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PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

19 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

A.2 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS AND CRITERIA FOR LOCAL LISTING OF 'NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS'

(Report prepared by William Fuller)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report to Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee the first five in a series of 'Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans' prepared for the Council by Essex Place Services, as well as the proposed criteria for the inclusion of buildings and structures on a 'Local Heritage List'; and for the Committee to agree a recommendation to Cabinet that they be published for consultation and that proposals for a Local List of non-designated heritage assets be invited.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tendring contains a wealth of 'heritage assets' which include over 900 listed buildings, 20 Conservation Areas, four Registered Parks and Gardens and a variety of scheduled monuments for which the Council has a duty to preserve or enhance through its decision making as the Local Planning Authority.

Following consideration by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee, the Cabinet agreed to formally adopt the Council's 'Heritage Strategy' in March 2020. This Strategy contains a number of recommended actions for the Council and its partners which included reviewing and updating Conservation Area Appraisals and preparing a 'Local List' of non-designated heritage assets within the District.

Officers have worked with Essex Place Services to review and update the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for all 20 of the District's Conservation Areas and it is proposed that these are published for consultation before being finalised and formally adopted by the Council.

The first five of the new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans proposed for publication relate to:-

- Clacton Seafront Conservation Area;
- Dovercourt Conservation Area;
- St Osyth Conservation Area;

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- Thorpe-le-Soken Conservation Area; and
- Thorpe Station and Maltings Conservation Area.

These Conservation Areas have been put forward for consideration and publication first because they are identified on Historic England's register of Conservation Areas at risk. It is proposed that the appraisals undertaken for the remainder of the District's Conservation Areas will be presented to the Committee and, subject to Cabinet approval, published for consultation in batches over the course of the next 12 months.

Throughout the District there are also many historically important buildings which are not 'Listed' i.e. protected through their formal identification on Historic England's national List'. However, Local Planning Authorities do have the power to prepare their own 'Local Heritage List' of 'non-designated' heritage assets which gives them a level of protection through the planning system when they are the subject of, or affected by, development proposals.

The first stage of preparing a Local List is to agree a set of Criteria against which all proposed Locally Listed buildings and structures are assessed against. It is proposed that these criteria are published for consultation before the Council begins compiling the Local List, for which suggestions from the community will be invited in due course.

This report therefore presents details of the above mentioned Conservation Area Appraisals as well as the criteria Locally Listed buildings will be set against. The Committee is asked to consider these and to agree a recommendation to Cabinet to publish them for consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:

- 1. considers the new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for Clacton Seafront (Appendix 1); Dovercourt (Appendix 2); St. Osyth (Appendix 3); Thorpe le Soken (Appendix 4); and Thorpe Station and Maltings (Appendix 5); as well as the proposed Criteria for assessing buildings and structures for inclusion on a 'Local Heritage List' of non-designated heritage assets (Appendix 6);**
- 2. recommends to Cabinet that the above documents (forming Appendices 1-6) be published for consultation with the public and other interested parties;**
- 3. recommends to Cabinet that a six-month exercise to invite suggestions from the community and other interested parties for structures to include on the Local Heritage List of non-designated heritage assets; and**
- 4. notes that Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the District's other Conservation Areas will be brought before the Committee in due course over the next 12 months.**

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PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Conservation Area Appraisals and Local List will support the Corporate Plan 2020-24 (aligned with the core themes of Tending4Growth and Community Leadership) through delivery of interventions aimed at:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Community Leadership Through Partnerships
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finances and Governance
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

RESOURCES AND RISK

Resources: TDC Officers are leading on this project with the input of Essex County Council Place Services under a service level agreement.

Adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Local List will assist in attracting external funding for heritage related activity in the District. Potential sources of funding include:

- National Heritage Lottery Fund
- Heritage Action Zones (Historic England)
- Section 106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas with Historic England

Risks: The adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Local List supports the Council's duties to maintain and enhance heritage assets and so reduces the risk of the district's heritage assets being diminished or lost.

