

Great Clacton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Tendring
District Council



Client:
Tendring District Council

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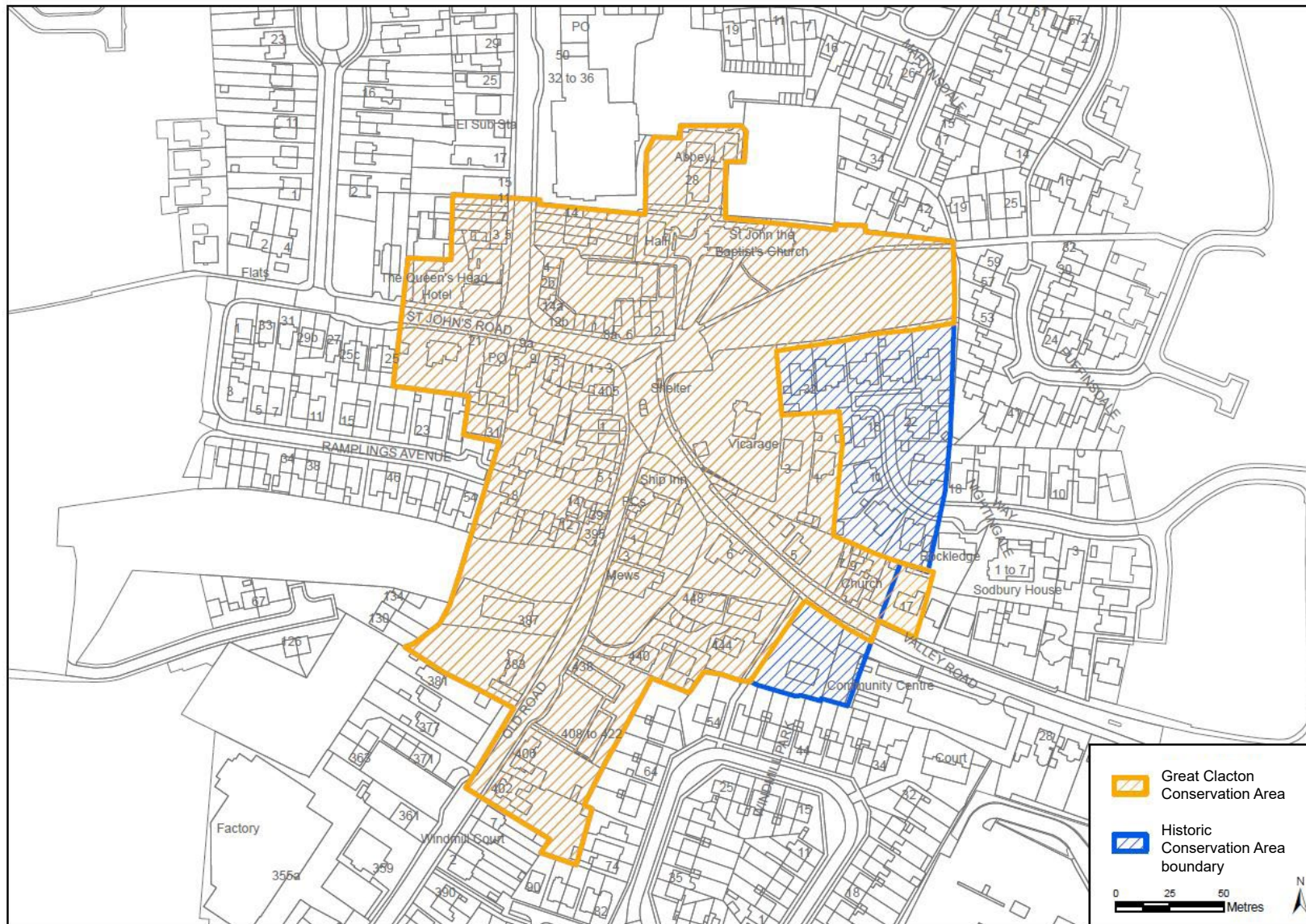


Figure 1 Map showing Great Clacton Conservation Area (with 2024 boundary changes)

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides an overview of the Great Clacton Conservation Area, outlining its designation history, alterations to the boundary, and a description of its special interest. This appraisal also considers buildings, green spaces and features which contribute to the Conservation Area's character and appearance. It also highlights the significance of heritage assets within the Conservation Area and the contribution that these, along with their setting, make to its character. The understanding of significance can be used to help manage future change.

Conservation Area designation provides broader protection than the listing of individual buildings as it recognises all features within the area which form part of its character and appearance. This ensures that planning decisions take the enhancement and preservation of the area into consideration.

Great Clacton Conservation Area's significance is predominantly derived from its historic and architectural interest. Great Clacton is a settlement with early medieval origins. The twelfth century Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist in the north of the Conservation Area would once have dominated the medieval village which developed around the bishop's manor. It remains an important landmark today, and its churchyard provides a tranquil and important public green space. The architectural interest of the area also derives from three Grade II listed timber framed and plastered public houses/former inns and other Grade II listed buildings on St John's Road, Old Road and Valley Road.



Figure 2 The Grade II listed Queen's Head former public house and The Plough on North Road



1.2 Purpose of Appraisal

This document is to be used as a baseline to inform future change, development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the Conservation Area and its unique character and appearance.

The appraisal recognises designated and non-designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area, which contribute to its special interest, along with their setting. It also recognises non-designated heritage assets within the setting of the Conservation Area which contribute to its special interest. It considers how the area developed, in terms of its building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities are used to assess the key characteristics of the area, highlighting the potential impact future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the character of Great Clacton. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and analysis of the area itself, as well as a review of the previous Conservation Area Appraisal published in 2006.

This appraisal enhances understanding of the Conservation Area and its development, informing future design. Applications that demonstrate an understanding of the character of a Conservation Area are more likely to produce appropriate designs and positive outcomes for agents and their clients.

It is expected that applications for planning permission will also consult and follow the best practice guidance outlined in Section 6.2.

1.3 Planning Policy and Guidance

The legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990). In particular, Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context: the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Chapter 16 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024).

This assessment follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's revised *Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2019) and Good Practice Advice in Planning 3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017).

The Great Clacton Conservation Area is located within Tendring District. Local planning policy is set out in the *Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 2 (2022)*. Policies which are relevant to the historic environment include:

Policy SPL 3 - Sustainable Design

Policy PP 8 - Tourism

Policy PPL 3 - The Rural Landscape

Policy PPL 7 - Archaeology

Policy PPL 8 - Conservation Areas

Policy PPL 9 - Listed Buildings

Policy PPL 10 - Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency

The Conservation Area is located within the Clacton-on-Sea Development Boundary.



Figure 3 Buildings on St John's Road (looking west)

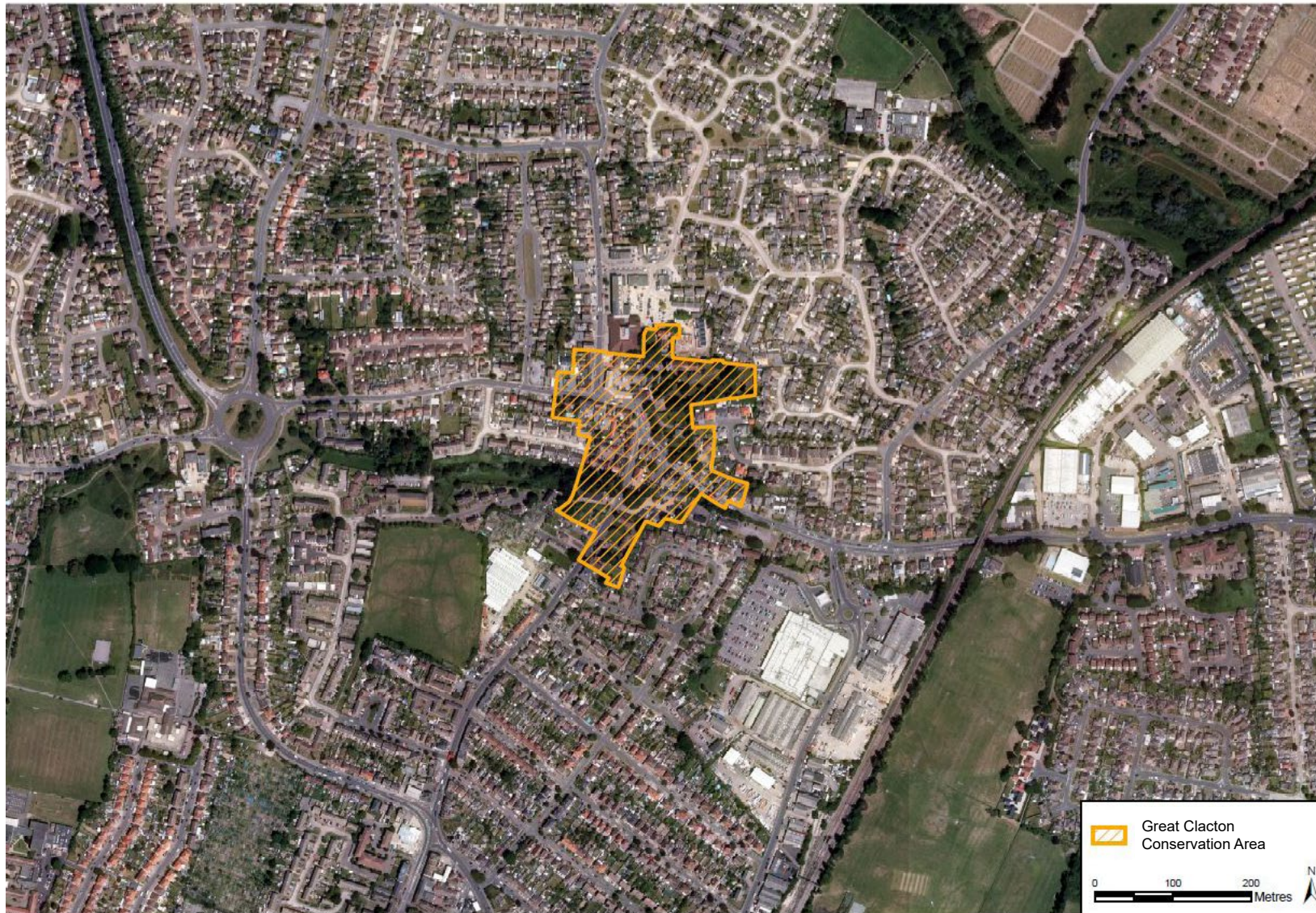


Figure 4 Aerial view of the Great Clacton Conservation Area showing it in its wider context



1.4 Designation of the Conservation Area

Great Clacton Conservation Area was first designated in 1983. A Conservation Character Area Appraisal was adopted by Tendring District Council in March 2006, derived from a document produced for the Council by consultants Smith Stuart Reynolds in 2001. The Conservation Area was reviewed in 2022, with a public consultation period and event undertaken.

