

BILLERICAY CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

November 2011



Basildon Council
BASILDON • BILLERICAY • WICKFORD

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of the Management Plan

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and to submit these proposals for public consideration.

Conservation management planning should be based on an understanding of the significance of a place and the values attached to it. The Billericay Conservation Area Appraisal outlines the special architectural and historic interest of the area and provides an assessment of its character and appearance. This Management Plan outlines Basildon Borough Council's approach to managing future change in the area.

1.2 The Importance of Conservation Areas

Historic areas are now widely recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural heritage, economic well-being and quality of life. Numerous studies produced by CABI, English Heritage, etc. have shown that there are a wide range of benefits of Conservation Area status, including:

- Locally valued buildings, trees and spaces are protected
- The retention and enhancement of buildings, features and spaces that make the Conservation Area special ensure that residents, workers and visitors continue to enjoy a unique area, improving the quality of their lives
- Property values are generally improved within Conservation Areas, particularly when traditional features and details are retained and enhanced
- Opportunities to repair and reinstate traditional buildings and to improve the streetscape

Conservation Areas often represent familiar and cherished local scenes and the protection of this special character ensures that the qualities that make Billericay Conservation Area appealing are enhanced.

1.3 The Need for Action

Historic areas have always changed, and our expectation should be that they will continue to change and evolve. Change should not be taken as automatically undermining the integrity of a historic place; the challenge is to facilitate and manage change in ways that maintain and if possible reinforce the area's special qualities.

The character of Conservation Areas is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental change (such as the replacement of windows and doors) as well as dramatic change (such as the wholesale redevelopment of a building). In Billericay, much dramatic change has already occurred with the erection of intrusive late twentieth century buildings along the High Street, but the pressure for redevelopment persists. Positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which alters the very character that makes the area attractive, is to be limited.

2. CONSERVATION AREA POLICY

2.1 National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) sets out the Government's national planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. The policies in this PPS are a 'material consideration' (planning related factors / issues) which must be taken into account when local authorities exercise their planning powers. Guidance for the implementation of these policies is provided in a companion document, Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide.

A Conservation Area is a 'designated heritage asset' as set out in the companion guide. Conservation Areas are designated, usually by local authorities, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Other designated heritage assets are:

Scheduled Monuments – designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 by the Secretary of State for their national importance.

Listed Buildings – designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 by the Secretary of State for their special architectural or historic interest.

Registered Parks and Gardens – designated by English Heritage under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983) for their special historic interest.

The Government's overarching aim in PPS 5 is 'that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations'. It seeks to do this through the implementation of the policies within PPS 5, utilising the Practice Guide. The relevant policies of the PPS and paragraphs of the Practice Guide to the preparation of this Management Plan are summarised below:

- Policy HE1: Heritage assets and climate change
 - Para 24 of the companion guide
- Policy HE2: Evidence base for plan-making
 - Para 27 of the companion guide
- Policy HE3: Regional and local planning approaches
- Policy HE4: Permitted development and Article 4 Directions
- Policy HE5: Monitoring Indicators

2.2 Local Planning Policy

The Basildon Borough Local Plan Saved Policies document (as approved by the Secretary of State through a Direction issued on 20th September 2007) sets out the local planning policy background against which development within the Billericay Conservation Area will be assessed. Saved Policies are policies that were originally part of the Basildon Borough Local Plan, adopted on March 1998, with Alterations in September 1999.

The policies of direct relevance to the Billericay Conservation Area are (and are provided in full in Appendix 1):

Town Centre – Policy BAS TC1 and TC6

Open Space – Policy BAS R1

Built Environment – Policy BAS BE12 and BE24

Shopfronts – Policy BAS BE17 and BE18 (both policies refer to the Development Control Guidelines document which is now a ‘material consideration’)

Changes in planning law, however, mean that Basildon Council must produce a new type of development plan called the Local Development Framework (LDF), to replace its old 'Local Plan' of 1998. Unlike the Local Plan which was a single very large document, the new LDF can best be described as a collection of planning documents which will be prepared by Basildon Council.

The LDF will aim to meet the local community's future economic, environmental and social needs by establishing the Council's policy on the control of land-use and development throughout Basildon Borough up until 2021. Work continues to produce the Basildon LDF which, when formally adopted, will become the basis upon which planning applications are judged.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

3.1 Local Authorities' Duties

Basildon Borough Council has a duty under Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [Planning (LB&CA) Act 1990] to review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designation of Conservation Areas is necessary. It should seek to establish consistent local standards for its designations and should periodically review existing Conservation Areas and their boundaries against those standards. Cancellation of designation should be considered where an area or part of an area is no longer considered to possess the special interest which led to its original designation.

Section 71 of the Planning (LB&CA) Act 1990 places a duty on Basildon Borough Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Billericay Conservation Area. The production of, and consultation on, the Billericay Appraisal and this Management Plan seeks to fulfil this duty.

In exercising their planning powers, Basildon Borough Council has a duty under Section 72 of the Planning (LB&CA) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Billericay Conservation Area. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the areas should also be a 'material consideration' in the Council's consideration of development proposals which are outside the Conservation Area, but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

3.2 Implications for Owners and Residents

Legislation in 2008 and 2010 extended 'permitted development rights' on some householder development, including in Conservation Areas. However, Conservation Area designation still requires a planning application to be made for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development. Appendix 2 provides details of when some common householder developments do or do not need planning permission. In April 2010, new legislation also extended permitted development rights for some non-residential buildings, although flats still do not have any permitted development rights. For further information on the legislation, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/> carries the relevant legislation and their accompanying explanatory documents.

A number of properties within Billericay Conservation Area are also subject to an Article 4(2) Direction which withdraws many of these properties' permitted development rights. In such cases, a planning application will be required for alterations to your property that would not normally require the Council's permission. For more information on the additional types of work that will require permission in these areas, please see Section 5.4 of this Management Plan.

3.3 Need for Community Involvement

The historic environment provides a tangible link with our past and contributes to our sense of national, local and community identity. People care about and want to conserve those elements of the historic environment that hold heritage value for them. The historic environment is a living and integral part of their local scene and can support the regeneration and sustainable economic and social development of communities.

In order to ensure that the historic environment continues to enhance the quality of people's daily lives, proactive and intelligent management is required. High quality places bring wider community benefits and the historic environment can play a key role in defining a place and in building local pride. However, the value that a place holds for some communities may not be obvious from expert advice or research alone and it is, therefore, important to incorporate the views and information of the local community to add to the understanding of Conservation Areas.

4. THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF BILLERICAY CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 Features of Billericay

- Billericay is a bustling, lively and prosperous shopping centre.
- The town occupies a ridge and land falls away steeply either side of the High Street.
- The long High Street is lined mostly with shops and commercial premises, without significant gaps between them.
- Lanes and yards lead off the High Street often to small courtyards.
- Traditional buildings are small and low, contrasting sharply with twentieth century infilling, which frequently detracts from the town's character.
- Early buildings are often timber framed with cross wings, sometimes jettied, which are gable end on to the road. Most are listed buildings.
- Eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings are usually of red brick (and some grey brick) with plain tile roofs or natural slate. The brickwork is in Flemish bond and hung sash windows are set in reveals.
- The church of St Mary Magdalen is an important landmark and the area to the north, including the north end of Chapel Street comprises a continuous group of listed buildings, many weather-boarded in the Essex vernacular.
- Chapel Street is less densely built up, but the presence of a car park and rear servicing erodes its character.
- Sun Street is a busy through route with imposing early nineteenth century terraces clad in pebbledash or cockle shell harling with slate roofs.
- Norsey Road has terraces of brick and weatherboard cottages on the roadside, many of which are listed and form an attractive group.
- Away from the High Street, trees soften the built-up area and there are fine views out of the town from open spaces at the Festival Garden, Mill Meadows and Sun Corner.

4.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of the Conservation Area are described in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. They may be summarised as follows:

1. The basic form of the Conservation Area is of two main streets running almost parallel north-south and converging at their northern ends. Beyond, they meet a crossroads and are then crossed by the railway line. At their southern end, they are linked by a main road.
2. The Conservation Area is characterised by a collection of buildings dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, modest in scale and rarely above two storeys in height, many of which have been used as High Street shops. This small scale country town mix of timber frames, jettied cross wings, plaster, weatherboard, brick, plain tiles and slate has been interspersed with tall and bulky steel framed buildings of the twentieth century, different in style, and particularly different in scale and bulk.

3. The result is a fragile townscape which could easily be destroyed if further development with buildings of this form is permitted. Rear servicing and car parking associated with modern retail, has already adversely altered the character of Chapel Street.
4. There are still parts of the Conservation Area where groups of buildings survive to give a very pleasing appearance, such as around the junction of Chapel and High Streets. The Conservation Area has over 40 listed buildings within its boundary.
5. Trees and open spaces form a backcloth or are on the edge, rather than providing focal points within the Conservation Area and High Street is particularly devoid of trees (notable exceptions being at Burghstead Lodge and outside No.81 High Street).
6. There are no derelict buildings, though a few require improvement, maintenance or repair, and there are areas of improvement opportunity for enhancement proposals.