LEGAL

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), paragraph 185 states:

Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- (b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

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- (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- (d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Consideration of any legal implications of actions proposed in the strategy will be needed in due course.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder: Heritage assets are, unfortunately, vulnerable to crime. Having a strategy for promoting heritage assets in the district should contribute positively to their maintenance.

Equality and Diversity: The recommendations in this report are aimed at benefitting all who live, shop, work and visit the District.

Health Inequalities: There is a growing wealth of evidence that demonstrates the role heritage plays in improving mental wellbeing and physical health. People who visit heritage sites reported higher life satisfaction and happiness scores, as well as lower anxiety (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2015). Across Essex there are a number of schemes and organisations to encourage and support healthy activity, such as Active Essex and Healthy Life Essex. Tendring's heritage provides a positive platform to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and take positive steps for their personal health and wellbeing. Heritage Trails, for example, are already established in Harwich and Dovercourt, Frinton-on-Sea, Clacton-on-Sea, Jaywick Sands and Walton-on-the-Naze encourage walkers to take routes through the historic environment. Promoting these to new groups and partnering with healthy organisations can open heritage to new audiences and increase wellbeing.

Area or Ward affected: All, with a focus on those area where Conservation Areas are being reassessed.

Consultation/Public Engagement: See 'consultation and adoption' section below.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the Council's Heritage Strategy was considered by the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee on 29th October 2019. At that meeting it was resolved that the Committee noted the Strategy and comments made by Members at the meeting.

On the 20th March 2020 Cabinet agreed to formally adopt the Council's Heritage Strategy. This Strategy contained a number of actions which were envisaged to be carried out by the Council and its partners throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. Two of these actions were for Officers to update

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Conservation Area Appraisals and prepare a 'Local List' of non-designated heritage assets within the District.

Officers have worked alongside Essex County Council (ECC) Place Services to identify five Conservation Areas to be assessed. These Conservation Areas are:

- Clacton Seafront Gardens,
- Dovercourt Conservation Area,
- St Osyth Conservation Area,
- Thorpe-le-Soken Conservation Area and,
- Thorpe Station and Maltings Conservation Area.

These Conservation Areas were prioritised as they are indicated on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The details of this can be found later in this report.

Officers intend to review all of the Council's Conservation Areas and the next set have already been commissioned from Place Services. These will follow in due course.

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

Each year the Council reports which Conservation Areas are at risk within the District to Historic England. Due to the pandemic details were not submitted in 2020 but in 2019 the areas at risk were:

- Clacton Seafront Gardens,
- Dovercourt Conservation Area,
- St Osyth Conservation Area,
- Thorpe-le-Soken Conservation Area and,
- Thorpe Station and Maltings Conservation Area.

Officers intend to reassess each of the District's 20 Conservation Areas over the next few years. We already have the next series of Appraisals in late drafts, these will also come before the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee in due course.

Context and General Character

Each of the five Conservation Area Appraisals share a broadly similar structure. At the start of each Appraisal a section detailing the context and general character of the Conservation Area and the evolution of the Conservation Area is given.

The following areas of assessment are specific to each Conservation Area so have their own section headings.

Proposed Changes to the Con Area,

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For Clacton reductions are made up of a reduction of the area in the east, to exclude modern development on the south side of Church Road which makes a negative or neutral contribution to the Conservation Area's character and appearance.

To extend parts of the area to the east, to include a consistent row of well-preserved historic dwellings of architectural interest on the north side of Church Road and north side of Holland Road, and the opposite side of the street on Church Road to reflect the symmetry of the tree lined street.

To extend the eastern boundary on the seafront to include the pavilion, which terminates the view on St Paul's Road and contributes to the seaside character of the Conservation Area.

To extend the area to the north to include a greater portion of the town centre; this will incorporate additional parts of the historic planned seaside resort, as well as areas and buildings which contribute to our understanding of the development of Clacton-on-Sea, therefore making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This addition also includes part of Station Road which connects the station with the main town, forming the principal approach to the town centre and terminating with the public square on Pier Avenue. This addition links key historic components of the town.