1.5 2024 Boundary Revision

The 2006 Appraisal included suggested changes to the Conservation Area boundary and proposed Article 4 Directions but these were not implemented, and the boundary remained as designated in 1983. The 2006 suggestions for boundary revisions were reviewed as part of this appraisal, and changes to the boundary of the Conservation Area were made in light of these, and as the result of new development which has taken place since 2006.

To the south of the churchyard and east of the twentieth century vicarage, mid-twentieth century housing has been augmented with a new development of further bungalows at the northern end of Nightingale Way, on previously undeveloped land. These are characterful in design and have been carefully detailed but are not of sufficient architectural quality to merit inclusion in the Conservation Area. An area of unkempt scrubland directly fronting Valley Road and a tarmacked area behind this surrounding the Army Cadets' building located off Valley Road was also removed. The map on page 4 of this report shows the amended Conservation Area boundary.

2. Great Clacton Conservation Area

2.1 Context and General Character

Great Clacton is situated in the south of Tendring District, and forms part of the larger coastal town of Clacton-on-Sea. The Great Clacton Conservation Area is relatively small, urban in character and represents the historic core of the village settlement which developed around the medieval church and nearby manor house and along the main roads: Old Road (to the south, formerly known as Brook Street)¹, St John's Road (to the west), Valley Road (which runs east to west, formerly known as Holland Road)² and North Road (to the north).

Modern commercial development on North Road just beyond the Conservation Area boundary and on St John's Road has eroded the historic village character of the Conservation Area. There has been more sympathetic new housing introduced on Old Road and to the rear of the street fronting buildings. Road traffic through the area is heavy and constant, which detracts from how the area is experienced and from the setting of all the street fronting listed buildings.

1 It was still shown as such on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map published in 1923.

2 The name Valley Road first appears on the 1923 OS map.



Figure 5 Approach to the medieval church



2.2 Origin and Evolution

The following section provides an overview of the history of the Conservation Area its environs.

Prehistory (-500000 – 43)

Relatively little is known about the prehistoric archaeology within the Great Clacton Conservation Area however the prehistory of the wider area is well documented. The cliffs and foreshore at Clacton-on-Sea have yielded abundant animal and plant fossil remains, as well as extensive Palaeolithic deposits of struck flints which gave its name to the 'Clactonian' flint industry. The numerous river valleys that cross the Tendring area and the coast would have been especially favoured in providing a predictable source of food (from hunting and fishing) and water, as well as a means of transport and communication in the prehistoric period. The free-draining sand and gravel soils were preferable locations for settlement and agriculture and coincidentally, also provide favourable conditions for the formation of cropmark features, where below ground archaeological features show as a visible trace on the surface and can be recorded through aerial photography. Recorded cropmark features suggest that there are numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments across the Tendring District with notable examples at St Osyth to the west. Some material remains relating to ritual activity have been recovered from the surrounding area from the Neolithic to Iron Age period though none from within the Conservation Area.

Roman (43 – 410)

The Romano-British occupation of the Great Clacton area is also relatively unknown with only a single Roman coin recovered north of the Conservation Area. Roman brick and limestone are incorporated into the walls of the parish church, however, and further building material recovered in the area surrounding the church could indicate the material came from a nearby source.

Early Medieval (410 – 1066)

Great and Little Clacton are ancient parishes that originated as a single estate in the Anglo-Saxon period. For taxation purposes they were treated as a single unit until the mid-sixteenth century although they each had their own parish church by the twelfth century. It is thought likely that in the tenth century or earlier, Great and Little Clacton and part of what was to become known as St Osyth made up a large Anglo-Saxon estate owned by St Paul's Cathedral. By around 1000 Clacton was a separate manor owned by the Bishop of London.³ The name Clacton is thought to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, simply translated as 'the village of Clacc's people' however Great Clacton is not separately documented until the medieval period and the location of the Anglo-Saxon settlement is unknown. Though not accurately located, the remains of a possible high-status burial suggests there was settlement in the Anglo-Saxon period close to or within the Conservation Area.

³ Ed. Christopher C. Thornton, Herbert Eiden, VCH Essex, Volume XI - Clacton, Walton and Frinton: North-East Essex Seaside Resorts (2011), p.226.



It is thought that Clacton Hall was probably established prior to the Norman conquest of 1066. The exact relationship of the medieval manor house to eighteenth century Great Clacton Hall is unclear but there was certainly a house on the present site by 1656.⁴ Outside of the Conservation Area, the less important manor houses including Cann Hall in the north-west corner of Great Clacton and a sub-manor of Colbaynes Hall located near the western boundary were medieval in origin but date to after the conquest.⁵

From the early medieval period to the late nineteenth century most of the land in the parishes of Little and Great Clacton was held by the manor of Great and Little Clacton, and so their landownership and economies were linked for much of their history. Both parishes had similar agricultural economies until the seaside resort of Clacton-on-Sea was developed in the 1870s, although Great Clacton developed a small fishing industry in the medieval period.⁶ There was a landing place, one ship, a master and four mariners and fishermen living at Great Clacton in 1565.⁷

4 Ibid., p.242.

5 Ibid., p.234. Timber forming part of Cann Hall has been dated to 1512 using dendrochronology. Roger Kennell, *The Place-Names of Great Clacton* (Essex Society for Archaeology & History, 2016 (e-book)).

6 Ed. Christopher C. Thornton, Herbert Eiden, *VCH Essex, Volume XI - Clacton, Walton and Frinton: North-East Essex Seaside Resorts* (2011), p.234.

7 Ibid., p.258.

Although no major highways passed through Great Clacton, the roads to Little Clacton (to the north) St Osyth (to the west) and Little Holland (to the east) are presumed to be ancient and were significant to the development of Great Clacton.⁸

Medieval (1066 – 1540)

Large areas of local woodland may have survived until the eleventh century but appear to have been cleared by the later medieval period. The manor of Great and Little Clacton had two parks including one in the south-west of Great Clacton known as Alton Park, the latter recorded in 1313 and which descended with Clacton Manor until the mid-seventeenth century.⁹ The Conservation Area encompasses the historic village core, clustered around an open area formed where the roads joined and crossed each other. The scale and grandeur of the Norman parish church gives some indication of the relative importance of the settlement in the medieval period. The village conforms to a typical medieval settlement pattern where the church and manorial hall are located in close proximity. The development of a village seems to have been encouraged by the bishops of London in the fifteenth century and by 1444 small parcels of land belonging to the manor (demesne land), probably near the centre of Great Clacton, were being leased to tenants, apparently as building plots.¹⁰

8 Ibid., p.230.

9 Ibid., pp.228 and 247.

10 Ibid., p.235.

In the mid-fifteenth century there are records of rents from several parcels of land and new houses which included a cottage at the church gate, land in the Hall yard, land on the west side of the churchyard and a parcel of land between a smithy and the lord's garden.¹¹

The Church of St John the Baptist is the only medieval monument to survive within the Conservation Area. In the medieval period it was dedicated to St Nicholas rather than St John, the latter dedication first recorded in the mid-eighteenth century.¹² A chapel to the north of the church appears to have been built at the time of the church's construction or soon after, possibly for private use by the lord of the manor. The three bay church nave with round arch headed windows is the main survival from the twelfth century. Inside the building a piscina survives from the fourteenth century and the octagonal font dates to the fifteenth century. The nave roof is of a form common between around 1350 and 1450. The west tower was added in the fifteenth century and superseded an earlier timber framed belfry.¹³

11 Ibid., p.235.

12 Ibid., p.277.

13 Ibid., p.281.



Figure 6 Medieval Church of St John the Baptist



Figure 7 Chapman and Andre map of 1777. The map depicts the Church of St John the Baptist with its parsonage to the south and Great Clacton Hall to the north and the Ship Inn can be seen directly to the south of the main road junction.



In 1507, the vicarage lay to the east of a road near Clacton Hall, thought probably to be the site of the nineteenth century vicarage which was demolished and replaced (on the same site) with the current vicarage in 1974. In 1810 the vicarage was noted to have a brick front with lath and plaster rear and side elevations, and to have a thatched and weatherboarded stable.¹⁴ The Parsonage is clearly marked on Chapman and André's map of Essex (1777), and shown as the vicarage from the 1st edition OS map of 1876 onwards.

Great Clacton had no proper harbour but due to its proximity to the coast it is thought that from the medieval period and later, communication with London and other parts of Essex may have been by sea with a landing place recorded at Conyber in 1565 (the location of which is unknown).¹⁵

Post Medieval (1540 – 1901)

In 1545 Clacton manor was exchanged by the church for land owned by the Crown in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. In 1548 the manor was granted to Princess Mary (later Queen) and in 1553 to Thomas Darcy, 1st Baron of Chiche (which became known as St Osyth) and passed through successive generations of the same family until the mid-nineteenth century when it passed to the Trustees of W F Nassau (died 1857), who were still in possession in the 1930s.¹⁶

14 Ibid., p.277.

15 Ibid., p.230.

16 Ibid., p.241.

Christopher Saxton's Map of Essex (1576) shows the church at Great Clacton but generally provides little detail for the county other than some of the larger mansions and certain estates which are shown as enclosed (or impaled) indicating private land belonging to someone with significant wealth.