4.3 SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
A busy, lively shopping centre	Traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles reduce pedestrian enjoyment	Enhance the attractiveness and support local traders/businesses	Under pressure for further development
Attractive historic buildings give a strong sense of place	Mid twentieth century development has diluted the character	Ensure further building respects the character; visually improve the worst properties and/or re-develop as opportunity permits	Further development which is out of scale and out of place, in terms of form, height, bulk and design detailing with traditional buildings
Open views and a strong sense of connection with the countryside	Some views compromised by development	Protect views out of the Conservation Area	Development pressure
Well maintained buildings and few vacant properties; general lack of negative elements	A small number of buildings lack maintenance and detract	Encourage maintenance and action concerning long term vacant property	Reduction in trade will create vacant property and affect levels of maintenance
Easy access with good road and rail links	Lack of car parking for shoppers and longer term visitors	Review car parking provision and enhance it	Loss of visitors if parking inadequate and resultant effect on trade

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Attractive shopfronts and good mix of local and national retailers	Excessive signs, window posters and jumble of 'A-board' advertisements detract	Retailers 'sign-up' to a Billericay specific shopfront and advertisement policy	Lack of specific policy and enforcement could reduce quality of the shopfronts. Use of corporate identity signs will weaken local distinctiveness
Popular evening/night time economy with establishment of restaurants/ bars	Night economy skewed towards pubs, bars, some restaurants, but little else provided	Explore possibilities of attracting other uses, e.g. cinema, theatre, concert venues	Late night noise, disturbance
Generally pleasant public realm with co-ordinated street furniture and adequate paving	Some items of street furniture are unnecessary and contribute to clutter. Paving in some areas is poor	Audit of street furniture and paving to achieve removal of unnecessary items, repair of damaged items and paving improvements	Proliferation of street furniture creates clutter and impairs the appearance of the street scene
Street trees contribute to pleasant appearance	Lack of trees in some areas to soften the appearance and an excess of tarmac	Prepare enhancement schemes to reduce expanses of harsh road surfacing and increase the number of trees where appropriate	The appearance, particularly at key 'gateway' points, will continue to detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area

5. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

5.1 Resources

Designation of a Conservation Area and the production of a Character Appraisal and Management Plan, without sufficient resources to fulfil the duties that follow can seriously undermine the purpose and value of a Conservation Area. Basildon Borough Council has, in common with many local planning authorities, limited resources, and a balance will need to be struck, giving priority to key issues.

The additional implications that Conservation Area designation makes on local authority staff time can be significant. Basildon Borough Council calls on the conservation expertise of Essex County Council officers in assessing and negotiating on development proposals that impact on the special interest of Conservation Areas. Essex County Council's conservation expertise is also used to advise on appropriate quality in the implementation of planning permissions that would affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (and to advise on the acceptability of Conservation Area consent applications for the demolition of unlisted buildings).

There is an existing Article 4(2) Direction within Billericay and its extension to other areas should be considered (see section 5.5 for further details). The making of an Article 4(2) Direction would involve additional resources because there would be a small increase in the number of planning applications (evidence [RPS Planning, 2008] suggests 1 or 2 additional applications per week). However, in Billericay, the limited coverage of the Direction suggests that far fewer should be expected. The long-term benefits to the character and appearance of the area are considered to far outweigh the limited resource implications. The importance of encouraging like-for-like repair and replacement in matching materials (which do not require planning permission) is therefore key to mitigating the resource implications of the existing and proposed Article 4(2) Directions. It is therefore crucial to provide clear, concise controls backed up by appropriate guidance (see section 6.1 for further details). Following expected changes in the Council's enforcement priorities, greater attention should be placed on monitoring unauthorised changes in the Conservation Area, including those in the area covered by the Article 4(2) Direction. These considerations would have to be balanced against an anticipated overall reduction in local authority resources in the short and medium term as part of the Government's public expenditure reductions.

Conservation Area Designation also means that all proposed works to trees within the boundary have to be notified to Basildon Borough Council at least 6 weeks in advance. This, inevitably, involves resources, mainly the time of the Borough Council's Planning and Arboricultural Officers as they are responsible for dealing with tree works applications – considered further in section 5.8. However, Billericay Conservation Area has been designated since 1969 and the work generated by Tree Works Applications is not substantial and has been accommodated within the workloads of the officers. Although the SWOT analysis identifies the opportunity for further tree planting, it is considered that the proposed removal of part of the Conservation Area (see section 5.4) would balance any potential increase in Tree Works Applications.

It is essential for all departments within Basildon Borough Council to understand the significance of Billericay's Conservation Area status and to work corporately and strategically with Essex County

Council to ensure that development control decisions are appropriate to the historic context. It is also important to ensure that a good working relationship is established with those departments and authorities that do not traditionally work in a 'development team' manner, to ensure that issues such as street management do not damage the historic fabric or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Priorities within Billericay Conservation Area

The following is a summary of key issues affecting the Conservation Area and suggested actions. They are explored in more detail in subsequent sections of the Management Plan.

1. Conservation Area Boundary Review

Review and formally approve the Conservation Area boundary with or without any changes.

2. Car Parking

Examine car parking in Billericay with a view to maximising existing provision for shoppers and visitors. The telephone exchange site in Chapel Street could provide a good car park site and discussions with BT regarding the site's future use could be instigated. Explore alternative sites outside, but with good footpath links to, the Conservation Area.

3. Buildings 'at Risk'

Consider appropriate action to secure the proper repair of under-maintained or long-term vacant property in the Conservation Area.

4. Article 4 Directions

Consider whether to extend the Article 4(2) Directions which restrict permitted development rights to other terraces within the Conservation Area.

5. Visual Improvements

Consider enhancement proposals to secure visual improvements to the Conservation Area and the public realm.

6. Shop fronts and Advertisements

Prepare detailed design guidance specifically tailored for Billericay, to advise on alterations to shopfronts and the design of signs and advertisements.

7. Redevelopment Opportunities

Prepare design briefs or illustrative material for the redevelopment of identified sites within the Conservation Area.

8. Buildings of Local Interest

Adopt a list of Buildings of Local Interest (or Local Heritage Assets)

5.2 Consistency

The production of a Conservation Area Appraisal and associated Management Plan provides a clear and accurate assessment of the Conservation Area's character and appearance, against which decisions can be made. The Billericay Conservation Area Appraisal sets out the key characteristics of the area which should be respected when development proposals are drawn up. The Management Plan identifies actions and provides design guidance which offers clear advice regarding what is required and acceptable within the Billericay Conservation Area.

Allied to the provision of clear advice in the Conservation Area documents, is the recommendation that guidance leaflets are produced (see section 7.2). The consistent application of this advice by all those concerned with submitting and determining development proposals (including Planning Inspectors at appeals where planning, etc. permission is refused) is necessary to preserve and enhance the area in accordance with statutory duties.

5.3 Enforcement

Most local authorities subscribe to the Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement, such as openness, consistency, proportionality and responding to complaints. The Borough Council does subscribe to this Concordat and should take its existing enforcement procedures forward into a more detailed enforcement strategy in order to:

- Explain the scope of planning enforcement;
- Openly define priorities;
- Set measurable standards for service delivery;
- Explain how investigations are carried out;
- Explain enforcement procedures and enforcement actions.

At present, enforcement staff are responsible for monitoring compliance with planning conditions. This process, which is triggered by commencement notices under the Building Regulations, is effective, but it leaves mainstream enforcement as a purely reactive practice.

An enforcement strategy would make clear the policies and procedures that are needed to ensure firstly the protection of the natural environment and secondly the protection of the built heritage, particularly in relation to heritage assets which should generally have the next highest priority, because so much historic fabric is irreplaceable. However, active enforcement in the historic environment does require the input of specialist skills, including a conservation officer. (This skill is provided by Essex County Council via a service level agreement.)

The strategy should also explain the circumstances when the Borough Council would make use of Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity (Section 215) Notices (see section 5.7 for further details).

Within the Billericay Conservation Area, there are a few instances where enforcement opportunities appear to have been missed, notably in Sun Street which is covered by an Article 4(2) Direction. In Sun Street, Nos. 7-15 have three satellite dishes and replacement plastic windows in two of the houses covered by the direction and one house has its roadside wall painted blue. The other terraces (Nos. 17-27 and 29-39) have four satellite dishes and a swathe of wires across the front

elevation and also replacement windows in four properties. Some alterations appear to have been in place for some time, but without researching each case it is difficult to accurately confirm where breaches of planning control have occurred.

If, on further investigation, it is ascertained that a breach of planning control has occurred, the case for enforcement action should be carefully considered, taking into account the nature of the change and acknowledging local pressures on resources. Some changes are benign – the restoration of missing features, for instance. Others may be considered damaging, but how badly? There are questions of:

- Sensitivity – A replacement window that differs only in a few minor but crucial respects may be devastating to a precious listed building but tolerable elsewhere
- Relativity – Some changes matter more than others.
- Magnitude – A replacement window that required the removal of masonry to alter the proportions would almost certainly be far worse than one that fitted the existing opening
- Accumulation – Small-scale changes that are inoffensive in a single iteration may have an erosive effect through repetition
- Speed – The rate of change, which can be measured by successive surveys, may itself be a cause for alarm
- Extent – An alteration may be so endemic that it is regarded as neutral rather than bad: television aerials, for instance, are rarely expressed as a major issue
- Survival – Some changes that would have been considered negative have survived the test of time to become cherished rarities. An example might be an art deco shopfront on a Victorian building

Different Borough priorities in the past have limited the enforcement resources available to suitably address the incremental changes that have occurred in the Conservation Area.

5.4 Conservation Area Boundary Review



St James Mews



Fairview

The Billericay Conservation Area boundary has been revised (as of September 2011) as a result of public consultation which generally supported the removal of A) St James Mews and No.47 Western Road, B) Chandlers Chase and Western Mews, C) Nos. 1, 3, 6, 8 & 10 Lion Lane and Nos. 1-3 St Edith's Lane, and D) Quilters Drive and Archers Close. Albion Court and Fairview were also suggested for exclusion, but this was not generally supported and thus, these areas remain within the Conservation Area boundary.

Removing areas A – D from the Conservation Area is considered to form a more coherent boundary which is centred on the historic core of the town from which the character of the Conservation Area is predominantly formed. This strengthens the character of the area and provides a robust boundary, which should focus resources into the most significant parts of Billericay, helping to retain its appeal and charm to visitors, residents and businesses alike.

5.5 Article 4 Directions



Nos. 7-17 (odd) Sun Street



Nos. 31-37 (odds) Sun Street

On the 6th July 1979, the Secretary of State confirmed an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights at Nos. 7-15 (odd) Sun Street. The schedule reads:

"The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of the dwelling houses at 7-15(odd) Sun Street...where this would materially affect the appearance of the elevation fronting Sun Street".