At Dovercourt there are a number of proposed additions (and no reductions) to the Conservation Area:

246-250 and 252 High Street; This twentieth century stone building is of architectural and historic value, built in the 1930s. The former chapel next door (1874) makes a positive contribution to the historic character of the area, with the later shopfront additions and original painted signage on gable end adding interest to the street scape

The Library and 33-45 Kingsway; The Library building is of communal, architectural, and historic value, its former use as a bus station is legible in its architectural style and tall apertures. The adjacent buildings have preserved some historic shopfront details.

54 - 60 Kingsway; The Wetherspools and mid-century shopfronts are of historic and architectural value and make a positive contribution to the streetscape, having retained many original architectural features, and therefore enhance understanding of the development of this street throughout the twentieth century.

Within the St Osyth it is proposed to rationalise the boundary of the Conservation Area by reducing it in two main locations:

On Mill Street and Point Clear Road it is proposed to remove all properties which are included to the south eastern side of the roads with the exception of the following properties: Numbers 20, 22, 52, The Old Bakery 54, Mill Street, 11 and 31 Hill House, and Point Clear Road. The buildings in this area to be removed are not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest or contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. It is also proposed to remove the eastern part of Mill Dam Lake up to the Mill Dam that is currently included within the Conservation Area Boundary. Whilst the lake is an important contributor to the setting of the Conservation Area, it is not considered to be a contributor to its significance as a historic settlement, within which there are many buildings of architectural and historic merit.

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It is also proposed to remove the properties at Old School Close, a twenty first century new-build cul-de-sac to the south west of the St Peter and St Paul Parish Church. Although sympathetic to their location and appropriate in design and scale, these buildings are not of significance. Also proposed for removal are the properties at Numbers 37, 90, 94, and 98 Clacton Road, these make a neutral contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and are of no historic or architectural value.

The proposed additions to the St Osyth Conservation Area include two areas comprised predominantly of early and mid-twentieth century housing, with some earlier structures and later infill development.

On Clacton Road it is proposed to extend the boundary of the Conservation Area to the east, to include residential dwellings which reflect the development of the village within the nineteenth and twentieth century. The five pairs of semi-detached houses at Numbers 47-65 (odd numbers only) are contemporary with those at 1-6 The Bury (already within the Conservation Area) and are similar in overall character, being of a vernacular revivalist style. The Old Parsonage is also proposed to be included in this boundary extension; the building is of historic interest due to its previous usage and is of architectural value.

On Spring Road, it is proposed to extend the Conservation Area boundary as far as Number 90 Spring Road, including the pairs of semi-detached houses and verges that line the street from Numbers 67-86, 88, and 90 Spring Road. Also included within this proposed extension are two pairs of mid-twentieth century semi-detached houses, Numbers 60, 62, 64, and 66 Spring Road, these differ from those semi-detached houses to their east, however as a grouping retain a character of post Second World War housing. Number 81 Spring Road, a listed building, is also proposed to be added to the Conservation Area.

At Thorpe le Soken the Appraisal proposes to extend the boundary to the north west to include the dwelling of Culver House and the Coach House and adjacent property boundary. These nineteenth century buildings are located on the periphery of the historic settlement, on the point of transition from the village to the countryside. Both buildings have an aesthetic value that would be a beneficial contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the brick-built boundary wall fronting the Colchester Road also contributes to the character of the area. Culver House retains its original sash windows and door surround, while the Coach House, though modified, has decorative barge board and a timber louvered lantern on its slate roof.