The earliest surviving buildings in the Conservation Area include the timber framed Ship Inn, and the buildings at 403 Old Road (The Maltings) and 1-3 St John's Road which abut one another and are thought to date to the sixteenth century or earlier. The former was converted to a shop in the 1980s. The latter was a single house called Turland in the 1950s.¹⁷ The Ship Inn was probably originally built as a dwelling but was recorded as an inn by the later 1700s.¹⁸ Smuggling was prevalent along the isolated local coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is reputed to be a bricked-up entrance to a tunnel in the cellar of The Ship which was part of a network used to hide smuggled contraband before it was moved to Colchester and London. Other tunnels were also said to connect the Queen's Head Hotel to the house called Three Chimneys opposite, and Great Clacton Hall to the church.¹⁹

17 Ibid., p.238.

18 Ibid., p.238.

19 <https://www.clactonhistory.co.uk/smuggling-tales-great-clacton/>



Figure 8 Grade II listed Forge Cottage on Valley Road which has been dated to the sixteenth century or earlier

Forge Cottage on Valley Road, originally a hall house and which became the local Smithy, has also been dated to the sixteenth century or earlier and has a later outshot to the rear. Of the same date is The Queen's Head on St John's Road and the corner of North Road which was originally built as a dwelling,²⁰ and extended in the eighteenth century. By 1704, it had a brewhouse and a stable yard.²¹ The brewhouse is likely to have been what is now The Plough to the rear of the hotel

20 VCH Essex Volume XI, p.259.

21 Ibid., p.259.



Figure 9 Portrait of John Cobbold of Ipswich who acquired the Ship Inn in 1800, by George Frost (1820) (Ipswich Borough Council collection)

which has been dated to circa 1700.²² Both The Ship and the Queen's Head were licenced from 1769, and The Ship was acquired by John Cobbold of Ipswich in 1800, passing to his descendants and Cobbold's brewery, who owned it through the nineteenth century and later also acquired the Queen's Head.²³

Number 383 Old Road (also known as Brook Villa) has been dated to circa 1679 and was built as a farmhouse possibly by its first known owner William Angier (died 1671).²⁴ It is reported that in 1832, Revenue Officers came to the house searching for smuggled goods.²⁵

The Mansion House which was located in the centre of Great Clacton before it was demolished in the 1960s was either built or encased in brick in around 1720.²⁶

22 Ibid., p.238. and James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, Essex (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), (Yale University Press) 2007, p.401.

23 VCH Essex Volume XI, pp.259-260.

24 Ibid., p.240.

25 <https://www.clactonhistory.co.uk/smuggling-tales-great-clacton/>

26 VCH Essex Volume XI, p.237.

Great Clacton Hall was built or rebuilt in the eighteenth century for the Schutz family who bought the house and demesne lands in 1717.²⁷ It is a two-storey timber framed and plastered house of three bays with a tiled roof, a central chimney stack and stair. Dormer windows to the roof were removed in the 1980s and the large extension on the north side of the house was added in the late 2000s.²⁸ A number of historic farm buildings and ranges associated with Great Clacton Hall are depicted on the 1777 map and structural remains of the former post-medieval buildings and yards have been uncovered north of the church. A relatively large complex of buildings is still shown to the north-east of the hall on the 1st Edition OS map published in 1876 and these were still in place by the time of the 1923 OS map.

The 1777 map shows the village clustered around a 'square' to the west of the church at the intersection of the main roads, The Ship directly to the south of the intersection, and with further buildings more sparsely ranged along St John's Road, Valley Road and Old Road.

Great Clacton was connected to Colchester by the operation of a carrier's cart which started to run from soon after 1730, and a carrier service continued into the late nineteenth century.²⁹ The 1777 map shows settlements at several greens in Great Clacton including Rush Green in the south-west, on the northern edge of Alton Park, and at

27 *Ibid.*, p.266.

28 *Ibid.*, p.242.

29 *Ibid.*, p.231.



Figure 10 Late nineteenth/early twentieth century view south along North Road with The Plough Inn on the right hand side

Magdalen Green which lies to the south of the Conservation Area along Old Road. The area to the west of Great Clacton featured extensive greens until the nineteenth century.³⁰

30 *Ibid.*

Three Chimneys lies on the western boundary of the Conservation Area and is a timber framed house with a painted brick principal façade, and plastered to the rear. It has been dated to the seventeenth or eighteenth century and had a new garden laid out in 1847.³¹ It takes its name from Three Chimneys Farm shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1876.

Weatherboarded Saddlers Cottage (No. 5) on St John's Road dates to the eighteenth century and has the fascia of a former shop front on the left-hand side. The shop sign was still present in the 1980s.³² Number 9 St John's Road which is a former cottage or pair of cottages now in use as a shop, also dates to the eighteenth century as do the three, three-storey former houses of Church House. What today is the barber's shop at the western end of this range was first converted to a double-fronted shop in 1883.³³

The village was considered vulnerable to invasion during the Napoleonic Wars and a signal station was built at Great Clacton in 1795, with three Martello towers built along the Clacton coast in the first decade of the nineteenth century.³⁴

31 Ibid., p.238.

32 The sign is shown on an image of Saddlers Cottage taken in 1985 by Essex County Council.

33 Ibid., p.238.

34 Ibid., p.229.



Figure 11 Late nineteenth/early twentieth century image of the Ship Inn showing the windmill demolished circa 1918 (Clacton and District Local History Society)



A windmill was in place at Bull Hill Farm to the east of Old Road by 1756 and seems to have continued in use until 1833. This mill, which appears on the 1777 map, lay further to the east of the road than a mill that succeeded it in the nineteenth century.³⁵

The Church of St John the Baptist was restored in the nineteenth century. The spire of the west tower was rebuilt in 1810 and a balustrade replaced the former battlements in 1913. Amongst other changes carried out in the nineteenth century was the introduction of two new galleries in 1837. A later phase of works was carried out from 1865-6 by Edward Charles Hakewill (died 1872), who rebuilt the east wall and introduced three new Norman-style windows, and added a two bay north aisle to the chancel. He also introduced septaria stonework to the external masonry, which was previously rendered.³⁶

The first Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1824 on Valley Road and is marked as such on the 1876 OS map. This building was superseded by the current Methodist church on the same site, in 1863, enlarged to include a schoolroom in 1876, and further extended in the mid-twentieth century.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., p.256.

³⁶ Ibid., p.281. Septaria is a mix of rock, mineral and organic matter formed within layers of limestone sediment.

³⁷ Ibid., p.286.

Beyond the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, two almshouses were built and endowed by James Maskell on Old Road, in 1827 and the vicar James Silvester added a third almshouse in 1908. The nineteenth century almshouses are shown as 'Maskell's Almshouses' on the 1876 OS map. These were sold around 1936 and replaced by houses at 215 and 217 Coppins Road. The almshouses on Old Road were subsequently demolished.³⁸ The Workhouse was also located on Old Road, at Clacton Green built around 1750 which became disused in 1835 when the Tendring Union workhouse was opened. It was demolished in the 1940s.³⁹

Also on Old Road, some way south of the current Conservation Area was the National School, founded by the church and built in 1860, eventually taken over and replaced by Essex County Council in 1930. The old school building was used as a shoe factory after the Second World War.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., p.270.

³⁹ Ibid., p.272.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.272.



Figure 12 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map published 1876 showing the northern part of the Conservation Area including Great Clacton Hall and the church and showing the former rural character of the surrounding area



Figure 13 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map published 1876 showing the southern part of the Conservation Area including the farm once associated with Three Chimneys, the first Methodist Chapel on Valley Road and the windmill demolished circa 1918



The broad pattern of settlement in Great Clacton remained the same until the development of Clacton-on-Sea in the 1870s, which initially only affected the coastal area.⁴¹ The economy remained mainly agricultural until the development of the seaside resort, led by Peter Bruff, an engineer from Ipswich.⁴² The railway (a branch line from Thorpe-le-Soken) to Clacton-on-Sea was opened by the Tendring Hundred Railway in 1866. The nineteenth century also witnessed the emergence of industrial activity in the area surrounding the village, including a brickworks north of Magdalen Green (in operation from 1886 to 1921, possibly longer)⁴³ and a three storey steam mill. The steam mill on Old Road was built in 1867 by Charles Beckwith and was sold in 1894 to Henry Bromley, miller and baker. Having been updated with new machinery, in 1909 the mill was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt, still trading as Bromley and Co Ltd in 1929.⁴⁴ The nineteenth century windmill shown on the 1876 and 1897 OS maps, was demolished circa 1918.⁴⁵

41 Ibid., p.237.

42 Ibid., p.248. and Bettley and Pevsner, Essex, p.54.

43 VCH Essex Volume XI, p.258.

44 Ibid., p.256.

45 Ibid., p.256.

Modern (1901 – now)

In 1939, Great Clacton Hall belonged to H S Cousins.⁴⁶ During the twentieth century, and particularly following the Second World War, there was much residential development which overtook Great Clacton, and areas such as Magdalen Green were subsumed within Clacton-on-Sea.⁴⁷

Given its coastal location, Clacton needed extensive defensive features during the Second World War and road barriers were emplaced around the junction at St Johns Square, with a Spigot Mortar emplacement positioned at the corner of the graveyard of St Johns Church.

Within the Conservation Area, the modern development of shops with flats above, located on the east side of North Road and the north side of St John's road, was built in the 1960s, and replaced a demolished group of medieval buildings which had been subdivided and used as shops in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.⁴⁸ In the current century, new housing has been developed at various sites on Old Road, to the rear of buildings on St John's Road, and a further small development of houses now borders the historic churchyard to the north, in the direct setting of the church and Conservation Area.