On the 17th December 1979 a second Article 4 Direction was confirmed affecting 19-39 (odd) Sun Street with the same schedule (i.e. restricting alterations that affected the Sun Street elevations), apart from no. 39 where the elevation to Chapel Street was included.

The success or otherwise of an Article 4(2) Direction depends on ensuring regular publicity occurs, (e.g. sending information packs to estate agents to pass onto prospective purchasers/tenants) so that those affected by it are aware of their responsibilities, and vigilant enforcement to ensure it is complied with. The latter depends on sufficient staff time being available to monitor and enforce. English Heritage guidance states that "Although requiring an initial investment of some resources, making a direction is usually worthwhile for its long-term benefits".



Stanley Terrace



Nos. 71-77 (odds) Chapel Street

If the Article 4(2) is to be extended within the Conservation Area, it could encompass other terraces and rows of unlisted houses. However, many have replacement windows and other alterations in place already.

Buildings which could be included are:

- Stanley Terrace (Nos. 1-6 consec) off Sun Street
Of similar age and appearance to the Sun Street terraces already covered. Porches have been added to two houses, two have replacement windows and one has concrete tiles on the roof.
- Nos. 76-84 (even) Chapel Street
Early nineteenth century row, pebble-dashed or rendered, but only No.82 has original windows.
- 71/73; 75/77; 79/81 Chapel Street
Three pairs of Edwardian villas in Arts & Craft style in red brick. Two pairs with original fish scale slates to porches. One has partially replaced windows with plastic.
- Nos. 2, 4 and 12-18 (even) Norsey Road
White weather-boarded houses either side of the listed building. Only No. 16 in the terrace has original windows, the rest have plastic. (NB No.8, part of the listed building (grade II*) has plastic windows and a plastic front door).
- Nos. 1-7 (odd) and 9-13 (odd) Western Road
Two terraces, pebble-dashed with some weather-boarding. Most have replacement roofing and all have replacement windows, except Nos. 3 and 13.

If Article 4(2) directions are pursued, it is recommended that a dated photographic record is made of every affected property, so that proper monitoring can take place.

Article 4(2) Directions can be extremely effective, particularly when:

- Developed as part of a management plan for the Conservation Area;
- Are selective in response to the evident threat of harm;
- Are backed up by a dated photographic record;
- Are supported by guidance on appropriate repair and alteration;
- Have a level of public support; and (most importantly)
- Are monitored by the local authority and prompt enforcement action is taken if any breaches occur.



Nos. 12-18 (evens) Norsey Road



Nos. 1-7 (odds) Western Road

The resourcing implications are discussed in Section 5.1 above, but in accordance with best practice, the proposed extension to the Article 4(2) Direction is limited and selective. It is proposed for those properties whose uniformity is a key part of their character and which is easily harmed by uncoordinated and inappropriate alterations. The photographic survey undertaken as part of the fieldwork for the Appraisal and Management Plan provides a baseline from which to monitor works, but a complete dated record should still be undertaken.

Guidance encouraging appropriate repairs and alterations to properties will be produced as part of the actions of this Management Plan in order to further public understanding and support for the existing and proposed extension to the Direction. Such guidance should refer to the economic benefits of reinstating traditional features which is likely to be a strong driver in persuading property owners to address unsympathetic changes to their buildings. English Heritage's 2009 report 'Conservation Areas at Risk' refers to a survey of estate agents in which revealed that:

- unsympathetic replacement windows and doors, particularly plastic/PVCu, is the single biggest threat to property values in conservation areas
- unsympathetic extensions and alterations are also considered to be particular problems
- 82% feel that original features tend to add financial value to properties and 78% think they help a property to sell more quickly
- three-quarters believe that a well-maintained conservation area adds to the value of the properties within it. Confidence in the area keeping its character and the attractive environment are the two key reasons
- residential properties within conservation areas sell for more than equivalent properties not in a conservation area
- 82% of estate agents feel that only a minority of their clients have a reasonable understanding of the additional controls in conservation areas.

5.6 Buildings at Risk



No.21 High Street



Rear of No.51a High St



Elizabeth Cottage, High Street

There are no evidently derelict buildings in the Conservation Area, although two facades are poorly maintained and detract from potentially attractive buildings. No. 21 High Street is occupied by three restaurants. Its upper floor has pedimented windows with false timber framing in the gable apex and pebbledash covering to the walls. The windows need repair and wall needs repainting, whilst below, the shop fronts require some degree of co-ordination. The building looks shabby and neglected; further lack of maintenance will put the building at risk.

Nos. 45-47 High Street occupy a building of some interest as the last remaining original sash window testifies. However, the dull pebbledash covering not only masks and detracts, it is probably causing damp problems which could put the building at risk. Just north along the road, the arched entrance to Crescent House has shops on the ground floor to either side. No 51a has been damaged at the rear and needs to be tidied-up and repaired. Consideration should be given to serving a Section 215 here (see 5.7 below).

The building most at risk is Elizabeth Cottage, at the north end of the High Street. This is a single storey building with attic, dating from 1903, with a cement render and a concrete tile roof. The building has been empty for some years. A full survey of the condition of this building is needed to enable consideration of statutory action, as this is clearly a building at risk.

5.7 Urgent Works and Repairs Notices and Section 215 Notices

There is no specific duty on owners to keep their buildings in a good state of repair, though it is in their best interest to do so. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) provides local councils with powers to intervene when it becomes evident that a building is falling into decay. There are other statutory powers under the Housing Acts (e.g. Empty Dwelling Management Orders) to deal with long term vacant property and under the Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the removal of eyesores (see below).

Urgent Works Notices

In Conservation Areas, 'urgent works notices' (usually served under section 54 of the 1990 Act on the unoccupied parts of listed buildings) may be served, in exceptional circumstances, under section 76 of the 1990 Act on the unoccupied parts of non-listed buildings where the preservation of the building is important for maintaining the character or appearance of the area. These notices announce the intention of a local authority to undertake immediate and urgent work itself if the owner does not, and to recover the costs of the works from the owner. The works that can be implemented include:

- Making the building weather tight
- Making the building safe from structural collapse
- Preventing unauthorised entry, vandalism or theft

The Council must serve a notice giving the details of what is required, 7-days before it intends to enter to implement the works. There is no appeal against this notice.

Repairs Notices

A Repairs Notice can be served under Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, only in relation to a listed building. The works allow for a much more comprehensive repairs scheme than the Urgent Works Notice. The Notice requires the building owner to comply with a schedule of works, which can be used to put the building back into the condition as of the date of listing.

For further information on Urgent Works and Repairs Notices, consult English Heritage's Stopping the Rot guidance which is available from www.helm.org.uk.

Section 215 Notice

Basildon Borough Council may also use its general planning powers under the Planning Act 1990 to serve a Section 215 Notice on the owner (or occupier) of any land or building whose condition is adversely affecting the amenity of the Conservation Area. Such a notice requires the person responsible to clean up the site or building, or the local authority can carry out the work itself and reclaim the cost from the owner (under Section 219).

Section 215 is a relatively straightforward power that can deliver important, substantial and lasting improvements to amenity. Ideally, the use of Section 215 Notices should be pro-active and not complaint-led. Further advice on the use of Section 215 Notices can be found in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215: Best Practice Guidance (January 2005) by the then ODPM.

5.8 Important Trees and Green Spaces

There are few trees within the Conservation Area and much of the visual connection with the countryside results from views out to the Metropolitan Green Belt and a backcloth of mature trees. A few saplings have been introduced into the High Street and further opportunities for tree planting should be considered, such as the Iceland and Waitrose car parks. Significant trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and planning legislation requires owners wishing to top, lop or fell non-protected trees within the Conservation Area boundary to inform the local authority of their intention, giving the Council six weeks notice. During that time, the Council considers whether to permit the work or serve a Tree Preservation Order.

Significant trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/protectedtreesguide.pdf>) and planning legislation requires owners wishing to top, lop or fell non-protected trees within the Conservation Area boundary to inform the local authority of their intention, giving the Council six weeks' notice. *In Conservation Areas, notice is required for works to trees that have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm when measured at 1.5m from ground level (or more than 100mm if reducing the number of trees to benefit the growth of other trees).* During the six week notification period, the Council considers whether to permit the work or serve a Tree Preservation Order.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies significant views within the Conservation Area and looking out from it. It is important to ensure that new development preserves these.

The largest open space within the Conservation Area is at Sun Corner. This has been used traditionally for fairs, carnivals and events and today also provides a playing field and children's play area. Views from it, looking out of town are spectacular. Billericay Town Council has asked Essex County Council to register the land as a 'village green', thereby protecting it. This action should be supported and expedited.

In order to preserve the character of Sun Corner and the trees within it, a management regime for this space should be set out. All proposals for landscaping schemes and other works in this important space must be based upon this management regime and should seek to maximise the benefit to biodiversity and the local community. The use of further Tree Preservation Orders should also be considered.



Mill Meadows – view East from Sun Street



Sun Corner – view West from Laindon Road

Mill Meadows is a 90 acre Local Nature Reserve, designated in 1994 and containing one of the finest ancient meadow systems in Essex. A group of fields within the reserve, identified as being particularly rich in wildlife, have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is protected from development by green belt planning legislation and by a covenant lasting until the year 2070 restricting use to outdoor recreation and social activities.

The Mill Meadows Society was established in 1998 to help Basildon Borough Council with the management and conservation of the Meadows. The Society responds to consultations and provides information and advice at regular meetings of the joint Management Committee, whilst also encouraging public interest and participation in the Meadows. The Council is working with Natural England and DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to maintain and enhance the rural character and natural history of the meadows while still allowing visitors access for passive recreation.

