects of the environment which contribute to the character of Conservation Areas will be protected and enhanced. Proposals for demolition and development will normally be permitted only where they would not be detrimental to the local scene and the character of the area. All development affecting Conservation Areas should meet the following requirements:**

- (i) the position and design of new buildings should respect the general pattern of development of the area, and should preserve or enhance as appropriate its townscape character;**
- (ii) the mass of extensions and new buildings should be in scale and harmony with the existing and neighbouring buildings and with the area as a whole;**
- (iii) the proportions, detailing and materials of extensions, alterations and new buildings should be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to the existing and neighbouring buildings.**

**All development in Conservation Areas will be expected to comply with the Council's design guidelines in Appendix 2 and in addition, where residential proposals are involved, Appendix 4.**

**The Council will prepare enhancement schemes for Conservation Areas as resources permit.**

**Policy Cross References : Appendix 2 Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas, page 167, and Appendix 4 Design and Layout Guidelines for Housing, page 187.**

### **Leigh Old Town Conservation Area**

- 2.9 The character of this Conservation Area is that of a working marine village. It depends on the appearance of its buildings, its setting on the edge of Leigh creek and the predominance of marine activities, including boat building and repair and shellfish processing for the local fishing industry. The area is popular with visitors and is under pressure for development involving the loss of marine industries and ancillary facilities and the introduction of non-traditional uses. Its marine industries and facilities are essential to its character, and the Council will seek to retain and encourage them as appropriate.

- 2.10 Shellfish processing is concentrated in "cockle sheds" on the foreshore adjacent to Leigh Creek which contains moorings for local fishing boats. The role of the local fishing industry is vital to the character of the area, and the Council will give priority to its continued existence in its present location. Uses of the cockle sheds will be restricted to the processing of fish, shellfish and other marine products traditionally associated with Leigh, together with their sale, both retail and wholesale. The Council welcomes the expansion of these cockle sheds when needed for improved processing facilities and associated storage, subject to appropriate designs and the preservation of the open character of the foreshore. Design guidelines for the cockle sheds are set out in Appendix 2 (see page 174).
- 2.11 The Council will also seek to maintain the character of the Conservation Area by maintaining the traditional mix of commercial, leisure and residential uses appropriate to a working marine village. Many of the properties in the Conservation Area are owned by the Council and both landlord and planning controls will be exercised to achieve this aim.



*Leigh Old Town : an important objective of the Borough Plan is to retain the character of the Conservation Area as a working marine village.*

- 2.12 Pressure from traffic and parking in the Conservation Area is harming its character and reducing its enjoyment by visitors. Whilst it is necessary to maintain vehicular access to properties in the Old Town, its capacity to accommodate vehicles satisfactorily is low. The Council will, therefore, seek to discourage non-essential vehicular traffic by appropriate traffic management measures and will also seek to provide additional parking spaces outside the Conservation Area.
- 2.13 Alley Dock is part of a well-used pedestrian route in Leigh Old Town. A terrace of small Victorian houses (19-24 High Street and 3-5 Theobalds Cottages) backs onto Alley Dock. These houses have been subject to development proposals for alterations and additions at the rear involving balconies. In order to protect their character when viewed from Alley Dock, development should comply with the Council's guidelines for the terrace, set out in Appendix 2 (see page 174).

**POLICY C5 - LEIGH OLD TOWN**

**Within the Leigh Old Town Conservation Area, in addition to Policy C4 the Council will require the retention of commercial, leisure and residential uses appropriate to its character as a working marine village, and will seek to reduce vehicular access for non-essential traffic. Permission will normally be refused for the loss of marine industrial uses and associated facilities. Development of existing cockle sheds to provide improved processing facilities will be encouraged subject to the design guidelines set out in Appendix 2 being met. The use of existing cockle sheds will be restricted to the processing, storage and sale of fish, shellfish and other marine products traditionally associated with Leigh Old Town. Additional parking facilities will be sought outside the Conservation Area.**

Policy Cross References : C4 Conservation Areas, page 24, and Appendix 2 Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas, page 174.