46 Ibid., p.241.

47 Ibid., p.237.

48 Ibid., p.238.

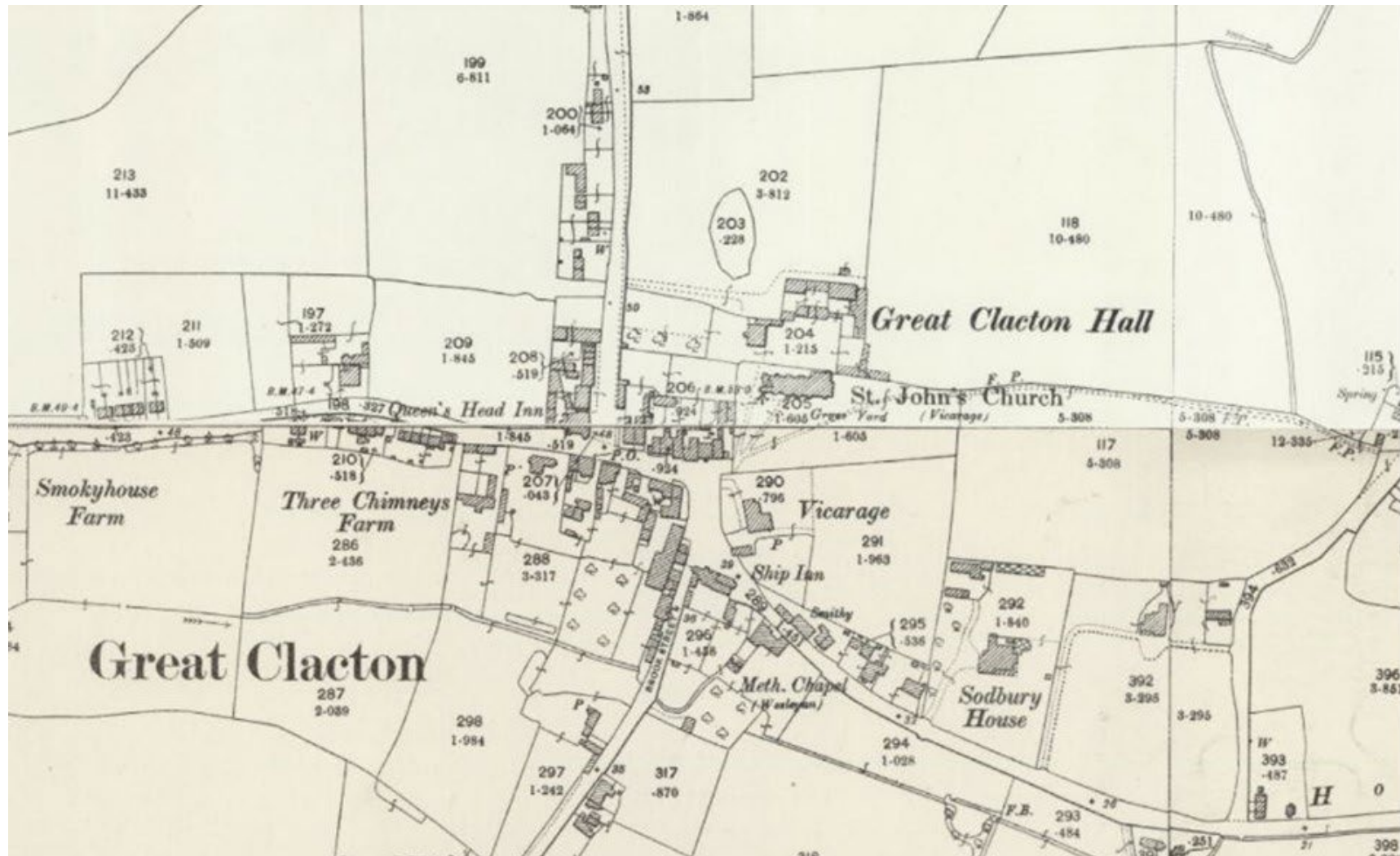


Figure 14 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map published 1897 showing the Conservation Area little changed from the first edition map

The Church of St John the Baptist underwent repairs in 1959 and 1981, and was closed from 1986 until 2002.⁴⁹ Having undergone significant deterioration, the church was restored by Gerald William Barrett from 1997-2000 which included removal of most of the nineteenth century furnishings and the installation of a new stone floor.⁵⁰

49 Ibid., pp.,280-281.

50 Ibid., p.281.



Figure 15 Great Clacton Hall and the tower of St John the Baptist in 1955 (G W Martin, Essex Record Office reference IM_8_86_1_28)



Figure 16 383 Old Road in 1985 (Essex County Council)



Figure 17 404 and 406 Old Road in 1985 (Essex County Council)



Figure 18 Great Clacton Hall in 1985 prior to addition of a large extension on the north side in 2002 (Essex County Council)



Figure 19 Saddlers Cottage in 1985 showing former shop sign (Essex County Council)

2.3 Designated Heritage Assets

There are twelve designated heritage assets within the Great Clacton Conservation Area which contribute to its special architectural and historic interest. These include the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall, the Grade II listed public houses The Plough and The Ship Inn and the former Queen's Head Hotel. Other designated assets include domestic buildings and former dwellings that have been adapted for commercial use, some of which are timber framed buildings re-fronted to reflect changing architectural tastes. The listed buildings in the Conservation Area provide a good representation of medieval and post-medieval English architectural history.

A full list of all the designated assets within the Conservation Area is included in Appendix 6.1.

These buildings have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest as defined by Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Further information about the listing process can be found on the Historic England [website](#).

Listed buildings are protected by government legislation and there are policies in place to ensure that any alterations to a listed building will not affect its special interest. It is possible to alter, extend or demolish a listed building but this requires listed building consent and sometimes planning permission.

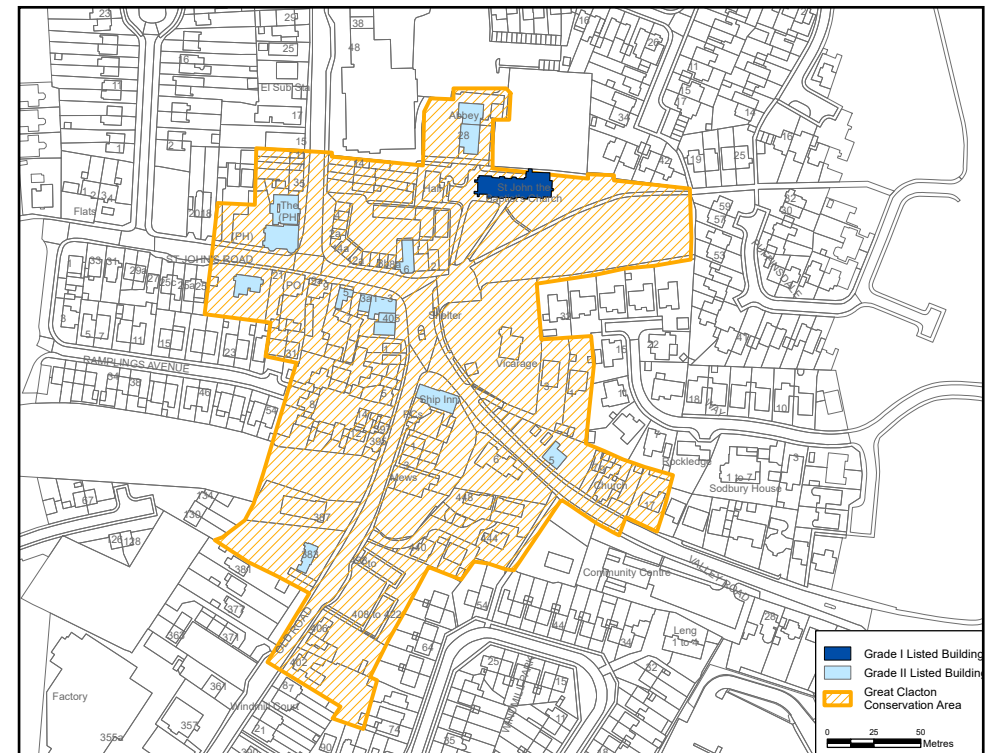


Figure 20 Map showing the location of the designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area



2.4 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Every building, space and feature within a Conservation Area makes a contribution to its character and special interest, be it positive, neutral or negative.

Heritage assets are defined in Planning Policy as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.’⁵¹

Not all heritage assets are listed, and just because a building is not included on the list does not mean it is of no heritage value. Buildings and other structures of the built environment such as fountains, railings, signs and landscaping can make a positive contribution to the appreciation of an area’s historic interest and its general appearance.

Local listing is an important tool for local planning authorities to identify non-listed buildings and heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the locality. At present there is no approved local list for Tendring District. This document has identified heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and could be considered for local listing in the future. This list is not exhaustive, and further buildings may be identified as non-designated heritage assets through the planning application process.

⁵¹ NPPF, p.67.

Buildings and features within the Conservation Area which are considered to be non-designated heritage assets include:

- 3-11 North Road
- 17 North Road (The Great Clacton Surgery)
- 9 St John’s Road (Foxes Garden and Furniture Shop)
- 397 and 399 Old Road (Vacant shop and Liberal Democrats office)
- 395 Old Road
- Former Public Convenience (Old Road, adjacent to The Ship public house)
- 406 and 404 Old Road
- Old Mill Cottage, 402 Old Road
- Eaglehurst, 6 Valley Road
- Great Clacton Methodist Church and adjacent semi-detached cottages on Valley Road
- 17 Valley Road
- Sodbury House, Nightingale Way (outside of the Conservation Area boundary)



2.5 Heritage at Risk

There are no buildings or features in the Great Clacton Conservation Area which are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, Grade II listed 383 Old Road appears to have been unoccupied for several years and is in a neglected state, thus this building could be considered at risk. Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall also appears to be unoccupied following the closure of the Abbey Care Home formerly on these premises, though appears to be in a reasonable state of external repair.

2.6 Archaeological Potential

The Conservation Area comprises the medieval Church/Hall complex and the core of the historic village which is medieval in origin. The survival of the Church, post-medieval buildings and historic road layout are an important, well-preserved resource.

The discovery of an Anglo-Saxon burial in a barrow found in association with a glass drinking cup, broken tiles and charred wood provides evidence for a high-status grave and a possible Anglo-Saxon settlement within or close to the Conservation Area.

Excavation adjacent to the Conservation Area shows that the graveyard of St John the Baptist once extended further north and that a chapel, possibly a private chapel associated with the manor, lay north of the church. The area north of the church has potential for further remains relating to the church, chapel and churchyard. Within the church itself, excavations below floor level have demonstrated the survival of structural remains associated with the earlier phases of the church.

The scale and importance of the Norman parish church gives some indication of the relative importance of Great Clacton in the medieval period. Early medieval settlement evidence is limited though some has been revealed to the north of the church. Further evidence for the



medieval settlement can be expected to survive around the church and may also include remains of the medieval manorial site. Structural remains of the later post-medieval manorial complex have been uncovered north of the church.

The eastern extent of the churchyard borders a cropmark feature of a square enclosure of unknown date and origin, and associated features may be preserved within the existing churchyard. Roman building material is commonly found incorporated into medieval church walls, the quantity of Roman building material found in later archaeological features adjacent to the church may be related to the destruction of the medieval chapel, but may also indicate the presence of a nearby available source of material, possibly from a former Roman building or villa.

In recent years there has been a number of small-scale archaeological investigations that have provided information on the nature, scale and quality of surviving archaeological remains within the Conservation Area. The low density of features and the low quantity of material remains from the sites investigated suggest that any settlement evidence is concentrated within the core of the historic village. The

settlement has been occupied since the medieval period and it can be anticipated that further below-ground archaeological remains survive within the Conservation Area. Whilst settlement evidence is more likely to be sited along the street frontage, the backyard areas may contain evidence for ancillary activity, such as wells, cess-pits, yards and middens, as well as industrial activity.

Much of the land surrounding the Church is in use as a graveyard which will have truncated any surviving archaeological remains within those areas. However, survival of archaeological remains is demonstrated closer to the existing church and is likely in any areas of less disturbance.

The soil-type within the Conservation Area is conducive to the survival of bone, shell and ceramics, and there is the potential for palaeoenvironmental deposits to be preserved within waterlogged deposits. The potential for these is high within the areas of undeveloped land bordering the stream which flows up to Old Road. Waterlogged deposits can also be anticipated within deeper features such as wells and cess-pits.