It is also proposed that the boundary to the north should extend a short distance along the west side of The Crescent to include Bloomfield Lodge. This property retains its original architectural features and its inclusion within the boundary would make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The building is early twentieth century in date and probably represents the initial stages of the New Town expansion that was proposed for Thorpe-le-Soken, but never fully realised. The bungalow has an aesthetic quality and a highly crafted joinery to its front porch and windows

To the south of the High Street and to the west of Mill Lane, it is proposed to consolidate the boundary to follow the rear boundaries of the properties along the High Street down to the bowling green and to remove the triangular piece of agricultural land, so the boundary follows the existing plot edges. The open green fields from within the Conservation Area boundary have been removed as they make a significant contribution to the setting of Thorpe-le-Soken as an isolated, rural settlement, but lack the special historic interest and character deserving of Conservation Area status.

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The removal of the modern housing development at Oak Close is proposed, these properties are of little historical significance and make little contribution to the area's special interest. The alterations to the boundary of the Conservation Area will provide a more definitive and rational boundary. It will create a robust Figure 14 The Lifehouse Spa car park conservation area boundary and improve an understanding of its setting. Figure 15

The boundary of the Thorpe Maltings Conservation Area was intended to include the buildings and spaces associated with the maltings and station and their late-Victorian setting. A review of the Conservation Area and public consultation was carried out by Tendring District Council in 2005 2006 and an Appraisal document was produced in March 2006. Within the Appraisal there was a proposal to reduce the boundary of the Conservation Area in the south to exclude the semidetached cottages on Edward Road.

The opinion expressed in the 2006 appraisal was that Edward Road was visually divided from the rest of the area by the railway and that the setting around Edward Road was unattractive and compromised by the industrial estate to the east on Harwich Road. The appraisal stated that the appearance of the houses had been too heavily altered for the application of an Article 4 Direction, which may return some visual integrity to the houses, to be worthwhile. The proposed boundary reduction was not supported by the Parish Council at the time and was subsequently not adopted.

The houses on Edward Road are likely to have a direct historic association with the Conservation Area as they were built as railway and workers' cottages. They may have provided accommodation for workers at the maltings or the brick manufacturing kilns which were once located to the south of the Conservation Area. They may also have provided accommodation for agricultural workers and it is this evidence for a combination of industrial manufacturing within a rural setting that embodies the character and special interest of the Conservation Area.

Roughly half of the Edward Road cottages have been rendered and painted, whilst the remaining buildings retain their exposed brick exteriors. Many of the original timber windows have been replaced with modern glazing, though some remain. Despite these alterations a substantial amount of the original, late nineteenth to early twentieth century character remains, to an extent that they contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, furthermore their physical and historic relationship to the maltings can still be perceived. It is therefore recommended that Edward Road be retained within the Conservation Area.

However, it is proposed that the small area to the south of Edward Road is excluded from the Conservation Area. This area is mainly covered with undergrowth, while some parts are used as parking spaces for the road's residents. This scrub area lacks the historic interest, shared by the rest of the Conservation Area and can therefore be excluded. This exclusion represents a minor adjustment to the Conservation Area boundary and will result in the area becoming part of the Conservation Area's setting.

Designated Heritage Assets

The appraisals unsurprisingly make note of the listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens in each Conservation Area.

Proposed Non-designated heritage assets

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Members will note that there is some overlap between these appraisals and the Local List project later in this report. Each of the Conservation Area Appraisals proposes a number of buildings to be considered on the Council's Local List.

These buildings have been identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival.

For Clacton:

- Pair of coastguard cottages, Tower Road
- Edwardian detached dwelling, No. 2 Alton Road
- The Sandrock, Penfold Road
- The Pier
- The Royal Hotel, Marine Parade East
- Lloyds building, Pier Avenue
- Natwest building, Pier Avenue
- Post Office building, High Street
- Old Lifeboat House, Carnarvon Road
- Row of gault brick cottages, Church Road
- Arts and Crafts style dwelling, 15 Church Street

For Dovercourt:

- 230 High Street (TSB Bank)
- 153 – 155 High Street
- 42 – 46 Kingsway
- Dovercourt Station
- Cliff Park

For St Osyth

- War Memorial c.1921, The Bury/Mill Street
- Social Club, Church Square
- Methodist Church, Chapel Lane/Spring Road
- Red Lion, Clacton road.
- Dukes Bistro, 9 Clacton Road.
- St. Osyth Almshouses, 21-27 Clacton Road.
- The Old Parsonage.
- The Cage, 14 Colchester Road.
- 67-86, 88, and 90 Spring Road.
- 47-65 Clacton Road.
- 1-6 The Bury.