**Conservation Grants and Advice**

- 2.14 The Council will give positive support to conservation. Historic Building Grants and Town Scheme Grants will be made available, as finance permits, for the repair of certain historic buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas. Proposals for the preservation and enhancement of each Conservation Area will be published by the Council for public consultation and implemented as appropriate. Specialist advice on conservation will continue to be made available by this Council and the County Council. The Borough Council has published conservation booklets and leaflets providing design guidance for Conservation Areas (see Appendix 12, pages 271 and 272). The need for additional design guidance on relevant conservation issues will be kept under review.

**Street Frontages and Fascias**

- 2.15 The street frontages of some buildings not subject to other conservation policies can, nevertheless, contribute significantly to the quality of the local townscape by their architectural character as a group and their prominence in the street scene. Such frontages are identified by the Council as Frontages of Townscape Merit. They are situated in parts of the town centre and Hamlet Court Road. The Council intends that such frontages are retained and that their architectural character is respected by proposals for fascias, shopfronts and other alterations.

**POLICY C6 - FRONTAGES OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT**

**Within these frontages identified on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix 1 as being of townscape merit, development proposals will be required to pay special regard to the preservation and restoration of features which contribute to their character and to the use of sympathetic materials and designs.**

Policy Cross Reference : Appendix 1 Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, page 165.

- 2.16 One of the main elements in establishing the character and image of shopping and mixed commercial areas is the design of ground floor frontages and fascias. If well designed, they can make a positive contribution to the townscape and help produce a lively and attractive environment. They tend to be designed, however, in isolation from the rest of the building frontage and other townscape features and can become obtrusive. Of particular concern are fascias of excessive scale, the style of lettering on fascias, frontages extending across two or more adjoining buildings, the open frontages of many car showrooms and the present-day demand for large plate glass windows, roller shutters and corporate house styles which do not always provide a satisfactory design in relation to the existing street scene. The Borough Council will publish design guidance for shop and commercial frontages and fascias having regard to the following policy:

**POLICY C7 - SHOP AND COMMERCIAL FRONTAGES AND FASCIAS**

**Proposals for shop and commercial frontages and fascias will be required to respect the scale and design of the buildings in which they are situated and of neighbouring buildings, and enhance the appearance of the area.**

**Advertisements**

- 2.17 Advertisements - including illuminated signs - are an essential part of commercial areas but because they are intended to have as much visual impact as possible, special care is needed to ensure that their design and location is not detrimental to the townscape. The proliferation of advertisements at any one location can be visually confusing and obtrusive and will be discouraged by the Council. Advertisements on the flank walls of buildings are rarely appropriate, especially at first floor level or above, and will not normally be allowed. On commercial frontages, advertisements will normally be restricted to below first floor window cill level although discreet advertisements and flag advertisements might be acceptable at a higher level in some locations.
- 2.18 Advertisement hoardings are rarely appropriate except on a temporary basis to screen development sites in predominantly commercial areas. Where possible, landscaping and public amenities, such as a seat or small garden, will be required in association with hoardings. They will normally be refused on vacant or derelict sites unless they would significantly improve the appearance of the site, are environmentally acceptable, do not represent a traffic hazard and are the only practical way of securing an improvement in the appearance of the site prior to its redevelopment. Flank wall hoardings are not considered appropriate.
- 2.19 Victoria Avenue from Harcourt Avenue to Victoria Circus is designated an "Area of Special Control" in order to restrict opportunities for displaying signs and advertisements and to maintain a high quality of townscape in this prominent section of the town centre. The Council will keep under review the need to maintain this designation which is identified on the Proposals Map (Town Centre Inset) and to designate additional areas of special control.
- 2.20 Where appropriate the Council will take action to remove existing advertisements which harm the appearance of the townscape. Advertisements will be expected to comply with the detailed design guidance set out in Appendix 3 (page 177), and in addition, in respect of Conservation Areas, in Appendix 2 (page 171).



## **POLICY C8 - ADVERTISEMENTS**

**Proposals for advertisements will normally be permitted in predominantly commercial areas if they meet the following requirements:**

- (i) they should be well designed and sited;**
- (ii) they should respect the character and architectural features of the buildings on which they are displayed;**
- (iii) they should not result in a proliferation of advertisements at any one location;**
- (iv) they should not be obtrusive in the streetscene or harm residential amenity;**
- (v) they should not endanger traffic;**

**The Council will apply more exacting standards to advertisements affecting Listed Buildings and those within Conservation Areas and non-commercial areas. These will be expected to preserve or enhance as appropriate the character and appearance of the building or area.**