3. Assessment of Significance

3.1 Summary

The Great Clacton Conservation Area is notable for its historic village character and appearance which largely derives from the medieval Grade I listed church of St John the Baptist to the north-west with its churchyard providing an important open green space enhanced by historic tombs and memorials; and the cluster of listed buildings at the heart of the Conservation Area, mostly placed around the junctions of North Road, St John's Road, Old Road and Valley Road. These are a mixture of predominantly two storey timber framed and plastered public houses and houses. Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall to the north of the church and Church House to the west date to the eighteenth century and some of the older timber framed houses were re-fronted with brick and/or render in the eighteenth century to reflect changes in architectural taste. Some of the listed buildings which originated as dwellings have been adapted for commercial purposes and the majority of commercial premises within the Conservation Area are located on St John's Road and North Road.

With some notable exceptions, modern development within the Conservation Area and immediately in its setting has somewhat eroded the historic character, coupled with poor quality surface treatments to roads and pavements as well as unsympathetic and poor quality street furniture (for example, street lighting, signage and bollards) adding to this issue.



Figure 21 The churchyard of St John the Baptist which provides a valuable green space in the Conservation Area



3.2 Significance of buildings

Where visible from areas of public realm, the buildings within the Great Clacton Conservation Area have been assessed. The map on page 31 (Figure 22) should be read in conjunction with the key notes opposite. These outline the broad descriptions of positive, neutral and negative attributed to buildings within the Conservation Area. It should be noted that just because a building is positive it does not mean it cannot be enhanced. Some positive buildings may have intrusive aspects (such as inappropriate windows) and are addressed in the management plan. The buildings identified as 'Positive with opportunity for enhancement' tend to have more bespoke or fundamental issues that are not generally observed or widespread across the area.

- **Positive:** these are buildings that have been identified as positive contributors to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst identified as positive there are likely to be enhancements which can be made to better reveal the architectural interest of the building and improve its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These general enhancements are noted in the management plan. One example would be the replacement of windows where the buildings have uPVC. The upgrade of these items would be beneficial as a general rule.

- **Positive with opportunity for enhancement:** these are buildings have been highlighted as they are positive contributors, however, they have been compromised due to intrusive alterations or additions. These buildings can be enhanced through the removal, replacement or redesign of intrusive or unsympathetic alterations.
- **Neutral:** These buildings make no beneficial or adverse contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Negative:** These buildings make an adverse or intrusive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Other:** It was not possible to view these buildings from the public realm to ascertain their contribution to the Conservation Area.

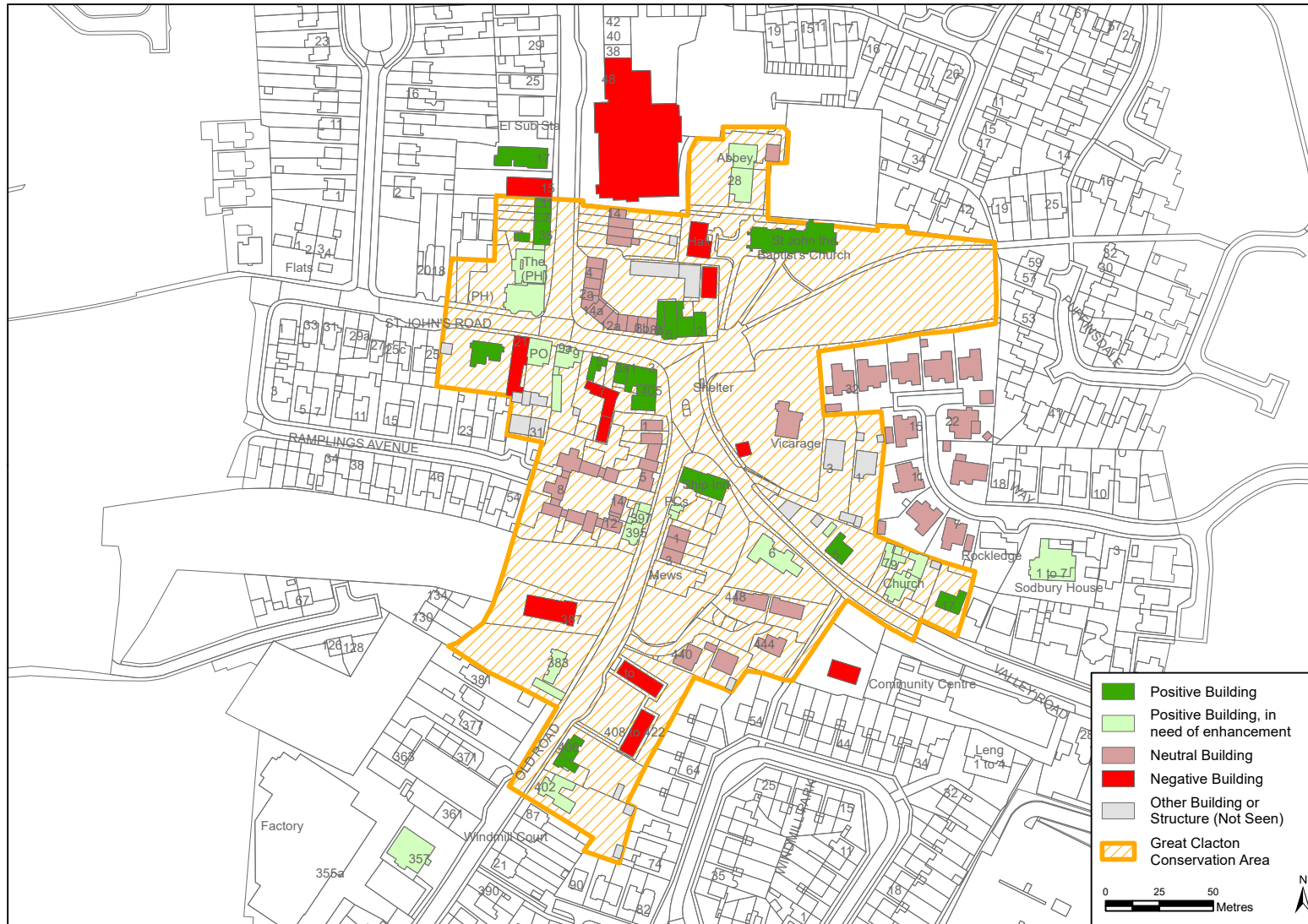


Figure 22 Map showing significance of buildings within and neighbouring the Conservation Area

3.3 Character Analysis

Summary of character

The character of this small Conservation Area derives from its historic village form with a relatively low density of predominantly two storey buildings, many set to the front of their plots, directly fronting the road. These comprise the linear form of development along the four main roads which converge close to the landmark medieval church to the north-west. A looser grain of development is apparent along Old Road and Valley Road than is experienced at the commercial centre of the Conservation Area. Today the Conservation Area is also characterised by the steady flow of road traffic along its main through routes.

Land usage

Land use is largely residential and commercial along the main road routes with the exception of the Grade I listed church of St John the Baptist and its churchyard, the latter of which provides the only notable area of public green space.

Landmark buildings

Due to the height of its tower, the church is the only landmark building that has prominence and visibility from a distance from both inside and

outside the Conservation Area, particularly in views from the south where the land slopes away as one heads southwards along Old Road. The church is screened from view when heading east along St John's Road and here the large horse-chestnut tree on the western edge of the churchyard provides more of a focal point. The Ship Inn also has prominence at the centre of the Conservation Area and the Queen's Head (which has been converted to business units and flats) defines the junction of St John's Road and North Road, retaining the former pub's hanging and painted signage.

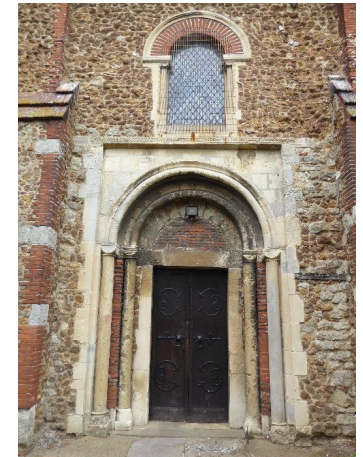


Figure 23 The south doorway of St John the Baptist church showing a variety of materials and detailing

Local Building Materials, Details and Boundary Treatments

The medieval church is exceptional within the Conservation Area for the use of mixed rubble stone and septaria in its construction, with dressings and details of limestone, Roman and twentieth century brick. The roof of red clay tile is, however, reflective of many other buildings within the Conservation Area. The twelfth century recessed north and south door surrounds of the church include details such as roll moulded round headed arches and stone columns with moulded bases and



Figure 24 Number 395 Old Road in red brick laid in Rat Trap bond, with numbers 399 and 397 to the north

cushion capitals. The fifteenth century tower features a nineteenth century timber weatherboarded upper stage with a balustrade, and grey fish-scale tiles to the octagonal spire.

Although less common than clay tile, slate roofs can also be found throughout the Conservation Area including the roof of The Plough (Grade II listed) on the western side of North Road.

Timber framed buildings are also a feature of the Conservation Area. The Plough is plastered and features exposed timber framing, which can also be seen on The Ship Inn. Other timber framed buildings in the Conservation Area are largely faced in render which conceals their frames including the Grade II listed building at 1-3 St John's Road housing the Thai Vintage Restaurant and adjacent dwelling. Weatherboard is also used as a facing material, painted white on eighteenth century Grade II listed Saddlers Cottage. Render is also used as a finish on brick buildings including eighteenth century Great Clacton Hall and where timber framed buildings have seen the introduction of brick infill such as at the seventeenth and eighteenth century house called Three Chimneys on St John's Road.

Red brick also features throughout the Conservation Area exemplified by a pair of late nineteenth or early twentieth century two storey red brick former houses (numbers 19 and 19A), to the east of Three Chimneys on the south side of St John's Road and on the two storey 1960s commercial development of shops with flats above on North Road and St John's Road, the latter with a concrete tiled parapet roof and some timber weatherboard detailing to first floor. A pair of single storey painted brick shops with twentieth century shop fronts and slate roofs at numbers 399 and 397 Old Road adjoin an attractive early nineteenth century two storey house at number 395 (extended in the twentieth century) in red brick laid in rat-trap bond (where the bricks are laid on edge).

Directly to the south of The Maltings on the west side of Old Road is a small modern development of five houses in a traditional style emulating eighteenth century architecture, with chimneys, sliding sash windows and predominantly finished in red brick (one with render) with clay tile roofs.