For Thorpe le Soken

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- Coolmore Lodge, High Street
- Vistan, High Street
- The Rose and Crown Public House, High Street
- Cottage Pye and Aston, High Street
- Holbys Row, High Street
- The Dutch Gable, High Street
- Orchard Cottages, High Street
- The Limes, High Street
- The Furze, High Street
- Suffolk House, High Street
- Red House, High Street
- Primary School, High Street
- Harry's Bar, High Street
- Langley House, High Street
- Thatch Cottage, Mill Lane
- Remains of Old Mill, Mill Lane
- Kirk View and Donnington Cottage, High Street
- Rolph House, High Street
- Three Steps, Landermere Road
- 23 Landermere Road
- Ivy House, High Street
- Charfield, The Square
- Ashtree and No. 1-10, Station Road
- Field Mouse Cottage, Abbey Street
- 1 and 2 Ivy Cottages, Abbey Street
- Bell Cottage and Lynton, Abbey Street
- Wild Goose Studio, Abbey Street

For Thorpe Maltings

- The King Edward VII public house
- Thorpe-le-Soken Station Master's House
- Thorpe-Le-Soken Signal Box
- Harwich Road Railway Bridge

Heritage at Risk

As has been stated above, these first five Conservation Areas are at risk from losing their heritage asset status. The reasons why this might be is given for each Conservation Area:

A 2017 report on the risks to the Seafront Conservation Area highlights that the key areas within the Conservation Area which are currently at risk are the Martello Tower, the pier and Pier Avenue, the historic seafront hotels (including the Esplanade Hotel), and Anglefield Junction.

The Lower Dovercourt Conservation Area has been included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register as being in 'very bad' condition and has been identified as 'deteriorating significantly'.¹ A study which assessed four coastal Vulnerable Conservation Areas (Essex County Council, 2015)

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identified key issues facing the Lower Dovercourt Conservation Area which contribute to it being at risk. These were as follows:

- The Condition of Station Building and its environs;
- The Site of the Former Victoria Hotel, Kingsway;
- Site of the former Park Hotel, Orwell Road;
- 1 Orwell Road;
- Underlying concerns over finance and perception of the area;
- Use of unsuitable materials and loss of architectural features;
- Loss of Boundary Treatments;
- Poor quality of new signage; and
- Inclusion of the Scheduled Monument within the Conservation Area boundary.

Within the Conservation Area, the Scheduled Monument Beacon Hill Fort is also included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register with 'extensive, significant problems' and in need of management.

St Osyth Conservation Area is currently on the Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. It is described as being in poor condition, with medium vulnerability and a deteriorating trend in condition.

The scheduled monument, St Osyth's Priory, is also on the Heritage at Risk register and includes the listed buildings within the scheduled monument's boundary. The Priory is described as being in poor condition and in priority category F (repair scheme in progress and [where applicable] end use of user identified; or functionally redundant buildings with new use agreed not but not yet identified).

The Thorpe-le-Soken Conservation Area is also on the Heritage At Risk Register. This has identified the overall condition of the area is fair, however, the area is highly vulnerable and with a deteriorating trend. Negative impact can have an adverse effect upon the way the community experience and how they feel about the area. By identifying and redressing the main threats to the Conservation Area it will help protect their historic and architectural character³.

The Thorpe-le-Soken Station and Maltings Conservation Area is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register and its condition is considered to be 'very bad', while its vulnerability is listed as 'high' and the trend is towards 'deteriorating significantly'.