**Proposals for advertisement hoardings will normally be refused except where they would screen sites in predominantly commercial areas during or prior to their development, when temporary permission may be granted. Where appropriate, they should incorporate landscape and public amenity features.**

**Proposals for advertisements will be expected to comply with the Council's design guidelines in Appendix 3 and the additional guidelines in respect of Conservation Areas in Appendix 2. The Council will seek to remove existing advertisements which harm public amenity.**

**Policy Cross References : Appendix 2 Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas, page 171, and Appendix 3 Townscape Policy Guidance, page 177.**

## **Satellite Antennae**

- 2.21 The dimensions, design and colour of most satellite antennae make it difficult for them to be located satisfactorily on building frontages and roofs, without harming the appearance of the building or the townscape. The proliferation of antennae on individual buildings, arising from the availability of different systems and the sub-division of buildings into separate units, could further damage the environment. Alternatives are available for minimising harmful environmental effects, for example, by locating antennae in less conspicuous positions, joint cabling from a single antennae and using inconspicuous colours for the dish. The Council intends, therefore, to control, where possible, the installation of satellite antennae, in order to minimise their visual harm to individual buildings and the townscape generally. Details of provision for satellite antennae may be required with planning applications for new buildings and changes of use. Design guidelines are set out in Appendix 3 (page 180), and in addition, in respect of Conservation Areas, in Appendix 2 (page 170).

**POLICY C9 - SATELLITE ANTENNAE**

**Proposals for satellite antennae will normally be permitted if they meet the following requirements:**

- (i) they should be designed and sited to be unobtrusive in the street scene;**
- (ii) where it is proposed to position an antenna on a building, it should respect the character and architectural features of that building;**
- (iii) they should not result in a cluttered appearance on an elevation;**
- (iv) where it is proposed to locate an antenna in a Conservation Area it should respect the character and appearance of that area.**

**Antennae will be expected to comply with the Council's design guidelines in Appendix 3 and, in respect of those in Conservation Areas, the additional guidelines of Appendix 2.**

**Policy Cross References : Appendix 2 Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas page 170 and Appendix 3 Townscape Policy Guidance, page 180.**

**Overhead Cables**

- 2.22 The placing of supply lines and cables underground can do much to improve the environment of sensitive areas. The relevant public or private utility services normally require such work to be funded by the Borough Council, and the opportunities for achieving improvement in this way will be subject to the availability of adequate resources. Nevertheless, the Council will seek, where possible, to install underground cables in Conservation Areas and other sensitive locations. It will also press for the electricity supply line which crosses properties in Eastwood and North Leigh to be placed underground.

**POLICY C10 - OVERHEAD CABLES**

**The Borough Council will seek the co-operation of relevant services in placing visually intrusive overhead power supply lines and cables underground with priority being given to such improvement in Conservation Areas, and to the electricity supply line crossing properties in Eastwood and North Leigh.**

**New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations**

- 2.23 The scale and height of new buildings and extensions to existing buildings likely to be considered appropriate for a particular site will be dependant on the character and density of adjoining property, the visual impact on the wider area, the townscape objectives for the area and the requirements for airport safeguarding.
- 2.24 Non-residential redevelopment sites are often located close to residential areas on the fringes of shopping centres or areas of mixed commercial use. New buildings will be required to

respect this relationship (see also Policy E5, Chapter 4, page 74). Proposals for new buildings at important focal points will be required to exploit fully the potential of such sites to enhance the townscape and provide centres of visual interest.

- 2.25 Proposals for new buildings, extensions or alterations will be required to respect the amenity of existing residential property, safeguard the character of Conservation Areas, historic buildings and important public vistas and, where appropriate, contribute to and enhance public pedestrian areas and open spaces. The Council is developing a "Percent for Art" scheme which encourages developers to set aside a proportion of their construction budget for commissioning public murals, sculpture and other forms of civic art to embellish new or extended buildings and adjoining public spaces.
- 2.26 The Borough Council will also encourage developers to consider access and safety aspects in the design and layout of new developments in order to ensure easy access for people with disabilities and to minimise the potential for crime (see Policy U5, page 131, and Appendix 7, page 219). Policy H5 (page 51) and the detailed design guidelines in Appendix 4 consider development in residential streets and residential development elsewhere, whilst Appendix 3 contains special provisions relating to properties in Chalkwell Avenue and the Burges Estate (part), see pages 182 and 183. The need for additional planning guidance on the design of buildings and the location of high buildings will be kept under review, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1 - General Policy and Principles, March 1992).