Many windows in the Conservation Area are of a traditional timber framed form but there are a regrettably high number of uPVC replacement windows and doors including those on a terrace of nineteenth century rendered brick cottages at 3-11 North Road (adjacent to The Plough), and to the modern extension to Great Clacton Hall. These windows are also ubiquitous on shops and the new housing developments within and adjacent to the Conservation Area.

The eighteenth century Grade II listed Church House features classical detailing of triglyphs and metopes, a dentilled cornice, and fluted and plain columns to its entrance porticos. The building houses a barber's shop (The Barber Royal) with a twentieth century shop front on the western side, whilst flats occupy the remainder. What appears to be an early nineteenth century pair of houses (now a single building) at number 9 St John's Road features an early twentieth century shop front with a canopy at the western end supported by an iron post with an Ionic order capital and scrolled bracket. Grade II listed The Maltings on the west side of Old Road, is an attractive timber framed house which has been dated to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with a



Figure 25 Mature trees and shrubs around the Vicarage and at the western end of Valley Road which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

principal façade of painted brick with timber vertical sash windows. It features a classical moulded door surround, and former shop window on the right hand side of the ground floor which has been dated to the twentieth century.

Many buildings in the Conservation Area directly front the pavement with no boundary treatments but red brick boundary walls can be found including examples at Three Chimneys (the wall surmounted with plain timber picket fencing), Saddlers Cottage (a low height boundary wall of red brick and septaria) and nineteenth century Eaglehurst at number 6 Valley Road. The twentieth century Vicarage to the south of the churchyard is set back within a large garden plot with large mature trees and shrubs bounded by a timber fence, with hedging and a low



height brick boundary wall directly fronting the pavement. With almost no historical precedent within the Conservation Area, the modern houses on Old Road have traditional black painted metal railings to their front boundary and another recent development of three terraced two-storey houses known as Old Valley Mews on Old Road features modern black painted metal railings on a paved plinth.

Landscaping, Open Spaces and Public Realm

When facing east on St John's Road, the view terminates with a large horse-chestnut tree which marks the entrance to the churchyard of St John the Baptist, entered via a tarmacked path with a car park on the south side. The churchyard provides the only public open green space in the Conservation Area with a footpath running through it from east to west that provides access to a large development of twentieth century housing to the east of the Conservation Area. Within the churchyard, mature trees, shrubs and grass sit comfortably alongside the peppering of gravestones and monuments which form the setting of the Grade I listed church. There is an attractive avenue of lime trees leading to the south porch of the church and there is a strong sense of enclosure on the south side of the churchyard. It is more open to the north beyond the church and now overlooks a new development of houses just outside of the Conservation Area boundary. Mature trees around the Vicarage and on neighbouring land which fronts Valley Road make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

An area of public realm in front of The Ship is paved and bounded by detracting concrete bollards and there is a tarmacked car park to the east of the pub. To the east of Eaglehurst is a tarmacked alleyway giving access to a twentieth century housing development around Windmill Park (the historic site of the windmill). Next to the alleyway is a small area of unkempt scrubland directly fronting Valley Road and a tarmacked area behind this surrounding the Army Cadets' building. It is proposed that the Conservation Area boundary should be amended to exclude these, which detract from its character and appearance.

Contribution by Key Un-Listed Buildings

The following non-designated heritage assets are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

Eaglehurst at number 6 Valley Road, is set slightly below pavement level. This is a large, attractive later nineteenth century former house in the style of a medieval hall house with two gabled crosswings, one of which is jettied. The building is of red brick but with a plastered finish to the first floor with timber frame detailing. A corner tower in the angle of the central range and eastern crosswing is a typically eclectic Victorian architectural flourish. This building first appears on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1897.



Figure 26 The Great Clacton Methodist Church on Valley Road, built in 1863

The Great Clacton Methodist Church on Valley Road dates to 1863, replacing an earlier chapel on the same site of 1824. The church is one of the more interesting nineteenth century buildings in the Conservation

Area. It is in a pared back Gothic style with narrow lancet windows and has an irregularly shaped central gable to the principal façade, which forms the main entrance. A circular window above the entrance doors has been replaced with modern stained glass of a simple design. The church was extended to the rear and alterations were made in the 1950s and 1970s. It has an area of garden laid to lawn on the east side of the building with a flat roofed outbuilding at the rear of the plot. There is an attractive pair of two storey early nineteenth century semi-detached houses directly to the west of the church, set well back from the street, parts of the front gardens of which have been tarmacked to provide space for car parking.

Numbers 3-11 North Road are an appealing terrace of four two storey houses which first appear on the First Edition OS map published in 1876. As noted above, they have suffered from the introduction of uPVC windows and doors, but otherwise make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Number 9 St John's Road (Foxes Furniture Shop) appears to be an early nineteenth century two storey rendered former house with vertical sash windows to the upper storey, converted to shops with accommodation/storage above in the twentieth century. The shop canopy on the western end of the front façade features a cast iron column and bracket which are attractive architectural details.

Neighbouring numbers **19 (the former Post Office) and 19A St John's Road** in red brick date to the later nineteenth century/early twentieth century. These buildings could be enhanced by the sympathetic restoration of their façades including the shop front, to remove and replace the detracting uPVC windows and doors.

The former Public Convenience (eastern side of Old Road, adjacent to The Ship public house) in red brick with a clay tiled roof and timber frame detailing to the front gable was erected in 1929 by Clacton Urban District Council. Having already been closed for several years, by 2017 the building had been converted for domestic or commercial use including the insertion of a large tripartite uPVC front window, but appears to have remained empty. It has the potential to be a good example of adaptive re-use of an historic building.

397 and 399 Old Road are an attractive pair of single storey nineteenth century painted brick buildings with twentieth century shop fronts and a slate roof located on the west side of Old Road (respectively a vacant shop and the Liberal Democrats office). Number 399 would benefit from more sympathetic signage.

395 Old Road adjoining the above, is a distinctive early nineteenth century two storey red brick house with a slate roof (with rendered twentieth century extensions to the rear and on the south side). The brick is laid in an unusual rat-trap bond (bricks laid on edge).



Figure 27 Number 406 Old Road adjoining number 404 to the right

Numbers 406 and 404 Old Road situated further south, on the western side of the street are a pair of two storey white painted rendered late eighteenth or early nineteenth century cottages with vertical timber sash windows and a hipped slate roof. Number 406 has side extensions and retains a front boundary wall in red brick whilst number 404 has a replacement boundary wall in yellow brick with a red brick coping.



Figure 28 View north along Old Road towards the centre of the Conservation Area and the church tower



Figure 29 View west along Valley Road towards the historic village centre

Old Mill Cottage at 402 Old Road on the east side of the road is a dwelling historically associated with the windmill thus has important local historical associations. It has been unsympathetically much altered and extended in the twentieth century but nevertheless has architectural interest and is likely to retain fabric dating to the eighteenth century or earlier. There is also potential archaeological interest relating to this site.

17 Valley Road is a mid-nineteenth century single storey pebble dashed house with three bay windows and an ornate timber porch located just beyond the Conservation Area boundary on the north side of Valley Road which makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area.

3.4 Views

Key views are identified on Figure 30. Note the views included are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there may be other views of significance. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs, should consider the views below and any others which may be relevant or highlighted as part of a bespoke assessment of that proposal.

Views of the church of St John the Baptist are important to understanding the historic village character of Great Clacton and its significance, and the church tower acts as a marker for the settlement. The church tower appears in longer range views when travelling north and uphill on Old Road, west along Valley Road when nearing the Ship Inn, and can be seen through a gap between a small terrace of four twentieth century houses and the 1960s shops on the east side of North Road.

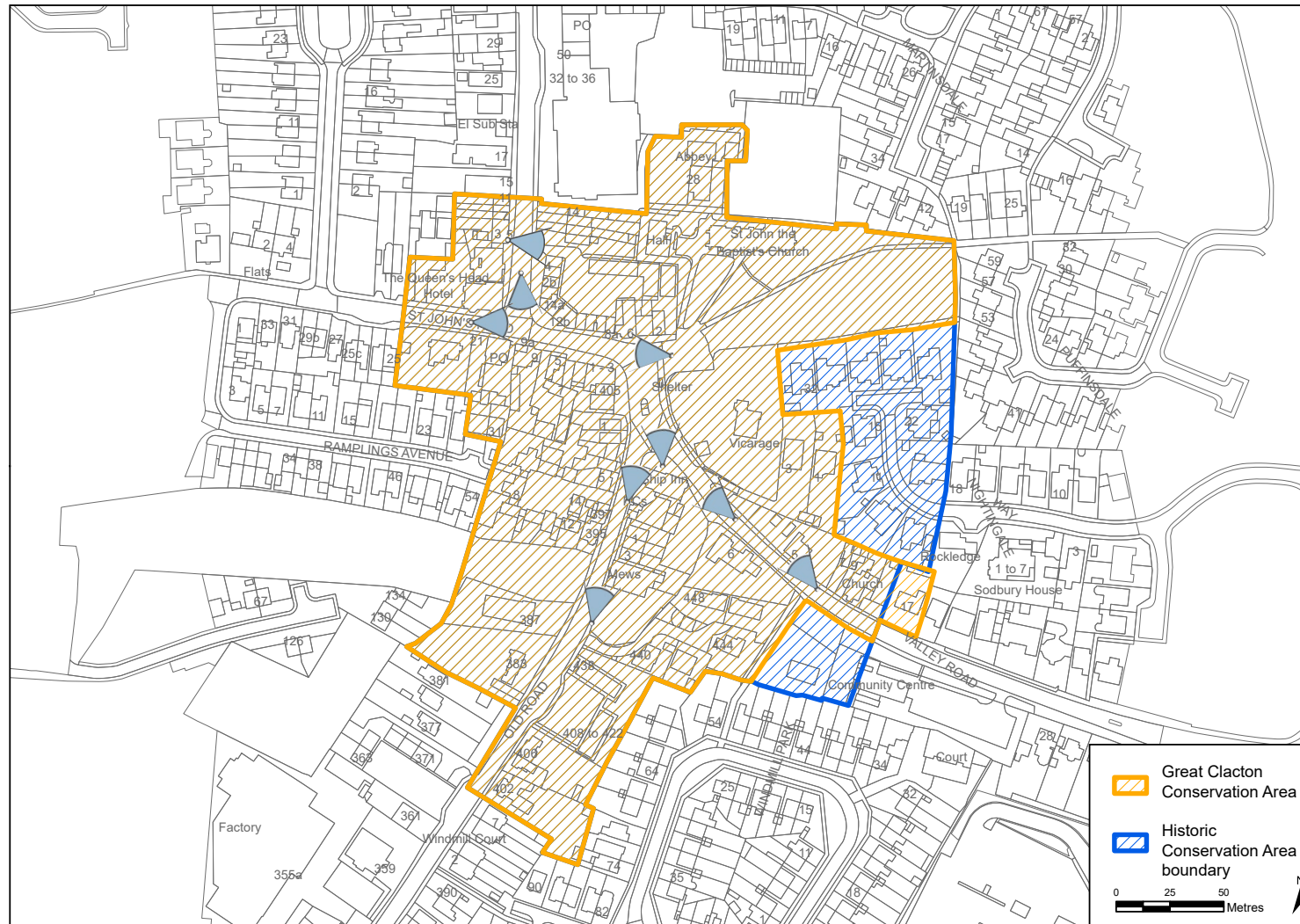


Figure 30 Map showing key views



Views east along St John's Road are terminated by the boundary of the churchyard, marked by a large horse-chestnut tree. Attractive views encompassing Church House, the listed buildings on the corner of St John's Road and Old Road, Saddlers Cottage and the Queen's Head can be gained when looking west from the eastern edge of the churchyard.