Being a Grade II Listed building, rather than Grade II* or Grade I, the maltings building is not included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. Yet the building is a unique heritage asset of significance and is in a very poor condition.

The Conservation Area is facing a number of issues, the most pressing of which is dereliction. The maltings, the King Edward VII Public House and its curtilage buildings are in a poor condition and unoccupied. A large proportion of the Conservation Area is therefore underused, although there still remains the potential for buildings and areas to be brought back into use.

Archaeology

Throughout these Conservation Areas there is the potential for a multitude of below-ground heritage assets yet to be discovered. In general the appraisals promote a cautious approach to development which might disturb or destroy these assets.

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Assessment of significance

A detailed assessment of significance of each of the Conservation Areas is then presented. Many of the Conservation Areas are split into distinct character areas. This assessment considers the following features:

- Layout
- Building materials and boundary treatments
- Listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets
- Other buildings
- Landscaping and open spaces
- Views

A summary is given of the significance of each Conservation Area below:

For Clacton, the special interest of the Conservation Area principally derives from its design as a seaside resort, built around a formal street pattern which is still discernible today. The Victorian and Edwardian architecture is of varied condition throughout the town, however many of the principal facades have been retained. High quality architectural features highlight the vision of Peter Bruff and subsequent planners for Clacton's development as a fashionable seaside town. The stretch of the seafront, including the Pier and the Martello Tower, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance Conservation Area; it is this coastal setting which gave rise to Clacton-on-Sea's built environment, reflective of its strategic location and consequential development as part of a defensive network and later seaside resort.

The significance of Lower Dovercourt Conservation Area is predominantly influenced by its coastal location, which has given rise to its historic use as a defensive site and its origins as a nineteenth century seaside resort, master planned by John Bagshaw along with architect W.H Lindsey. The Conservation Area is formed of three very distinct parts, which each have their own character and make a positive contribution to the overall special interest of the Conservation Area. These are the recreational and residential seaside development of Orwell Road and Cliff Park, the commercial core and gateway comprising of the High Street, Station and connecting roads, and the defensive Beacon Hill Fort to the south east.

The special interest of St Osyth Conservation Area is primarily drawn from its legibility as a small historic settlement closely associated with St Osyth's Priory and the retention of much of its post medieval character. Despite the relatively small size of St Osyth village in modern terms, the Conservation Area is large and encompasses three distinct parts, the Priory, the Creek and the village.

The special interest of Thorpe le Soken Conservation Area is derived from its development as a medieval village with its ribbon development along the High Street still evident today, its high density of quality historic buildings of different periods, and rural village character. Within the Conservation Area, a substantial amount of the village's built heritage has survived and evolved through complex growth and regeneration. Its historic buildings make an important contribution to the character, significance and special interest of the Conservation Area.

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The overall distinctive historic character of the Thorpe-Le-Soken Station and Maltings Conservation Area is as a nineteenth century railway and industrial complex, but within a rural setting. The Conservation Area encompasses a distinctive collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings. These embody the commercial and social changes resulting from the opening of the railway over a hundred and fifty years ago. The railway connected the village of Thorpe-le-Soken (situated approximately 700m to the north), with Colchester and the coast at Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze. As was the case with many railway ventures, the construction of the line and its various stations through this part of rural Essex was a speculative development. As a result, the station was modest in size and built to an established pattern adopted by the Tendring Hundred Railway and intended to serve a rural community.