#### **POLICY C11 - NEW BUILDINGS, EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS**

**New buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings should be designed to create a satisfactory relationship with their surroundings in respect of form, scale, massing, height, elevational design and materials. Where appropriate they should contribute to and enhance public pedestrian areas and open spaces. External materials should be sympathetic in colour and texture with neighbouring development. The Borough Council will also encourage developers to have regard to access and safety aspects when preparing proposals for development (see Policy U5).**

**In considering the height appropriate for new buildings and their impact on the environment the Council will have regard to:**

- (i) airport safeguarding requirements;**
- (ii) the prominence of the site and the need for the building to enhance the townscape;**
- (iii) the scale of neighbouring development;**
- (iv) the evolving skyline of the local street scene;**
- (v) the need to protect residential amenity, important vistas and the character of Conservation Areas, Historic Buildings and Frontages of Townscape Merit;**
- (vi) the potential of the Development to enhance public pedestrian areas and open spaces.**

**In appropriate cases the Council will encourage the provision of new works of art as part of development proposals and in considering planning applications will have regard to the contribution made by any such works to the appearance of the scheme and to the amenities of the area.**

**In considering development proposals for properties in Chalkwell Avenue and the Burges Estate (part), the Borough Council will also have regard to the detailed design guidance set out in Appendix 3.**

### **Undercliff Gardens - Design policy**

- 2.27 Whilst the Council wishes to ensure that all new development achieves a high standard of layout and design that adequately respects surrounding development in accordance with Policies C11 above and H5 (see page 51), the Undercliff Gardens area provides a unique location within the Borough, combining a quiet, almost traffic free environment with exceptional estuary views and proximity to the amenities of Leigh. This has resulted in strong pressures for development and redevelopment in an environmentally sensitive location, in which the peaceful quality and open, undeveloped frontage to Grand Parade are considered to be important. New development will be required to comply with the following policy and the guidelines set out in Appendix 3 (page 184). This area is also subject to an Article 4 Direction - see para 2.38 (page 36).

#### **POLICY C12 - UNDERCLIFF GARDENS**

**In order to conserve the quality of this area and the generally open undeveloped frontage to Grand Parade with associated estuary views, the Borough Council will require all development proposals to meet the following objectives, as appropriate:**

- (i) the preservation of existing views of the estuary including the foreshore from Grand Parade and adjoining streets, from Cliff Parade and from Cliff Gardens;**
- (ii) the preservation of the generally open and undeveloped frontage to Grand Parade;**
- (iii) the preservation of Undercliff Gardens south of the building line as an area free of vehicular traffic and parking;**
- (iv) the preservation of existing garden areas as planted and landscaped areas providing views across the estuary;**
- (v) the harmonisation of new buildings, extensions and other works with their surroundings;**

**In addition, all proposals will be required to comply with Policies C11, H5 and the specific design criteria relating to Undercliff Gardens set out in Appendix 3.**

Policy Cross References : C11 New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations, page 30; H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; and Appendix 3 Townscape Policy Guidance, page 184.

## Street Furniture and Planting

- 2.28 Planting, street furniture and surface materials are important factors in establishing the character of the townscape. They are especially important in areas well used by the public and in Conservation Areas. When they are designed as integral parts of the townscape and are of a good quality in themselves, they can do much to humanise the area, giving it individuality and making it more attractive and enjoyable as a place to be. The design and location of street furniture needs special care. This is the responsibility of a variety of public bodies and can lead to a confusing effect unrelated to the particular townscape needs of the area. The type of surface materials also needs care, especially in pedestrian areas. Materials such as pavers, setts, cobbles and natural stone paving slabs which produce a textured surface usually give a more pleasing appearance than materials such as tarmac, concrete and concrete paving slabs. The Council will seek to co-ordinate the location of street furniture and prevent a cluttered appearance and will encourage a good standard of design.
- 2.29 Trees and planted areas are essential features of the Borough's environment. They complement the appearance of buildings and streets, soften the appearance of what would otherwise be harsh, unwelcoming areas, and screen unsightly features. They do much to establish the image of the town for visitors, especially along the main access routes and in the central area. They can also help reduce air pollution and noise levels. They contribute to the enjoyment of areas used for informal leisure, and they form part of eco-systems with other flora and fauna. In accordance with the aims of the Council's adopted "Charter for the Environment" existing trees and planted areas will be protected from unsuitable treatment and development.
- 2.30 Trees will be included in Tree Preservation Orders where they make a significant contribution to public amenity. Other planted areas which contribute to the townscape will be protected where practicable. In the design of new development, planting tends to be an afterthought and the potential for enhancing the townscape is often not fully exploited. Applications will be required, as appropriate, to include landscaping proposals as an integral part of the development scheme. The Council itself undertakes a substantial programme of tree and amenity planting throughout the town and will continue to seek ways of enhancing the townscape, especially in areas of high public use. Guidelines for trees, planted areas and landscaping are set out in Appendix 3 (page 181).