5.9 Climate Change

The consequences of climate change which is generally considered to be brought about by carbon dioxide emissions are a major concern worldwide. The buildings that we live and work in produce almost half of all carbon dioxide produced in Britain. Making buildings more energy efficient could drastically reduce this.

Many of the buildings in Billericay Conservation Area were built before the First World War. They are built from traditional materials: brick, timber, clay and lime plaster. They have solid walls, and timber single glazed windows. Making these houses more energy efficient is desirable, both from the point of view of occupiers/owners and to benefit the environment, but there are several issues to be looked at when measuring the sustainability of a building. The amount of energy required to make a product (the 'embodied energy') is important, as is the pollution caused by the transportation of products and the energy used in waste disposal.

Products which have long manufacturing processes, such as plastics, have high-embodied energy because they use up fuel and other resources. Timber, which in some cases just needs sawing before it is ready for use, has low embodied energy. The historic buildings in Conservation Areas were built using traditional materials which tend to have less embodied energy as little energy was usually spent in their production. These materials also tend to be longer lasting than their modern counterparts, meaning that whatever energy was used in their production is further reduced as it is spread out over the longer life of the materials.

The replacement of traditional timber windows with double glazed PVCu involves the long manufacturing process to produce the PVC (and the consequent production of toxic by-products) and the use of other chemicals to improve its stability and other qualities.

PVC is difficult to recycle, it does not biodegrade when it becomes waste and additives are susceptible to leaching in landfill sites. It is difficult to repair (usually the whole unit needs replacing) and produces toxic gases when it burns.

Importantly for the Conservation Area, PVCu window replacements change the character and appearance of an old building and replacement windows can gradually erode the character of the Conservation Area.

Repairing an existing window is more sustainable than throwing it away and making a new one. Timber in old windows is usually of higher quality than modern timber and therefore less likely to need wholesale replacement. They can be patch repaired, which requires much less material than wholesale replacement, and the amount of timber needed for repair is a renewable resource with low embodied energy. Repairs will ensure the original character is retained and a properly maintained timber window can last for hundreds of years.

Greenpeace have produced a leaflet 'Briefing No.1 Installing New Windows' which considers the pros and cons (including costs) of PVCu windows compared to traditional timber windows. This can be found at: <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/MultimediaFiles/Live/FullReport/5588.pdf>.

Insulating our houses is an important way to save energy. Often, introducing secondary glazing, or shutters, or thick insulated curtains to the existing window would be a more sustainable option than a PVCu replacement, and would conserve the character of the building.

Mineral wools and oil-based products (e.g. polystyrene), used by most insulation installers, are non-renewable, have high embodied energy and are difficult to dispose of. They are also unpleasant to use. Organic insulation (wool, flax, cellulose, wood fibre, hemp) does not have these problems. It may also last longer than other types because it can absorb and release water without damage. This 'breathability' also makes organic products more suitable for old buildings.

Sustainability requires us to make the best use of what we already have. Reusing old buildings conserves embodied energy and is likely to be a more sustainable option than demolition and new build. All the traditional materials used in old buildings are either recyclable or are a renewable resource.

Up to 90% of the internal surface of a building may be sealed with synthetic, petrochemical-based coverings. Indoor environments can be up to 10 times more polluted than the external environment (Source: US Environmental Protection Agency).

Oil-based paints contain up to 50% solvents. Solvents are persistent, and can build up in the body, causing serious illness. Water-based paints do not contain solvents, but require a large number of other chemicals to make them perform like oil paints. Leftover paint is classed as toxic waste. The combination of synthetic paints, chemicals in carpets and furniture, and lack of ventilation is now thought by many to increase susceptibility to allergies, headaches and other illnesses.

These products can also affect the health of your building. Houses built before the First World War usually have solid walls. Water vapour can be absorbed by the wall material and then evaporated without causing damage. This is often described as a 'breathing' wall. If surfaces are sealed, the wall can no longer breathe. Water becomes trapped within the solid wall, causing damp problems, condensation and mould growth.

In the past, building surfaces were decorated with limewashes and distemper. These were based on natural products, which allowed vapour in and out of walls. Timber was treated with linseed oil-based paints. Linseed oil soaks in to timber actively repelling water. These days there are several natural paint ranges which use only natural products, and allow walls to breathe.

If a property is of traditional build (this includes most pre-war buildings) cement mortar for re-pointing or cement render should not be used as this can cause damage to traditional materials. A soft lime: sand mix should be used instead as this allows the walls to breathe (see above). Localised re-pointing is generally all that is required, but if extensive areas of wall surfaces are badly eroded, the use of modern paints, renders or coatings should be resisted as they are likely to trap damp in your walls; a lime plaster or render should be used instead.

'The Green Guide for Historic Buildings – How to improve the environmental performance of listed and historic buildings' by The Prince's Regeneration Trust (published March 2010) brings together advice from a number of sources on tackling climate change through the refurbishment and conversion of all types of historic buildings.

English Heritage, working with power company e-on, has also set up an interactive web portal: <http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk> which aims to help you understand more about the potential impacts of climate change and ways to save energy if you own or manage an older home. It includes links to documents such as 'Micro Wind Generation and Traditional Buildings', 'Small scale solar electric energy (photo-voltaics) and traditional buildings' and 'Small scale solar thermal energy and traditional buildings'.

6. ENHANCEMENT ACTIONS

6.1 Design Guidance

Demolition

In line with national planning policy, all necessary applications will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification for any demolition of heritage assets (including undesignated assets such as buildings of townscape value), and the applicant must prove the following:

- The building is incapable of beneficial use;
- The building is beyond the point of economic repair;
- The building does not make a 'positive' contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- That the building has been marketed and an alternative use/owner has not been found.

Policy HE9 of PPS 5 sets out the Policy Principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to Designated Heritage Assets. Further guidance is provided in paragraphs 91 to 97 of the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide which provides specific guidance on marketing to demonstrate redundancy. Policy HE8 of PPS 5 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset or its setting is a material consideration in determining an application.

Alterations and Extensions to Existing Buildings

Appendix 2 of this Management Plan attempts to summarise what common householder alterations can be undertaken by property owners within Conservation Areas, but some of these may potentially be damaging to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Basildon Borough Council has designated the Billericay Conservation Area because it is seeking to preserve those features that are important to the character and appearance of the historic town. Property owners also have a responsibility to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Property owners are therefore encouraged to undertake regular and appropriate maintenance and should also take the opportunity to consult Essex County Council (Basildon Borough Council's historic environment advisors) over proposed alterations to their properties to ensure that they do not, however unintentionally, harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Some general guidelines are set out below:

- Extensions should always relate well to the proportions, form, massing and character of the existing buildings.
- In order to maintain the character of the original building, extensions should be subordinate and of high quality design, with good detailing and materials which harmonise with the existing building.

- Reference should be made to the local architectural tradition by way of materials and detailing, but this needs to be used in a logical context and be well executed to be successful.
- Where a house is of a symmetrical composition or part of a semi detached pair of buildings, extensions which harm the design and symmetry of buildings and lose the architectural integrity of the composition can devalue both buildings and so should be resisted.
- Where new and old join it is good practice to slightly recess or set back the walls of the extension so that the extent of the original building is still legible and to avoid any awkward junctions in the new and existing materials, particularly in brickwork.
- Porch extensions can be very disruptive because they are usually easily visible from the street. If not suitably designed they can harm the main elevation of the building and destroy important details of the principal elevation.
- Roof extensions can also significantly impact on the appearance of a building. The number and size of dormers should be kept to a minimum to avoid the roof from looking cluttered and should be properly proportioned and traditionally detailed. Conditions should therefore be applied to any consents granted requiring the submission of drawings of the new dormers at a 1:20 scale to ensure that the detailing is acceptable.
- There is not a strong tradition for the use of roof lights in Billericay. Where these are employed they should be of a traditional 'Conservation' type with a central mullion and of a flush format which follows the plane of the roof rather than having a significant upstand. They should generally be avoided on elevations fronting a road.

New Development



Nos. 8-10 High Street



Waitrose, High Street

“There is a need to recognise past architectural and planning mistakes and correct them.” (Billericay Design Statement, July 2010).

Development in the mid-twentieth century did not treat Billericay kindly and much of it detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Many new buildings are too high, too bulky with flat or false pitched roofs, out of keeping with the scale of the town. The materials are alien too; concrete, plate glass, steel framing, contrasting with timber frames, plaster, weatherboard, clay tiles and slate.

Windows were traditionally of timber and, from the eighteenth century, sash types often set in 100mm (four inch) reveals and brickwork from the same century was in a visually pleasing Flemish bond, with rows of bricks composed of alternate headers and stretchers (bricks laid in alternate short and long profiles). The mid-twentieth century buildings contrast: with plastic or metal windows, often flush or almost flush with the façade and brickwork in stretcher bond (rows of bricks all laid longways on). The result is dull buildings which lack charm and quality. This must not be repeated.

The following text box is the proposed policy approach within the Conservation Area and could be incorporated into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Conservation Area Management or in a Development Control / Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD):

Basildon Borough Council will not permit development in the Conservation Area which detracts from its character or appearance in terms of height, bulk, scale, form, detailing and material. The Council will not approve the demolition of buildings which detract, without clear and appropriate proposals for their replacement. The Council will not permit the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Applications to demolish buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will need to be assessed by the Council on a case-by-case basis, but generally permission will be refused and there will be a presumption in favour of retention. See above for further guidance.

It is not easy to correct the worst excesses of the twentieth century, short of demolition and starting again, but this is often not economically viable. However, the construction of these steel framed buildings, clad with panels of concrete or glass or masonry means that the cladding can be altered and the appearance changed.

The following text box is the proposed policy approach within the Conservation Area and could be incorporated into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Conservation Area Management or in a Development Control / Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD):

Whenever the opportunity arises, Basildon Borough Council will encourage and support schemes which improve the appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area. However, the Council will not support the use of concrete tiles, artificial slate, panels of concrete, plate glass or stretcher bond brickwork. Where traditional style sash or casement windows are proposed, they will be expected to be of timber and where sashes are intended, they should have narrow glazing bars and be set in sufficient reveals.