Views between The Ship Inn and Church House and the Maltings are also important to understanding the historic nature of the Conservation Area, as are kinetic views along Valley Road which, when travelling west, take in the Great Clacton Methodist Church, Eaglehurst, Forge Cottage, the Ship Inn and The Maltings against a clear sky backdrop.

Travelling south on North Road, views encompass the Plough and the Queen's Head and are terminated by Numbers 9 and 19 St John's Road.

3.5 Setting of the Conservation Area

The NPPF describes the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Historic England *Good Practice Advice Note on the Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017) indicates that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which the asset is experienced. It notes 'Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset'.

Historic England's advice note on setting includes a '(non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. As the advice note states, 'only a limited selection of the attributes listed will be of a particular relevance to an asset'.

This checklist has been used to inform this assessment.

The historically rural and agricultural setting of the Conservation Area has been overtaken by modern housing and small-scale commercial development on all sides and thus it is difficult to gain a sense that the coast lies less than two miles to the south of the church. There are no long-range views from within the Conservation Area that reveal this aspect of its location.

Overall, the setting of the Conservation Area makes a limited contribution to its significance, however, the topography of the setting makes some contribution to how that significance is revealed, particularly where Old Road rises uphill from the south towards the centre of the village, affording views of the church tower. This and other kinetic views into the Conservation Area on the main approach roads are described in Section 3.4 and contribute to setting and significance.

The Conservation Area and its immediate setting is also accessible and permeable with strong patterns of vehicular and pedestrian movement along the main through routes that converge within the area. However, twentieth century housing developments to the east of the Conservation Area are less permeable reflecting the mid-century proliferation of cul-de-sacs designed to discourage through traffic and thus promote safer areas for families with children to live in. The prevailing domestic land use of the setting has generally limited building heights to two storeys which has been beneficial in retaining a sense of openness and permeability and the ability to appreciate

designated and non-designated heritage assets against a clear sky backdrop, in particular the church tower.

There is just one designated heritage asset located in the setting of the Conservation Area:

- Grade II listed Yew Trees (List UID 1111527) to the west along St John's Road



Figure 31 The Mill on Old Road in the setting of the Conservation Area



The following non-designated heritage assets are located within the setting of the Conservation Area:

- 17 North Road (the Great Clacton Surgery) is located just beyond the Conservation Area boundary. It is a later nineteenth century classically detailed house with a two storey bay window, in fair faced gault brick. The clay tile roof still present to the bay has unfortunately been replaced with cement tile on the main roof. Providing one of the only examples of a building from this period in the setting of the Conservation Area, it makes a positive contribution to the street scene.
- The Mill is situated approximately 50 metres beyond the Conservation Area boundary on the west side of Old Road. This is an impressive three storey former corn mill dating to the early twentieth century (on the site of a previous corn mill built in 1867).

It is of white painted brick with a black weatherboarded lucam (the projecting housing for a hoist pulley), and has been converted to house office units. Its tarmacked plot is bounded by a white painted timber picket fence. The Corn Mill was associated with the nineteenth century windmill formerly located to the east of Old Road demolished circa 1918.

- Sodbury Hall is located to the east of the Vicarage at the northern end of Nightingale Way. Dating to 1892, it was designed by architect J O Smith in the Queen Anne style with tall chimneys and retains its impressive rooftop belvedere. The house has been converted to flats and has suffered from some unsympathetic additions and alterations including a large double garage and uPVC windows, however, it remains an important local nineteenth century building.



4. Opportunities for Enhancement

The following opportunities for enhancement have been identified and are summarised below in brief. The list is in no way exhaustive and neither are the opportunities identified unique to Great Clacton with many being shared with other Conservation Areas.

4.1 Road Traffic

As noted in the character summary, there is constant and heavy road vehicle traffic through the centre of Great Clacton which reflects the high level of connectivity of the Conservation Area with the wider local area. However, the noise and congestion arising from this detracts from the Conservation Area's historic village character and the ability to appreciate its significance and the significance of individual listed buildings which line the main routes. Any opportunities to disperse through traffic to alternative routes would be beneficial.

4.2 Interpretation

Due to the amount of development surrounding Great Clacton which knits it into the wider area of Clacton-on-Sea, the Conservation Area would benefit from a well-designed interpretation board, perhaps upon entry to the churchyard, which explains the history of the village from its medieval origins and which highlights its historic buildings.

4.3 Vacant Buildings

Vacant buildings can have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and without occupation, regular maintenance and repair they may suffer from criminal damage as well as water ingress leading to losses of historic fabric and features. The following heritage assets were vacant at the time of survey in October 2022:

- Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall – there is an opportunity to enhance the significance of this heritage asset by re-instating its use. Ideally, the detracting uPVC windows to the extension would be replaced by timber framed windows sympathetic to the host building. There are also opportunities to improve the area of garden and hard landscaping around the building which has a very neglected feel and reveals nothing of the history of the building and its former grounds. The car park directly to the north of Great Clacton Hall also detracts from its setting and significance.
- Grade II listed 383 Old Road – the site is currently protected by unsightly Heras fencing and the front garden is overgrown, with a large spoil heap from excavations on site. It is clear that renovation work has been undertaken on the outbuildings adjoining the house but the property seems to have been vacant for several years.



- Number 19 St John's Road – this was formerly the Post Office and is now a vacant shop which would benefit from a new use. The shop front could be markedly improved by replacement of the detracting uPVC windows and door.
- Former Public Convenience (Old Road, adjacent to The Ship public house) was vacant at the time of survey but there was evidence of work being carried out to the interior of the building suggesting a new use may be imminent. The appearance of this building would be enhanced by the replacement of the uPVC window with a timber alternative.
- Number 397 Old Road is another vacant shop, which appears to be in good decorative order.

4.4 Loss of Architectural Details

Many windows in the Conservation Area are of a traditional timber framed form but there are a regrettably high number of uPVC replacement windows and doors. These are of a poor quality material which cannot be used to sympathetically reflect traditional detailing and profiles, and often historic glazing patterns are lost when windows are replaced. This detracts from the historic character and appearance of individual buildings and from that of the Conservation Area as a whole.

Poor quality plastic rather than traditional painted metal rainwater goods are also found on many buildings in the Conservation Area, including some listed buildings (for example The Queen's Head). As well as having a poor quality appearance, they are also less robust than traditional metal rainwater goods and may be at higher risk of failure leading to the risk of water ingress and damage to historic fabric.

4.5 Public Realm

Street Furniture (including lampposts, signage, bins, bollards)

Street furniture throughout the Conservation Area is generally of poor quality, and unsympathetic in character, particularly with regard to streetlights, bollards and bins. These would be enhanced through replacement with traditional and consistent models which respect the historic character of the area.

Although some traditional hanging and painted signs have been retained to public houses and shops, there is also the opportunity for improvements to be made to shop signage (including to the 1960s commercial development), where it:

- Has proliferated (for example on the Thai Vintage restaurant at 1-3 St John's Road which is a listed building);



- Is overly large;
- Is internally illuminated;
- Features poor quality and unsympathetic plastic fascia and lettering which dominate the facades of buildings and harm the overall historic character of the streets (for example, as seen on Reg's Fish & Kebab on St John's Road and The Royal Barber at Church House).

The use of temporary vinyl advertising banners affixed to buildings in the Conservation Area should be resisted.

Hard Landscaping

Road and pavement surfaces are generally of poor quality tarmac and of patched, inconsistent and poor appearance throughout the Conservation Area. No vestiges of historic surface materials appear to have survived. Where there are areas of paving stones rather than tarmac surfaces, for example to the front of the Thai Vintage Restaurant, these are sometimes of poor quality, are cracked and in poor condition. Areas of block paving have been introduced in the

Conservation Area, for example to the car park of The Queen's Head and the parking area of a new development to the rear of Number 19 St John's Road, which are not sympathetic to the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Hard landscaping can have a particularly harmful impact on the character of an area where areas of private front gardens have been paved over in a piecemeal approach and are inconsistent with their neighbours and adjoining paving (for example at the Maltings and the terrace of four early twentieth century houses on the east side of North Road).

Open Spaces

There appears to be only one managed public open green space in the Conservation Area which is the churchyard. As elsewhere, this features tarmac paths which do not reflect the historic character and appearance of the Grade I listed church. The single storey pre-fabricated twentieth century church hall to the west of the church is of poor architectural quality and materials. Although it is acknowledged to be a vital and valued community facility it detracts from the churchyard setting of the listed building and its significance.



There is a small area of unkempt private scrubland on Old Road located to the south of Number 395 which would benefit from management and maintenance. It is proposed to revise the boundary of the Conservation Area to omit another area of unkempt scrubland directly fronting Valley Road and a tarmacked area behind this surrounding the Army Cadets' building.

Trees and Planting

Appropriate levels of maintenance need to be ensured and, where required, opportunities for enhancement sought to maintain and manage the trees within the Conservation Area which are primarily in the churchyard but also on private land at the western end of Valley Road.

4.6 Unsympathetic additions

There are numerous satellite dishes and some air conditioning units on the principal facades of buildings in the Conservation Area including to listed buildings (for example Church House) which detract from the character and appearance of the heritage assets.