### **POLICY C13 - STREET FURNITURE**

**The Borough Council will ensure that the location, design and level of provision of street furniture is appropriate in its setting and avoids a cluttered and unattractive townscape. A high standard of design for street furniture, surface materials and planting will be sought. Improvement schemes will be undertaken where appropriate.**

### **POLICY C14 - TREES, PLANTED AREAS AND LANDSCAPING**

**The Borough Council will seek to preserve those trees and planted areas which contribute to the townscape of an area and will require additional planting in appropriate locations. Applications for new buildings, open site uses, car parking areas, including hardstandings in front of building, and other development will normally be required to respect existing trees and planted areas and, where appropriate, to provide replacement planting. Most development proposals will be required to include planting as an integral part of the scheme in accordance with the guidelines set out in Appendix 3. proposals for planting should exploit fully the potential of the development to enhance the townscape and be designed to enable adequate future maintenance of the planted areas.**

Policy Cross Reference : Appendix 3 Townscape Policy Guidance, page 181.

### **Open Spaces**

- 2.31 Much of the Borough is intensively built-up. Continuing pressure to develop and redevelop existing sites reflects competing demands from different users for the very limited space available. Open spaces remaining within the built-up area, i.e. outside the Green Belt, are likely to come under increasing pressure for their partial or complete development, especially for housing. These open areas are used for a variety of purposes - school playing fields, other public or private sporting and recreational activities, parks and public gardens. As well as providing for the legitimate needs of open space users, these spaces also provide a valuable public amenity. They act as open "lungs" within the built-up area providing an essential contrast and variety in the townscape and opportunities for open vistas, planting and greenery.
- 2.32 This townscape and amenity role is vital for the surrounding area, the street scene and the overall image of the town. The loss of any of these open spaces would result in a permanent decline in the standard of environment enjoyed by residents and visitors to the town. The Council will, therefore, seek to prevent the detrimental effects of 'town cramming' by retaining a balance of land uses throughout the Borough having regard to the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Notes 3 and 17 (PPG3 - Housing, March 1992 and PPG17 - Sport and Recreation, September 1991) and, in particular, by safeguarding established open spaces within the urban area, subject to the special considerations set out in paragraph 7.11 (see Chapter 7, page 115), in accordance with the following policy:

### **POLICY C15 - RETENTION OF OPEN SPACES**

**In order to safeguard the important townscape and amenity value provided by established open spaces within the built-up area of the town, the Council will normally refuse planning permission for proposals involving the complete or partial loss of those key open spaces included within the following categories and identified on the Proposals Map:**

- (i) public and private playing fields including school playing fields;**
- (ii) open sports arenas and golf courses;**

**(iii) public parks and gardens including informal amenity open spaces and children's playgrounds;**

**(iv) graveyards, cemeteries and crematoria.**

**In addition, the Council will seek to retain all other incidental open spaces including open areas without general public access within the built-up area of the town where their townscape and amenity value is important to the surrounding area and will also normally refuse permission for development on sites proposed in the Plan for open space use. (See also Policies contained in Chapter 7).**

## **Foreshore Views**

- 2.33 The quality of the seafront environment and its general appearance are instrumental in determining the resort's image and attractiveness for visitors. They influence investment decisions for tourist and leisure development. They also help determine its amenity value as a recreational and leisure resource for residents and need to be retained or enhanced. Except in Leigh Old Town, the area of seafront south of the seafront road and the Chalkwell-Leigh towpath has a predominantly open and undeveloped character which enables extensive views across the foreshore. This character is enhanced by the adjacent public open spaces and gardens. It has produced a relaxed atmosphere in many parts of the seafront which complements the lively and commercialised Central Seafront Area. Outside the Central Area some limited development has occurred south of the road and towpath mainly in respect of beach sales kiosks, beach huts and boat racks in order to cater for recreational needs. Some of these facilities are of a poor quality and need to be upgraded. Where appropriate the Council will support the replacement of two older kiosks with a single well-designed new one. The predominantly open character needs to be protected, however, and development south of the road and towpath generally restricted. Design standards for beach huts are contained in Appendix 3 (page 184).