When considering the design of new buildings, the Council will take into account the impact of the proposal on the setting of all heritage assets. Section 4 of this document (and the Appraisal generally) sets out some of the key characteristics that need to be considered if a design is to fit comfortably with its neighbours or the Conservation Area generally. Any application for a new building is required to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that explains how the proposal conforms to the key characteristics identified in the appraisal or, if it does not conform, why this particular approach is felt to be appropriate.

In particular regard will be had to the following matters:

- **Scale** – The tradition in Billericay is that buildings are generally between 2 and 3 storeys in height and new buildings should follow this pattern. Conditions to planning applications should be applied to secure slab levels of buildings to ensure the finished levels do not exceed the scale of the existing units. Where important vistas have been identified within the townscape, applicants will have to clearly demonstrate that the new development will not harm the existing views.
- **Massing** – Traditional buildings in Billericay have a shallow plan form with additional depth provided by cross-wings and extensions, usually to the rear. This enables good penetration of daylight and permits natural through ventilation which are key aspects of sustainability. Roof depths are also minimised. New buildings should minimise the plan depth to avoid bulky roofs and large and uninteresting gable ends. Where deep plans are unavoidable, the use of narrower ranges can help to shield large gable ends and break up the roofline.
- **Form** – buildings should be designed with a roof form appropriate to the area. Simple gabled roofs are the most common form in the area and are encouraged. Other roof forms will be considered where it can be shown that the proposal will provide a successful contrast with other buildings.
- **Grain** – new development must have regard to how the existing buildings in the locality relate to the street including boundary treatments. All new developments should seek to reflect the size, pattern and form of the plots in the location.
- **Siting** – On the High Street the buildings should be positioned close to the road to reflect the traditional building line and respect the location of the adjacent buildings. The positioning of any development on a site should consider how the adjacent or nearby traditional properties relate to the street.
- **Materials** – The palette of materials to be used should reflect the historic materials of the area as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Conditions should be used to secure sample panels for the materials to be used on new developments. Using locally sourced materials is often the most sustainable option as it reduces the need for transport.
- **Detailing**
 - Windows – generally they should have a vertical emphasis, be set within sufficient reveals and should be of timber construction. The type and form of window should relate to the status of the building. New buildings should avoid a mix of styles, particularly on the same elevation.
 - Dormer Windows - Any dormer windows should be appropriately detailed with a vertical rather than horizontal emphasis. The windows need to be in scale with the dormer and the rest of the building. All new dwellings should include an appropriately designed chimney/ventilation stack as part of the roofscape.
 - Roof lights should be kept to a minimum and avoided on front elevations. Conservation style roof lights which sit as flush as possible within the roof plane should be employed.
 - Doors – The traditional styles are solid vertical plank or panelled doors. New timber doors of similar styles should be used and must not have integral fan lights. Fan lights above doors are themselves not a notable feature of the area.

- Doorcases – On higher status buildings door cases are a feature in the street scene. The replication of these on modern buildings is not considered to be appropriate as this alters the hierarchy of buildings. Simple porches of an appropriate design will be more appropriate.
- Eaves and verges – Traditional eaves and verges are simply detailed without soffits, fascias or barge boards. Modern boxed eaves and deep fascias or barge boards should be avoided on new developments.
- Colours – Conditions will be applied to new developments to ensure that the colour finishes to rendered surfaces are in traditional subdued earthy tones not modern strident colours.
- Vistas – Full regard must be given to the potential impact of developments on the vistas in and around the Conservation Area including important views out to the open countryside from within the Conservation Area. Where a proposal would adversely affect a key view or vista, consent will be refused. Where necessary information must be provided to adequately demonstrate the potential impact on such important views.

6.2 Areas of Improvement Opportunity



The Blue Boar, High Street



Telephone Exchange, Chapel Street

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies ten sites which offer opportunity to improve the visual appearance of the Conservation Area. Of these sites, five (nos. 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7 on the Appraisal map) involve redevelopment, whilst the other five (nos. 1, 4, 8, 9 & 10) on the Appraisal map) can be described as enhancement opportunities and are detailed in section 6.3 of this Management Plan. (It should be noted that where opportunities for redevelopment are highlighted, there is the potential for disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits.)



Chapel Street garage



Former garage, Sun Street

There are a number of other sites which detract from the appearance of the High Street, but these are less likely to be opportunities for redevelopment in anything but the longer term. These include:

- Nos. 3-11 (odds) High Street and Nos. 2-12 (evens) Western Road
- Nos. 26-36 (evens) High Street
- Nos. 58-70 (evens) High Street
- Nos. 76-78 (evens) High Street
- No.86 High Street
- Nos. 115-127 (odds) High Street
- No.120-134 (evens) High Street
- No.129 High Street
- No.144 High Street
- No.147 High Street
- Nos. 85-91 (odds) High Street
- Gas site, Laindon Road

It is recommended that Basildon Borough Council prepares design briefs, building studies or other illustrative material for all of the above sites (and following public consultation for candidate sites) for the redevelopment of these sites.

a. Land between Alexander and Shereday Mews including Nos. 8-10 (evens) High Street



Rear of Nos. 8-10 High Street



Shereday Mews

This site is marked as number 2 on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal map. The redevelopment of the land behind Shereday House, now called Shereday Mews, sets a good precedent for development in a backland location. The land to the rear of Nos. 8-10 High Street offers an opportunity to extend this form of development in similar style.

The height, scale, form and design of the Shereday Mews development seems appropriate for this location although further mansard roofs should be avoided so as not to over-use this form here. A mix of roof heights, not exceeding two storeys, and the use of brick bonds other than stretcher bond, weatherboard and render with clay tiled roofs would be visually pleasing.

It is possible in the longer term that the rather harsh twentieth century building (Nos. 8-10 High Street) might be redeveloped in a style more in keeping with its neighbours. Indeed, development to the rear of this property may well provide the impetus needed to spur redevelopment of the site in a more wholesale manner. The owner/agent of Nos. 8-10 High Street could be encouraged to redevelop, potentially as part of proposals to develop the backland of the property.

b. Land rear of the Blue Boar on the east side of Western Road including the Blue Boar

This site is marked as number 3 on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal map. This is an untidy site, allowing unfortunate views of the rear of an unattractive building and its yard, whilst the pavement edge to Western Road has been breached, creating an unwanted gap in the street scene. There is an opportunity to simply improve the appearance here with a single building of quality and imaginative design restoring the street scene to Western Road. However, if the opportunity arises, the entire site could be redeveloped.

The former Co-Op, now the Blue Boar (No.39 High Street), a building which detracts from the street scene, could be replaced with a building on the pavement edge, continuing the design of No.37. This could be a traditional two storey building, rendered with timber sash windows in reveals above traditional shop fronts. To the south, the building would be separated from the listed bank (No.41) by a pedestrian link to a small courtyard behind. This would also have vehicular access to Western Road and comprise a small group of 1.5 to 2 storey dwellings with a varied roof line. A mix of red brick (in Flemish bond) and render with plain clay tiles would seem appropriate here.

c. Garage site on the east side of Chapel Street

This site (number 5 on the Appraisal map) is located at a particularly sensitive part of Chapel Street, where the street scene has been degraded with the development of the Waitrose car park and its access. This garage site has created an open area of no visual quality and resulted in a loss of enclosure in the street scene. The challenge here is to 'recover the street'.

The garage premises are currently occupied and used, but there may be an opportunity for redevelopment in the future. If so, the exemplar should not be taken from adjacent buildings. A better inspiration would be the pairs of Edwardian brick houses to the south (Nos. 71/73, 75/77 and 79/81). Access to the rear may be possible from Chapel Court.

d. Telephone Exchange site between High Street and Chapel Street

This site (number 6 on the Appraisal map) comprises an apparently underused building and its large yard which is unattractive. If the opportunity presents itself, the building should be replaced.

The site could provide a car park with pedestrian access to the High Street alongside the old Post Office and the eastern section of the site could be developed as a terrace fronting Chapel Street, as a continuation in form, height and materials to the terrace on the north side of Rose Hall. Again, pavement edge development will help the visual recovery of Chapel Street, whilst the car park would provide a facility for longer staying visitors (see 6.4).

Alternatively, a landscaping scheme that would improve the frontage of the building could be encouraged to screen the building. This would improve the appearance of the site if redevelopment was not possible and could be as simple as tree planting along the boundary.

e. Garage site north of Sun Street

This former petrol filling station and adjacent vacant land (area of improvement opportunity number 7 on the Appraisal map) offers some potential for redevelopment. The need is to close the gap in the street scene, but the site is limited by its proximity to the traffic lights on a busy thoroughfare.

An apartment building of similar scale to the Rising Sun public house, two and a half storeys high, might be appropriate here or commercial premises or office uses. The exemplar would be No. 140 High Street, built in 2004, and not a repetition of the corner building, opposite the Rising Sun.

6.3 Improving the Public Realm



Junction of Southend Road / Sun & Chapel Streets



Crown Yard

In 2004, High Street was repaved using buff brick paving set in a herringbone pattern and the street furniture was redesigned with new bollards, barriers and black painted poles for road signs and lights. Some six years on, additional signs have been added, but on their own poles, rather than sharing posts with existing signs and reducing highway clutter (car parking information signs for example). Some items of street furniture have become redundant and need to be removed.

An audit of street furniture is needed to help reduce clutter, to repair or replace signs and to identify items which contribute to the street scene (e.g. red telephone kiosks and pillar boxes).

Although pavement surfaces are generally good in the Conservation Area, the roads and courts leading off High Street have not all been paved and some have road and pavement surfaces in poor condition, e.g. Sun Street and Western Road. Crown Yard is probably one of the worst and is one of the areas of improvement opportunity identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (see below). More recent courtyards have been paved using setts, as at Alexander Mews, Shereday Mews and Cookshop Yard and the 'aprons' of other road junctions with High Street could be similarly paved. The use of traditional and appropriate surfacing materials will be encouraged in any future public realm schemes.