The most prominent of the buildings within the Conservation Area is the maltings, which was constructed at this location to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Tendring Hundred Railway, for supply and distribution. The Thorpe-le-Soken Maltings were innovative in that two types of malt were produced on an industrial scale, within the purpose-built building. No other maltings showing the double use of crystal and pale malt so distinctively are known to survive²¹. The maltings are also significant due to their connection with Robert Free who formed Free Rodwell and Company Ltd and by the end of the nineteenth century, the company had seven maltings. Together with Thorpe-le-Soken Maltings, they represented the technological peak of the malt production industry. The railway continued to provide the impetus for development within the Conservation Area into the early twentieth century. The opening of the King Edward VII Public House in 1901 is evidence for the extent to which visitors were traveling by rail to Thorpe-le-Soken, many of who came to visit the market that was held on the area of open land to the east of the public house. The area around the maltings became a popular destination and in particular the market and the pub were once a focal point for the local community. The pub is a local landmark and is still fondly remembered within the local area. The workers cottages on Edward Road represent the continued growth and prosperity of the maltings and the immediate locality. The character of the Conservation Area is therefore typified by mid to late Victorian era railway, industrial and domestic architecture, within a rural setting. Together, the stock of differing buildings within the Conservation Area forms an interconnected and unified group.

Opportunities for Enhancement

This section identifies the issues facing the Conservation Areas which have been reviewed. Many of the issues are common to all of the Conservation Areas, but where they are unique, that is also highlighted.

Many of the Conservation Areas could benefit from enhancement to car parking including planting trees and a review of hard landscaping to ensure its historic appropriateness.

For Clacton, Dovercourt, St Osyth and Thorpe le Soken, on-street parking detracts from the historic character of the Conservation Area

All of the Conservation Areas apart from St Osyth and Thorpe Maltings suffer from inappropriate shop frontages, signage and illumination.

For Clacton the number of vacant plots which promote unsympathetic gaps within the Conservation Area are an issue and Clacton, Dovercourt and St Osyth suffer from empty properties. Specifically in St Osyth the Kings Arms and White Heart are mentioned.

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Within the Clacton Conservation Area enhancement of upper floor fenestration and detailing is noted as an issue. All the Conservation Areas suffer from the loss of or inappropriate use of architectural detailing such as UPVC windows and doors, rainwater goods and external paintwork. In Thorpe le Soken, the number of satellite dishes and solar panels were specifically mentioned.

The public realm in general was noted as being an issue for all of the Conservation Areas. An inconsistency to street furniture such as benches, bins and street lighting was noted. Many of the Conservation areas could use improvements to areas of public open space, tree planting and management.

Many of the Conservation Areas suffered from poor interpretation and lack of wayfinding. This is particularly true for Clacton between the station and seafront and Dovercourt between the station and highstreets.

In terms of area-specific issues, in Clacton the seafront shelters require attention. At Dovercourt the Beacon Hill fort has multiple owners and requires a clear development strategy. Within the St Osyth Conservation Area the benefits are given for interpretation of the registered park and garden (the Priory) at the Bury, and in Thorpe a heritage trail around the village and gardens is also proposed.

Management Proposals

As outlined above, there are a wide range of issues facing each of the five Conservation Areas, many of which share common themes. This section recommends management proposals which address these issues in both the short and long term.

- The preparation a Local Heritage List of non-designated heritage assets is suggested for all Conservation Areas. More detail on this project can be found in the next section of this report.
- With the exception of Thorpe Maltings, each of the Conservation Areas would benefit from bespoke shopfront design guidance
- The Council is encouraged to use its enforcement powers to prevent inappropriate development within each of the Conservation Areas.
- Joint working between different Council departments to promote public realm improvements is also suggested.
- The monitoring of trees and addition to tree planting within public open space is recommended.
- Publishing guidance for homeowners and businesses in Conservation Areas could help owners identify appropriate alterations to their properties within Conservation Areas.
- At vacant shops, the introduction of information boards and QR codes could show the past of an area in a more immersive manor.
- The timely renewal of these Conservation Area Appraisals could help to monitor change within the Conservation Areas more accurately.
- For Clacton on Sea the appropriate development of opportunity Sites including car parks and vacant sites could improve the character.
- Wayfinding, particularly in Clacton and Dovercourt between the station, town centre and seafront could help with legibility.

Funding Opportunities

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- Heritage lottery fund
- Heritage Action zones
- S106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas

PREPARATION OF A LOCAL LIST

Within both the Council's adopted Heritage Strategy and the above mentioned Conservation Area Appraisals it is recommended for the Council to identify non-designated heritage assets within the District.