4.7 Inappropriate Modern Development

Not all modern development in and around the Conservation is inappropriate by any means, however, there are a number of examples of post-war infill and backland development within the Conservation Area and within its immediate setting which have had a negative impact on its historic village character and appearance. Most notable amongst these is:

- The large one and two storey commercial development just outside the Conservation Area boundary on the east side of North Road, the scale, massing, design and materials of which are entirely unsympathetic to the historic core. The setting of Great Clacton Hall has been greatly eroded by this commercial development and its car park to the rear. Due to erosion of the hall's historic setting and alterations to the building itself including the addition of a large modern wing at the north end, it is difficult to discern the historic nature of Great Clacton Hall.
- Directly to the North of number 406 Old Road, a mid-twentieth century social housing development of two, two storey blocks of flats which have the appearance of two pairs of large semi-



detached houses faced in red brick at ground floor level and hung with red pantiles to the upper floor, with hipped roofs of the same material. They have replacement uPVC casement windows. The two blocks are arranged on two sides of a large communal front garden laid to lawn and bounded with a timber fence.

- Also on North Road, a poor quality single storey rendered former industrial building set back within a gravelled yard which is currently in use as The Iron Works Gym.

More recent housing developments, whilst of an appropriate form, incorporate poor quality materials such as uPVC rather than timber or aluminium framed windows and cement tile rather than clay tile roofs. It is recommended that a recent development of bungalows at the northern end of Nightingale Way to the east of the Vicarage should be omitted from the Conservation Area. Although these have been carefully detailed, they do not reflect the traditional form or materials of buildings in the Conservation Area nor of other housing in the local area.

4.8 Neutral Contributors

A number of buildings and plots are currently considered to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character. Notable areas which make a neutral contribution are:

- The 1960s development of shops with flats above on North Road and St John's Road
- The terrace of four mid-twentieth century houses on the east side of North Road
- The Vicarage
- Twenty-first century developments on Old Road including Ship Mews, Old Valley Mews and Mascot Court.



5. Management Proposals

There are a range of issues facing the Great Clacton Conservation Area, many of which share common themes. This section seeks to recommend management proposals which address these in both the short and long term.

5.1 Positive Management

The first set of proposals relate to positive management and focus on good practice and improved ways of working with the Local Planning Authority. These are generally low cost and can be implemented within a short timeframe, typically within one or two years.

Local Heritage List

Tendring District Council is in the process of developing the local heritage list. Suggestions have been made within this document of buildings to be considered for inclusion on this list.

Article 4 Directions

Article 4 Directions are additional planning controls which can be introduced by a Local Planning Authority to revoke certain Permitted Development Rights. Permitted Development Rights allow building owners to carry out certain works to their properties without the need for planning permission and are set out within the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO).

Article 4 Directions served on properties within the Conservation Area would introduce the need to apply for planning permission for certain works and this would allow the Council to better preserve and enhance the area by ensuring high quality design and use of traditional materials. An example of an Article 4 Direction that would be beneficial would be the removal of Class A of the GPDO which would limit changes to front elevations of buildings such as replacement windows and doors.

Enforcement

Where the necessary permission is not sought for alterations which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order, the Local Planning Authority should consider its enforcement powers. This could assist in reinstating any lost character or architectural features whose loss may have a negative cumulative effect on the Conservation Area, as well as avoiding a precedent being set for similar, uncharacteristic works.

General Maintenance: Public Realm and Highways

Through the agreement of standard good practice within the Conservation Area between relevant Local Authority teams and other landowners, long term goals can be set to promote good design within the public realm. This could include elements such as improvements to the quality and appearance of materials used on road and pavement surfaces to enhance local character and distinctiveness, and likewise



Figure 32 Poor quality surfaces and street furniture detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

avoiding excessive road markings or signage; and agreeing standard forms of street furniture based on local historic examples to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced. This will have a long-term positive impact on the Conservation Area.

Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments and Archaeological Assessments

In accordance with the NPPF (Para.194), applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

All applications within the Conservation Area and immediate setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated. This includes development outside the Conservation Area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). Applications which fail to have assessed any impact upon views and setting should not be validated.

The key views analysed within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, trees or highways on key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the Conservation Area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design



and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). Applications which fail to have assessed any impact upon views and setting should not be validated. This is particularly important for the development of any sites allocated for development as part of the Local Plan process as the change to the setting of the Conservation Area should be fully assessed, understood and, where necessary, mitigated.

Tree Management

Trees that are either located in a Conservation Area, covered by a Tree Preservation Order or planning condition have a degree of protection.

Where a tree is protected consent must be given by the Council in writing before you do any works to it including cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, severing roots, wilful damage or destruction. The Council must be notified of any intended works to trees through the submission of a Notification of Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area.

Where trees contribute to local amenity and the character or appearance of the Conservation Area their retention and appropriate management will be encouraged. If felling is necessary due to the condition of the tree (dead, dying or dangerous) then an appropriate replacement tree should be planted.

New Development

To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the conservation area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

Historic England and CABI guidelines state that successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths);
- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods as high in quality of those used in existing buildings; and
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.



Tendring District Council should guide development in a positive manner by:

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application Process and Local Plan Process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail and materials.
- Ensuring medium-large scale development schemes are referred to a CABE Design Review (or similar) to ensure that new buildings, additions and alterations are designed to be in sympathy with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure it's appropriate to a conservation area.
- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements.

Neutral Elements

The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character. Tendring District Council must not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment. Officers must, where possible, seek schemes which enhance the built environment.

Public Facing Resources

The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publication of resources aimed to inform property owners and members of the public. An introductory summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of owning a property within a Conservation Area. Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive to the preservation of Great Clacton's built heritage.



5.2 Positive Management: Longer Term

These proposals are also focused around positive management but either take longer to implement or are better suited to a longer time frame.

Conservation Area Boundary

Revisions to the Conservation Area boundary have been proposed within this appraisal in accordance with the NPPF (2021) and Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019).

The Conservation Area should be reviewed regularly to monitor change and inform management proposals. The boundary should be assessed as part of this review to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area.

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal should be reviewed regularly to monitor change and inform amendments and additions to the Management Plan.

Public Realm and Highways

The Highways Department should be engaged to conduct an assessment of existing signage within the Conservation Area with a view to 'de-clutter' the historic environment. Other case studies have found this was a cost-neutral exercise due to the scrap value of signage and posts.

Collaboration between the Highways Department and Local Planning Authority should ensure the maintenance and replacement programme for street furniture (including lampposts) and hard surfacing reflects the character and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.

Improved Understanding and Awareness

At present there is no interpretation (information boards, signage, interactive QR Codes) within the Conservation Area aimed at improving understanding and awareness. This would be an effective way to improve awareness and re-establish the identity of Great Clacton as a historic settlement.



Heritage at Risk

Currently there are no assets on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, it is advised that officers devise a system to monitor the status of the two Grade II listed buildings (Great Clacton Hall and 383 Old Road) identified in this appraisal to be at possible risk within the Conservation Area, and if necessary, bring these to the attention of Historic England.

5.3 Funding Opportunities

There are three main funding opportunities which would assist in the execution of these plans:

National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF)

The NLHF is the single largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and therefore is the most obvious potential source of funding. Funding is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding. Grant opportunities and requirements change over time, for up-to-date information on NHLF schemes Tendring District Council should consult their appointed Heritage Specialist.

Section 106 Agreements

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon Great Clacton. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site specific improvements.

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (Historic England)

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas is a programme run by Historic England to target funding for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. As the name suggests, the scheme forms partnerships with local authorities (along with any additional funding partners) to facilitate the regeneration of an area through the conservation of its built heritage. The scheme makes funds available to individuals to enable them to carry out repairs or improvement works to their property to enhance the area. This would be suitable to preserve and enhance the shop frontages noted to require improvement.



6. Appendices

6.1 Designated Heritage Assets

List Entry	Name	Grade	List Date	Amend Date	Legacy UID	NGR
1111525	GREAT CLACTON HALL	II	04/07/1986		119879	TM 17690 16570
1111526	THE SHIP INN	II	04/07/1986		119883	TM 17668 16415
1111528	SADDLERS COTTAGE	II	04/07/1986		119889	TM 17614 16466
1165521	THE PLOUGH	II	04/07/1986		119880	TM 17583 16522
1165532	THE QUEEN'S HEAD HOTEL	II	04/07/1986		119886	TM 17589 16495
1317258	383, OLD ROAD	II	04/07/1986		119882	TM 17596 16329
1317259	CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST	I	04/07/1986		119884	TM 17708 16529
1317265	"CROWN TOP PAGE ESTATE AGENTS REWARDS RESTAURANT" HAIRDRESSERS	II	04/07/1986		119888	TM 17628 16463



List Entry	Name	Grade	List Date	Amend Date	Legacy UID	NGR
1317272	THREE CHIMNEYS	II	04/07/1986		119890	TM 17563 16472
1337151	THE MALTINGS AND SHOP ON CORNER OF ST JOHNS ROAD, ATTACHED TO AND	II	04/07/1986		119881	TM 17641 16454
1337152	"CHURCH HOUSE	II	26/10/1973	04/07/1986	119885	TM 17652 16497
1337153	ST JOHNS HOUSE	II	04/07/1986		119891	TM 17730 16390



6.2 Bibliography

Publications

J Bettley and N Pevsner, Essex (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), (Yale University Press), 2007

Roger Kennell, The Place-Names of Great Clacton (Essex Society for Archaeology & History, 2016 (e-book))

Ed. Christopher C Thornton with Herbert Eiden, Victoria County History Essex, Volume XI - Clacton, Walton and Frinton: North-East Essex Seaside Resorts (2011)

Tendring District Council Conservation Area Review: Great Clacton Conservation Area (March 2006)

Tendring District Historic Environment Characterisation Project, Essex County Council (2008)

Tendring Geodiversity Characterisation Report, Essex County Council (2009)

Webpages

<https://www.clactonhistory.co.uk/smuggling-ales-great-clacton/>

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2946282>

Archives

Essex Record Office (ERO)

Historic Environment Record (Essex County Council)

6.3 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (2024) DLUGH	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) DLUGH	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets	
National Guidance	English Heritage (2019) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance	
Local Policy	Tendring District Council Local Plan (2007)	QL9 – Design of New Development QL11 – Environmental Impacts and Compatibility of Uses EN1- Landscape Character EN17- Conservation Areas EN20- Demolition within Conservation Areas EN21- Demolition of Listed Buildings EN22- Extension and Alterations to Listed Buildings EN23- Development within the Proximity of a Listed Building



6.4 Glossary

Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. 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.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic environment record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
Setting of a heritage asset	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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