Rear of Nos. 58&60 High Street



Hawkley Court, Chapel Street

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal identified three sites where the public realm could be improved and these are discussed below, but the Appraisal map also noted other areas as having poor floorscape and these are:

1. Lane between Nos. 97 and 99 High Street
2. Holly Court
3. Lion Lane
4. St Edith's Lane

Areas of Improvement Opportunity identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal:

a. Junction of High Street, Norsey Road and Western Road, including the wide pavement area on the west, land south of The Crown and the garden at the end of Western Road. (The site might also include shops on the western boundary of the Conservation Area – see 6.2)



View N from High St/Norsey & Western Roads junction



Shops at junction of High St and Western Road

This is Area of Improvement Opportunity number 1 in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The intention here should be a reduction in the amount of tarmac, the creation of more green space with areas of paving and further tree planting. A reduction in the amount of street furniture would result and the memorial garden and the space south of the Crown would form part of an overall design.

If, in the longer term, it became possible to redevelop the shopping parade, a building of greater quality, more in keeping with the scale of surrounding property could present itself to the crossroads, whilst turning the corner into Western Road.

However, changes here are likely to have traffic implications and close working with the County Highways team will be necessary.

b. Crown Yard – Opportunity for visual improvement

This is Area of Improvement Opportunity number 4 in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The road surface is of deteriorating tarmac with no defined space for pedestrians. The north edge of the roadway is separated from the adjacent car parking area with low concrete barriers.

This could all be improved immensely by paving in setts with a pedestrian path identified by a subtle change of paving and the edge marked with more substantial and pleasing street furniture. There is also the potential for tree-planting.

c. Junction of Sun Street, Southend Road and Chapel Street – Opportunity for visual improvement

This is Area of Improvement Opportunity number 8 in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Again, there is a need to ‘break-up’ the expanse of tarmac, reduce the clutter of street furniture and, if possible, secure the removal of overhead telephone cables. The green and trees of Fairview need to be extended here and the area could mark the gradual entrance into Mill Meadows.

Changes to this part of Sun Street and Southend Road will have highway implications and close consultation with the County Highways team will be necessary.

d. Rear boundary of Nos. 58-60 (evens) High Street – Opportunity for visual improvement

This is Area of Improvement Opportunity number 9 in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The open car park to the rear of this building allows views across an expanse of cars to the blank rear facade of the building. The lack of enclosure means that all the air conditioning units, bins and other associated plant and servicing is in plain view and does not contribute to the townscape.

Tree planting along the rear boundary would help to screen views across the car park and the servicing areas at the rear of the building, whilst also providing greater enclosure to the street.

e. Front boundary of Nos. 37-53 (odds) Chapel Street – Opportunity for visual improvement

This is Area of Improvement Opportunity number 10 in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Hawkley Court is a rather functional block of flats which is set back from the street behind a low brick wall and an open expanse of grass. The openness of the front ‘garden’ is unrelieved with the exception of the two trees on the north boundary and does not provide any enclosure to the street. Further tree planting or some landscaping would soften the somewhat plain elevation of the block and improve the street enclosure. However, it is acknowledged that tree or hedge planting would create ongoing maintenance costs and potentially reduce natural light levels for residents of the Court. An alternative option may be to increase the height of the wall and/or add railings.

6.4 Car Parking and Servicing

The vibrancy of Billericay High Street depends on an active and successful retail trade. This in turn relies to some extent on adequate car parking provision for local shoppers and visitors. Whilst short stay car parking is permitted on the High Street and there are two main car parks within the Conservation Area, there is a lack of spaces, particularly for longer staying visitors. The need to provide more off street parking in the vicinity of the High Street is mentioned in the Billericay Design Statement (July 2010).

Potential sites to accommodate an additional car park are limited and the impact of such a use can be detrimental to the appearance of the Conservation Area. However, the BT telephone exchange site in Chapel Street is underused and detracts from the appearance of the street. It could be developed to provide car parking with pedestrian links to the High Street and roadside residential development on Chapel Street, which would reduce the visual impact of the car park and restore the appearance of the street scene. Any enhancement of Billericay's car parking provision should consider how to make the parking areas work better and their location and accesses need to be carefully thought through. A balance needs to be struck between allowing sufficient trade without allowing excess traffic and allowing car parking to dominate. A parking audit needs to be undertaken to ensure that the right amount of parking is provided in the right locations.

An alternative could be to utilise land to the south of the Conservation Area to provide a long stay car park, perhaps linked to the centre with a shuttle bus service. The Gas Compound site in Laindon Road is a large open under-used site that may also offer car parking potential where the gas valves on the site can be suitably protected. The scope for negotiation with the owners, National Grid, could be investigated.

It is recommended that Basildon Borough Council examines car parking in Billericay with a view to maximising existing provision for shoppers and visitors. The telephone exchange site in Chapel Street could provide a good car park site and discussions with BT regarding the site's future use could be instigated.

Chapel Street provides access to the rear service areas of the shops on the High Street, but this has unfortunately eroded the character of the street, although it does remove delivery traffic from the busy High Street. In order to reduce the impact of these deliveries, a restriction on the size of delivery vehicles could be encouraged which would help to reduce the highway impact of these servicing areas.

6.5 Shopfronts and Advertisements

The appearance of town centre shopping streets is shaped by the design and quality of the shop fronts and advertisements as much as the variety and style of the buildings themselves. The character of Billericay town centre is no exception. It has a number of shopfronts of distinction.

Over time, shop fronts and associated advertising has changed, but not all changes have achieved visual success; indeed many lack both quality and a pleasing appearance. The result can often be a jumble of mixed designs, with over-large fascias and little respect to the original building behind the shop front.



Cater Museum, No.74 High Street



Iceland, No.101 High Street

Basildon Borough Council has design guidance for shop fronts, prepared by Essex County Council and applicable to all towns in the Borough. However, in order to preserve the special quality of the Conservation Area, a shop front and advertisement policy specific to Billericay would be beneficial (as it would help to conserve shopfronts that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area), helped by a guidance leaflet. In general, however, the following guidance should be followed:

Shopfronts

In considering proposals to alter the shop fronts of the retail units within the Conservation Area, regard should be given to preserving the historic form of the shop fronts by retaining timber stall risers and fascia boards. Single pane modern plate glass windows are to be resisted. Any new shopfronts/refenestration should be of timber construction and include traditional mullion divisions and fascia signage. The use of modern materials is to be resisted. All works to shopfronts should maintain or ensure ease of access for those with mobility impairments.

Signs

The signage to the commercial units shall be of a traditional painted format. The use of plastic or other modern materials should be resisted. The use of illuminated signs and lighting of buildings should also be resisted within the Conservation Area.

On buildings where illuminated signs are considered to be acceptable, the light source should be discreet and not interfere with architectural features or proportions of the sign or building. Illuminated box fascias will not be acceptable. Strip lights which fit within the cornice or architrave, individually lit lettering and a small number (two on most shopfronts, three on very wide frontages) of slim, elegant spotlights can be successful. On hanging signs, the illumination should be discreetly attached to the bracket. Large spotlights, swan-necks or heavy canopy lights bolted on to the top of hanging signs will not be acceptable.

Where existing shop fronts do not make a positive contribution to the street scene, or actually detract from it, a substantial visual improvement will be required when proposals for replacement are made. A simple 'like for like' replacement will not be acceptable. A shop front in sympathy with its host building and the character of the Conservation Area will be required and enforcement action will be taken, where necessary, to ensure this.

The proliferation of 'A-board' advertisements creates visual clutter and can impede pushchairs and the disabled. Their use should be controlled.

There is one large advertisement hoarding in the Conservation Area, on the Sun Street garage site – see 6.2(e). Such hoardings have a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area and their installation shall be strongly resisted.

7. FUTURE ACTIONS

7.1 Monitoring Change

English Heritage recommends that Conservation Area Management Plans be reviewed regularly and progress in implementing recommendations should be monitored. Thus, it is recommended that this document is reviewed every four years from the date of its formal adoption by Basildon Borough Council. It will need to be assessed in the light of any changes to government policy generally. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the Conservation Area including a full photographic survey to note positive and negative changes and aid possible enforcement action;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- The identification of any new issues that need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action; and
- Publicity and advertising of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and associated guidance leaflets, Article 4(2) Direction information, etc.

It is possible that reviews could be carried out by an amenity, community group or the Town Council. A Billericay Forum could include representatives of community groups, retailers, young people, town, borough and county council (officers and members) as necessary. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the opportunities for promotion of good work and the problems associated with enforcement.

7.2 Local Generic Guidance

Although Essex County Council has produced a number of excellent public information leaflets, it would be useful to have some, on a number of topics, which are Billericay-specific. Titles might include:

- Building Materials and Billericay Conservation Area (An explanation of traditional materials, their use, detailing and sources)
- What is an Article 4 Direction? (This leaflet should be delivered to all owners and tenants of affected property, with copies to local estate and letting agencies); and
- Shop front & Advertisement Guidance (see section 6.5 above). (A copy should be delivered to every retailer in the Conservation Area).

Essex County Council has produced a number of public information booklets and leaflets that provide generic technical advice about conserving and altering traditional properties. These include:

Information booklets:	Looking after your old building Pointing with lime mortars
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The conservation and renewal of timber window frames

Conservation in practice booklets: Weatherboarding
Plastering and limewash
Wattle and daub,
Repointing

Conservation in Essex series: No. 4 – Historic Buildings
No. 5 – Shopfronts
No. 6 – Signs and lettering
No. 7 – Conservatories and historic buildings
No. 8 – Infill in historic areas

It would, however, be useful to have some more specific local guidance on the use of appropriate materials for development and design guidance for property owners in Billericay. It is suggested that leaflets on topics such as ‘What does living in a Conservation Area mean?’ and ‘Why use timber windows?’ which should be based on the advice and guidance provided in section 6 particularly of this Management Plan, should be produced.