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.

There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. In Tendring, the Conservation Area Appraisals (see above) have identified around 60 non-designated heritage assets. Also Alresford Parish Council, in their emerging Neighbourhood Plan have also identified a number of non-designated heritage assets.

But these are only small areas of the District. Officers intend to open a 'call for sites' for non-designated heritage assets. Parish and Town Councils, heritage groups and members of the public will all be encouraged to submit buildings and structures which they consider have historic merit. The consultation period for this will be an extended period of time (a minimum of six months) to gather the widest level of interest for this initial call for sites. A draft template form for submitting buildings is attached at Appendix 6.

Once gathered, the non-designated heritage assets will need to be assessed. It is important that the decisions to identify sites and structures as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence. Officers therefore commissioned Place Services to prepare a criteria to which these building can be assessed (also see Appendix 6).

Each of the proposed non-designated heritage assets will be assessed using a standardised survey form completed by Place Services (at the back of Appendix 6). Each nomination assessment form will include:

Section A

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- Photograph
- Entry Name
- Unique Identification Number (composed of year assessed and chronological number, for example 2019001, 2019002)
- Site Address (including postcode or grid reference)
- Conservation Area (where appropriate)
- Parish
- Original use and current use (where known)
- Site accessible (yes/no)

Section B

- Brief Description
- Assessment against criteria (see below)
- Notes (including any concerns)
- Overall condition
- Date assessed

The criteria used to assess the nominated buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes has been informed by the criteria and methodology used by Historic England. This approach ensures that the output is consistent with similar surveys at both a local and national level. For inclusion in the Local List an asset must demonstrate significance under at least one of the values below.

Rarity - Appropriate for all assets, as judged against local characteristics.

Group Value - Groupings of assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship.

Age - The age of an asset may be an important criterion, and the age range can be adjusted to take into account distinctive local characteristics or building traditions.

Asset type - Although local heritage lists have long been developed successfully for buildings, all heritage asset types, including monuments, sites, places, areas, parks, gardens and designed landscapes may be considered for inclusion.

Authenticity - Buildings should be recognisably of their time, or of a phase in their history. If they have been unsympathetically altered, the change should be easily reversible. A building which is substantially unaltered, or retains the majority of its original features, qualifies under this criterion.

Architectural and Artistic Interest - The intrinsic design and aesthetic value of an asset relating to local and/or national styles, materials, construction and craft techniques, or any other distinctive characteristics.

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Archaeological Interest - The local heritage asset may provide evidence about past human activity in the locality, which may be in the form of buried remains, but may also be revealed in the structure of buildings or in a designed landscape, for instance. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Historic Interest (Including Social and Communal Interest) - Landmark/Townscape Status A significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important local figures, may enhance the significance of a heritage asset. Blue Plaque and similar schemes may be relevant. Social and communal interest may be regarded as a sub-set of historic interest but has special value in local listing. As noted in the PPG: 'Heritage assets ... can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity'. It therefore relates to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence, contributing to the 'collective memory' of a place.

Designed Landscape - The interest attached to locally important historic designed landscapes, parks and gardens which may relate to their design or social history.

Landscape/Townscape Status - An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may be singled out as a landmark within the local scene

Once assessed by Place Services, the 'short list' of non-designated heritage assets will come back to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee before adoption.

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the discussion had at this meeting, Members of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee are asked to recommend to Cabinet that the five Conservation Areas to be put to a six week public consultation and for a 'call for sites' for non-designated heritage assets to be carried out for at least six months.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Clacton Seafront Conservation Area Appraisal
- Appendix 2 – Dovercourt Conservation Area Appraisal
- Appendix 3 – St Osyth Conservation Area Appraisal
- Appendix 4 – Thorpe le Soken Conservation Area Appraisal
- Appendix 5 – Thorpe Station and Maltings Conservation Area Appraisal

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Appendix 6 – Local Heritage List

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None