### **POLICY C16 - FORESHORE VIEWS**

**The open character of the seafront and adjoining public and private open spaces, including the cliffs, will be protected and where possible enhanced. Development south of the seafront road (outside the Central Seafront Area) and south of the towpath between Chalkwell and Leigh Old Town will be strictly limited to:**

- (i) the replacement of older seafront kiosks with modern architecturally designed kiosks in character with the surroundings. Where appropriate the Council will support the replacement of two existing kiosks with one new one;**
- (ii) the improvement or replacement of existing beach huts, (subject to the design criteria in Appendix 3), buildings and other structures which cater for recreational needs, without increasing their existing floor area or reducing the area of beach available to the public;**

**(iii) the provision of additional water recreation facilities in accordance with Policy L4**

Policy Cross References : L4 Water Recreation, page 105, and Appendix 3 Townscape Policy Guidance, page 184.

## **A127 Frontage**

- 2.34 The A127 is the main road access to the town and leads to both the town centre and the Central Seafront Area. It is, therefore, an important element in establishing the town's image for visitors. The road is bordered mainly by residential property, but also by some industrial areas, commercial premises and open spaces. Much of the adjacent development has been set back from the highway, especially between the Borough boundary and Progress Road, where a 27 metre (90ft) building line has been in existence for over 40 years. This has provided a relatively open aspect and enabled a good degree of tree planting along parts of the route. It has helped to isolate and screen properties adjacent to the highway, enhance residential amenity and provide a relatively attractive entry to the town. The Council intends, therefore, to continue the existing building line policy, to encourage additional planting where possible and to maintain a generally open aspect along the frontage in order to provide a high quality environment leading into the town. The Council will undertake a programme of tree planting, landscaping and other environmental improvements along the A127 as resources permit.

### **POLICY C17 - A127 FRONTAGE**

**In addition to Policy C14, the Borough Council will normally require a high standard of landscaping, tree planting and building design for development adjacent to the A127, commensurate with the importance of this road as the main access to Southend. Boundary enclosures fronting the highway will normally be restricted to no more than 1 metre in height. A building line of 27 metres from the back edge of highway will be maintained for new buildings and extensions between the Borough boundary and Oak Wood on the south side, and the Borough boundary and Oak Wood Park on the north side. Elsewhere the building line for new buildings and extensions should normally enable high standards of landscaping and tree planting along the A127 frontage.**

Policy Cross Reference : C14 Trees, Planted Areas and Landscaping, page 33.

## **Open Sites**

- 2.35 Southend has a large number of open sites in commercial use. They include car sales areas, petrol filling stations, garden centres/nurseries, builders yards, open storage sites and car breakers yards. Those appropriate for industrial areas can usually be satisfactorily incorporated into the townscape of such areas. Elsewhere, open site uses can have a damaging effect on the townscape through the nature of their operation and the style of ancillary buildings, boundary treatments and other structures. Where such uses are acceptable, careful design will be needed to integrate them satisfactorily into the street scene. Landscaping treatment will also be required.
- 2.36 Open sites for car sales prove especially difficult to integrate successfully, and their



proliferation along London Road, in particular, has produced areas of poor townscape. Proposals for new or expanded car sales sites will be resisted (See Policy S7, Chapter 5, page 93), therefore, and encouragement will be given to the improvement of existing sites and their development for enclosed car showrooms, where appropriate.