Production of such guidance leaflets would ensure that the information and advice contained within this Management Plan is widely disseminated and would, in the longer term, help to minimize the number of queries directed at the Local Planning Authority. Together with wider promotion of the existing Essex County Council booklets, local guidance leaflets would help to provide property owners with sufficient information to undertake sympathetic extensions/alterations that respect the character of original buildings, the wider Conservation Area. They would also help to realize the economic benefits to residents that improved Conservation Areas can bring.

Without careful consideration, many seemingly minor and insignificant alterations, particularly those undertaken under permitted development rights, can result in the loss of architectural features which are important to the special interest of Billericay, e.g. traditional doors and windows, chimneystacks and traditional roof coverings such as plain tiles and natural slates.

7.3 Buildings of Local Interest (or Local Heritage Assets)

Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest, defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. They are selected by English Heritage, satisfying a set of national criteria.

However, there are buildings, structures and sites which are of undoubted local interest, but do not satisfy the national criteria to qualify for listed status. These ‘local heritage assets’ need to be recognised and protected as they are positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in addition to being of special interest in themselves. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has made a start by suggesting some 14 properties (and groups of properties) be included in a local list of Buildings of Local Interest (BLI).

Whilst BLI status does not provide statutory protection, in the manner of nationally listed buildings, it indicates that these buildings are of special local interest and should be given protection from unsympathetic alterations and extensions. Their position within the Conservation Area affords them

protection from demolition without authorisation, but the aim of the local list is to help safeguard the buildings and to ensure that repairs, alterations and extensions are sympathetic to their character.

The national planning policy guidance on the historic environment is contained in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) and this highlights the contribution of local listing to the development of the evidence base used to support local plan making/ the LDF. Policy HE8 of PPS 5 states that the effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets or their setting is a material consideration in determining the application. The use of local lists would strengthen the role of local heritage assets as a 'material consideration' in deciding the outcome of planning decisions.

BLIs make a contribution to the borough because of their architectural merit and, in some cases, their historical associations. They contribute to and help to define the character of Billericay Conservation Area and are significant in the historical and architectural development of the town.

English Heritage are in the process of developing non-statutory best practice guidance for local authorities, community representatives and other interested parties for the identification and management of significant local heritage assets using a local list. This guidance will encourage a more consistent approach to the identification and management of local heritage assets across England. It will also signal a move away from the buildings-led approach to local listing to encompass the full range of assets that make up the historic environment and ensure the proper validation and recording of local heritage assets.

When this guidance becomes available, local listing will be a good opportunity for local people to become involved in drafting the selection criteria used to judge the suitability of an asset for inclusion on the local list, along with the responsibility for nominating assets for addition to the list. In section (7.1) above, the establishment of a Billericay Forum is mooted. The development of a local list could become one of its responsibilities.

7.4 Funding

The availability of grant aid to encourage the appropriate repair and reinstatement of original architectural features is a strong incentive to property owners. Unfortunately, in the current economic climate, funding opportunities are restricted and grant partnership schemes will probably require local input. This would include contributions from local councils and possibly amenity groups such as the Essex Heritage Trust (see below).

However, there are some local and national funding schemes that can be approached and may be able to offer some help, although many have stringent criteria and often require some form of public access/ownership within the project. The main schemes are set out below. Further information on available sources of funding can be found on the 'Funds for Historic Buildings' website: <http://www.ffhb.org.uk>, and the Heritage Funding Directory, part of Heritage Link, see: <http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>. Depending on the revised Community Infrastructure Levy, and how it impacts on Section 106 agreements, there may be funding avenues that could be developed through the LDF.

The Essex Heritage Trust

The Trust is established "to help safeguard and preserve, for the benefit of the public, such land, buildings, objects and records that may be illustrative of, or significant to, the history of the County or which enhance an understanding of the characteristics and traditions of the County". It is a Registered Charity (No. 802317) and does not give grants involving private property or persons and public access must be available to all funded projects. <http://www.essexheritagetrust.co.uk>

War Memorials Trust

War Memorials Trust has two grant schemes that operate in England. Freestanding war memorials are eligible for support from the 'Grants for War Memorials' scheme funded by English Heritage and The Wolfson Foundation or the 'Small Grants Scheme' depending on the work to be undertaken and the costs involved. Non-freestanding war memorials are only eligible for support from the 'Small Grants Scheme'. Although, clearly, a directly targeted funding programme, the War Memorial in the High Street may benefit from this grant scheme. <http://www.warmemorials.org/>

English Heritage Funded Grants

English Heritage offer a variety of grants, some of which are intended to help local authorities that have historic sites in their care, and some of which are intended to help people who own or manage individual historic sites and need to repair them or understand them better.

Local authorities can apply to English Heritage for funding under its 'Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas' (PSiCA) scheme. These schemes are designed to target funding for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. They are based on a partnership between English Heritage, the Local Authority and other funding bodies and are designed to ensure the long term sustainable future of Conservation Areas, in particular through supporting heritage based regeneration initiatives.

The majority of the grants are, however, targeted at statutorily designated heritage assets at risk, of which there are none in Billericay. English Heritage strongly advises potential applicants to contact the Regional Office to discuss any potential application for funding. The website provides full details of all available grants and the funding priorities and criteria. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/funding/grants>

Heritage Lottery Fund

Through its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, the Heritage Lottery Fund makes grants that help communities to regenerate Conservation Areas displaying particular social and economic need throughout the United Kingdom. It encourages partnerships to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic properties within those areas, and improve the quality of life for all those who live, work or visit there. Applicants must be single organisations such as local authorities, partnerships and less formally structured consortia. The local authority will be expected to demonstrate its commitment by membership of the partnership.

Basildon, as part of the South Essex area, is identified as one of three areas in the East of England that have received a smaller amount from the HLF's regional budget than other areas. There is no

extra ring-fenced money available for priority areas, but they do benefit from dedicated HLF Development Officer time and applicants from these areas are encouraged to submit bids to HLF.

To receive a grant a project must help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage and it must also do either, or both, of the following:

- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;
- help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.

Projects should also deliver a number of outcomes which are set out on the website. The national batch deadline for first-round applications is 30 November each year and decisions are made in April. Further information, an Application Pack and Guidance Notes are available from website: <http://www.hlf.org.uk>

8. REFERENCES

Basildon Council/ Beacon Planning	Billericay Conservation Area: Character Appraisal	September 2011
Billericay Design Statement Association	Billericay Design Statement	BDSA; July 2010
English Heritage	Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas	February 2006
Department for Communities and Local Government	Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment	March 2010

9. USEFUL CONTACTS

Billericay Archaeological and Historical Society

Secretary
24 Belgrave Road
Billericay
Essex
CM12 0TX
Tel: 01277 658989

Billericay Borough Residents Association

E-mail: chairman@bdra.org
Tel: 01277 656715
E-mail: vice.chairman@bdra.org
Tel: 01277 623519
<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/bdrawebsite>

Billericay Design Statement Association

www.billericaydsa.org.uk

The Billericay Society

74 High Street
Billericay
Essex
CM12 9BS
Email: secretary@billercaysociety.co.uk
www.billericaysociety.co.uk

Billericay Town Council

The Loft
Crown Yard
High Street
Billericay
CM12 9BX
Tel: 01277 625732
Fax: 01277 634784
Email: townclerk@billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk
www.billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk

English Heritage

East of England Regional Office
Brooklands
24 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge
CB2 8BU
Tel: 01223 582700
Fax: 01223 582701
Email: eastofengland@english-heritage.org.uk
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Essex County Council

Environment – including: Historic Buildings, Conservation and Archaeology
County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH
Tel: 0845 603 7624
www.essexcc.gov.uk

Heritage Conservation
Seax Archaeology
Tel: 0845 743 0430
Email: heritage.conservation@essexcc.gov.uk
<http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk>

The Mill Meadows Society

Email: chair@millmeadows.org.uk
www.millmeadows.org.uk

RIBA East

The Studio
High Green
Great Shelford
Cambridge
CB22 5EG
Tel: 01223 566285
Fax: 01223 505142
Email: riba.east@inst.riba.org
<http://www.architecture.com/RegionsAndInternational/UKNationsAndRegions/England/RIBAEast/RIBAEast.aspx>

10. GLOSSARY

Adoption

The final confirmation of a plan as a statutory document by the Local Planning Authority.

Amenity

The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.

Ancillary Use

A subsidiary use connected to the main use of a building or piece of land.

Appeal

The process whereby an applicant can challenge the refusal to grant planning permission, by means of written representations, an informal hearing or formal inquiry proceedings. Appeals can also be made against the failure of the planning authority to issue a decision, against conditions attached to a permission and against the issue of an enforcement notice.

Article 4 direction

The local authority can remove permitted development rights through the use of an Article 4 direction. This is most common in conservation areas and means a planning application should be submitted for works which do not normally require one.

Back-land

Land which is behind existing development with no, or very limited, road frontage.

Bio-diversity

A measure of the number and range of species and their relative abundance in a community.

Change of Use

More correctly referred to as a 'material change of use'. A change in the use of land or buildings that is of significance for planning purposes, often requiring planning permission.

Conservation area

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Conditions

Stipulations attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

Conservation area consent

The consent required to carry out demolition in a conservation area of any building over 115 cubic metres. This is only one of a number of permissions which may be required for any works.

Consultation

Procedures for assessing public opinion about a plan or major development proposal, or in the case of a planning application, the means of obtaining the views of affected neighbours or others with an interest in the proposal.

Density

In the case of residential development, a measurement of either the number of habitable rooms per hectare or the number of dwellings per hectare.

Detailed/Full Application

The most common type of planning application is one that seeks full or detailed planning permission. It should contain all the information needed for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to reach its decision, but the LPA may seek further information.