#### **POLICY C18 - OPEN SITES USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES**

**Proposals to use open sites for commercial purposes (including vehicle sales - see also Policy S7) should normally meet the following requirements:**

- (i) the proposed uses and the proposed design for ancillary buildings and structures should be compatible with neighbouring properties;**
- (ii) all proposals should satisfactorily integrate with an enhance the street scene and should incorporate adequate landscaping and suitable boundary treatments.**

**Ancillary buildings and structures proposed at existing open sites in commercial use will normally be required to integrate satisfactorily with and enhance the street scene and be compatible with neighbouring properties.**

**Policy Cross Reference : S7 Car Sales and Showrooms, page 93.**

### **Disused Vacant Sites**

- 2.37 Despite development pressures in the Borough, some open sites have remained unused for a number of years and appear to be in a derelict condition. Others suffer from inadequate maintenance and present a poor appearance in the street scene. Where such sites are in prominent positions or harm local amenity and there is no prospect of their development in the short term, the Council will seek their maintenance or improvement through the provision of suitable landscaping and public seating, by agreement with their owners, and through other appropriate action.

#### **POLICY C19 - DISUSED VACANT SITES**

**In the interests of local amenity, the Borough Council will seek the improvement and proper maintenance of all neglected, derelict and other vacant land in the town which is unlikely to be developed in the short term, through the provision of suitable landscaping or other appropriate action.**

### **Permitted Development**

- 2.38 Certain forms of development come within the definition of permitted development under current planning law and can normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. On occasions, such development might seriously harm the townscape of the area or the amenity of adjoining properties. The accumulated effect of poorly designed permitted development might also harm the character of Conservation Areas. Historic Buildings might be threatened with the loss of features which contribute to their character. Elsewhere, there

may be a special need to safeguard aspects of the townscape from certain proposals. The Council will, therefore, keep under review the need to restrict permitted development by means of Article 4 Directions. Seven Directions already exist, relating to properties in the Leigh, Leigh Cliff, Leigh Old Town, Clifftown, Shorefields and Milton Conservation Areas and in Undercliff Gardens/Grand Parade. Further Directions will be sought when necessary.

## Planning Briefs

- 2.39 There are a number of sites in the Borough which because of their size, location or importance or as a result of the quality of buildings associated with them, will require special consideration when preparing proposals for their development or change of use. Guidance has already been prepared for the refurbishment and re-use of a number of Listed Buildings at Shoebury Barracks which the Ministry of Defence are considering for disposal. Guidance will also be prepared for the conversion of St Erkenwald's Church, a vacant Grade II\* Listed Building, subject to the outcome of considerations into its future, and for development proposals on land at Prince Avenue (see Proposals P4h, P6e and P7g pages 78, 111 and 125) and north of Eastern Avenue (Proposal P7d, page 124). In appropriate cases, therefore, the Council may consider it desirable to prepare detailed planning briefs to guide prospective developers in their preparation of proposals in accordance with the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1 and 3 (PPG1 - General Policy and Principles, March, 1992 and PPG3 - Housing, March 1992), and the following policy -

### **POLICY C20 - PLANNING BRIEFS**

**In appropriate cases the Council will prepare planning briefs to guide the preparation of development proposals in accordance with the policies and proposals in the Plan.**

## Proposals

- 2.40 The following site within the Shoebury Garrison Conservation Area has been identified as having potential for conversion and associated new development to provide additional accommodation.

### ***PROPOSAL P2a - HORSESHOE BARRACKS, SHOEBURYNESS***

*Horseshoe Barracks and an adjacent area (approximately 4.65 hectares) comprise Ministry of Defence land which is currently surplus to requirements. Many of its buildings are included on the statutory list of buildings with architectural or historic interest, and have been vacant for a number of years. The area is within the Shoebury Garrison Conservation Area and part is also within an ancient monument site. The Ministry of Defence proposes to dispose of this site for residential development in accordance with the Borough Council's planning brief. This proposal presents an opportunity to renovate the buildings and to secure their long-term future. It is recognised, however, that the success of the project may depend upon some new building work being carried out. The Council would, therefore, support a residential use of the site. Alternative uses may be acceptable if they comply with the relevant policies of the Plan. Any proposal should meet the objectives of the planning brief, should facilitate the renovation of the listed buildings - subject to any alterations or associated development respecting their character and setting - should provide greater public access to the area, and should also be in accordance with relevant policies of the Plan, in particular Policies C1, C2, C3, C4 and T11.*

Policy Cross References : C1 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites, page 22; C2 Historic Buildings, page 23; C3 Conversion of Historic Buildings, page 23; C4 Conservation Areas, page 24; and T11 Parking Standards, page 155.