Development Brief

A document providing detailed information to guide developers on the type of development, design and layout constraints and other requirements for a particular, usually substantial, site.

Development Control

The process whereby a Local Planning Authority considers planning applications, including whether they comply with planning policy, both national and as set out in development plans.

Development Plan

Document(s) that set out in writing and/or in maps and diagrams a Local Planning Authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area.

Enclosure

The separation of land, often by means of a fence or a wall. Is also used to describe the framing of a space by buildings and/or trees, i.e. the edge between the space and buildings/trees.

Enforcement

Procedures by a Local Planning Authority to ensure that the terms and conditions of a planning decision are carried out, or that development carried out without planning permission is brought under control.

General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 grants rights (known as permitted development rights) to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application for planning permission.

Grade

The way in which listed buildings are categorised. Grade II are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. Grade II* are particularly important buildings of more than special interest. Grade I buildings are those of exceptional interest.

Green Belt

A specially designated area of countryside protected from most forms of development in order to stop urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements, preserve the character of existing settlements and encourage development to locate within existing built-up areas.

Listed building

A Listed Building is one included in a statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest compiled by the Secretary of State in England.

Material Consideration

A matter which should be taken into account in deciding on a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

Listed building consent

The consent needed to do works to a listed building. This is applied for through the local authority and is only one of a number of permissions which may be required for any works.

Outline application

A general application for planning permission to establish that a development is acceptable in principle, subject to subsequent approval of detailed matters.

Permitted development

Minor changes which can be made to houses without planning permission. They derive from general planning permission granted by Parliament. Permitted development rights are more restrictive if you live in a listed building or conservation area.

Planning (Listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990

The act governing works to listed buildings and development within conservation areas.

Public realm

The publicly accessible external space between private buildings including pavements, streets, squares, parks and lanes.

Quality of Life

The overall enjoyment of life, i.e. your personal satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cultural or intellectual conditions under which you live (as distinct from material comfort).

Sense of place

A response to an environment and consciousness of one's physical surroundings. It is a component of 'cultural identity' formed by the essential character and spirit of an area.

Statutory

Required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament.

Sustainable Development

Environmentally responsible development, commonly defined as "development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Townscape

The appearance and character of buildings and all other features of an urban area taken together as a whole.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

A direction made by a Local Planning Authority that makes it an offence to cut, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree without that authority's permission.

Vernacular

Buildings in a local style, using local materials, following traditional building practice and patterns and not architect designed.

Well-being

A contented state of being happy and healthy and prosperous. The well-being of a community could involve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

APPENDIX 1

Basildon Borough Local Plan Saved Policies – September 2007

Policy BAS TC1 – Borough Wide Town Centre Policy

Within the town centres, as identified on the Proposals Map, development appropriate to a town centre, including retailing, offices, recreational or community facilities and residential (where it forms an ancillary part of a mixed use scheme) will be encouraged. All proposals will be assessed by reference to other relevant policies in the plan, especially Policies BAS SH3, BAS SH4 and BAS SH5, and the following criteria:-

- i. The proposal should not result in a significant net loss of retailing floorspace;
- ii. Car parking should be provided in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Standards in Appendix Three ^(viii);
- iii. The surrounding roads should be adequate to accommodate the increase in vehicle traffic generation. A Traffic Impact Assessment may be required;
- iv. Servicing and turning areas should be provided on the site so that the development is able to function properly, and traffic danger and congestion are avoided;
- v. The design, form, scale and materials used in any development are sympathetic and appropriate to the area;
- vi. In the case of Billericay Town Centre, regard will be given to the Conservation Area status of the town centre and the concentration of Listed Buildings;
- vii. The development should not result in the loss of any public open space or amenity area.

Policy BAS TC6 – Residential Development in Town Centres

Planning permission for new residential development within the town centres will normally only be allowed where it forms part of a mixed use scheme. Residential development or change of use to residential will not normally be allowed at ground floor level within established shop frontages.

Residential development should provide private car parking in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Standards ^(ix) in Appendix Three.

Policy BAS R1 – Open Space

Within the urban areas, planning permission will not be granted for development of open space which would cause significant harm to the recreational or amenity value of the open space, or to the contribution which the open space makes to the character of the area within which it is located.

Policy BAS BE12 – Development Control

Planning permission for new residential development, and for the alteration and extension of existing dwellings, will be refused if it causes material harm in any of the following ways:-

- i. Harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene;

- ii. Overlooking;
- iii. Noise or disturbance to the occupants of neighbouring dwellings;
- iv. Overshadowing or over-dominance; and
- v. Traffic danger or congestion.

Policy BAS BE17 – Shop Fronts

In determining planning applications for new shop fronts, the Council will have regard to their scale, design and likely impact on the existing and adjoining premises.

New shop fronts within Conservation Areas or relating to a Listed Building will, in addition, be assessed with regard to the other policies set out in this plan, and the Development Control Guidelines.

Policy BAS BE18 – Advertisements

In determining applications for advertisement consent, the Council will have regard to its Development Control Guidelines, the scale and design of the proposal and the likely impact on the local environment, in terms of amenity and public safety.

Policy BAS BE24 – Crime Prevention

The Council will expect the design and layout of new development to include consideration of crime prevention. The Local Planning Authority will consult the Police in respect of relevant applications and make the best possible efforts to improve street lighting.

The **Development Control Guidelines** were originally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1993, but following the Alterations to the Local Plan, they are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The document provides guidance on residential development, advertisements and shopfronts. A copy of the document can be acquired from Basildon Borough Council's offices at The Basildon Centre in St Martin's Square. It can also be downloaded from: <http://www.basildon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=481&p=0>

APPENDIX 2

Common Householder Alterations in Conservation Areas

The following paragraphs attempt to summarise when planning permission will be required for common householder alterations **within Conservation Areas**, although it should be noted that some of the restrictions listed also apply to alterations outside of Conservation Areas. It should be noted, however, that almost all applications for the works set out below to Listed Buildings will require an application for planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent. Interior works and those within the curtilage of a Listed Building may also require an application.

A number of properties within Billericay Conservation Area are also subject to an Article 4(2) Direction which withdraws many of these properties' permitted development rights. In such cases, a planning application will be required for alterations to your property that would not normally require the Council's permission. For more information on the additional types of work that will require permission in these areas, please see Section 5.4 of this Management Plan.

Residential Extensions

In a Conservation Area not covered by an Article 4(2) Direction, an extension or addition to a dwelling house will be considered to be permitted development (i.e. not requiring an application for planning permission) subject to the following limits and conditions:

- No more than half the area of land around the 'original house' should be covered by additions or other buildings.
- No extension should be built forward of the main elevation or a side elevation fronting a highway.
- No extension to be higher than the highest part of the roof.
- No rear extensions of more than one storey are permitted.
- The maximum depth of a single-storey rear extension is 3m for an attached house and 4m for a detached house.
- The maximum height of a single-storey rear extension is 4m.
- The maximum eaves height should be 3m if the extension is within 2m of any boundary.
- The maximum eaves and ridge heights of the extension should be no higher than those of the existing house.
- No side extensions are permitted.
- Materials used in construction should be similar in appearance to those used for the existing house.
- No verandas, balconies or raised platforms are permitted.
- No cladding of the exterior is permitted.

'Highway' means any carriageway, footway or verge over which the public have a right to pass.

'Original house' means as it was originally built or as it stood on 1 July 1948.

Loft Conversions and Roof Alterations (including the installation of rooflights and skylights, dormer windows, solar panels and satellite dishes, and the fitting, alteration or replacement of chimneys and flues)

A loft conversion in a dwelling house will be considered to be permitted development subject to the following limits and conditions:

- Side-facing windows must be obscure-glazed and any opening part to be 1.7m above the internal floor level.
- Roof extensions are not permitted development in Conservation Areas.
- Dormer windows are not permitted development in Conservation Areas.

Planning permission for a rooflight or skylight is required if:

- If it projects more than 150mm from the existing roof plane;
- If any part of the rooflight will protrude above the highest part of the roof;
- If you live in an area covered by an Article 4 Direction.

The following limits apply to roof and wall mounted solar panels and satellite dishes:

- Panels should not be installed above the ridgeline and should project no more than 200mm from the roof or wall surface.
- Planning permission will be required if panels are to be fitted on the front or side elevation walls and they are visible from the highway.
- If panels are to be fitted to a building in your garden, they should not be visible from the highway.

You may install a satellite dish up to a specific size on your house without the need for planning permission subject to the following limits and conditions:

- there will be no more than two antennas on the property overall;
- if you are installing a single antenna, it is not to be more than 100 cm in any linear dimension;
- if you are installing two antennas, one is not more than 100 cm in any linear dimension, and the other is not more than 60 cm in any linear dimension;
- the cubic capacity of each individual antenna is not more than 35 litres;
- an antenna fitted onto a chimney stack is not more than 60 cm in any linear dimension;
- an antenna mounted on the roof only sticks out above the roof when there is a chimney-stack. In this case, the antenna should not stick out more than 60 cm above the highest part of the roof, or above the highest part of the chimney stack, whichever is lower; and
- an antenna is not installed on a chimney, wall, or a roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a road.

Fitting, altering or replacing an external flue, chimney, or soil and vent pipe will normally be permitted development providing the conditions outlined below are met:

- Flues are allowed if less than 1m above the highest part of the roof.
- The flue should not be fitted on the principal or side elevation that fronts a highway.

It is, however, advisable to check with Basildon Borough Council before a flue is fitted, particularly if the building is listed as it is likely an application would be required in this case.

Porches

The planning rules for porches are applicable to any external door to a house. Planning permission is required if:

- the ground floor area (measured externally) would exceed 3m²;
- any part would be more than 3m above ground level;
- any part of the porch would be within 2m of any boundary of the house and a road or footpath.

However, if you live in an Article 4 Direction Area, you will need consent for any type of porch.

Sheds, garages and outbuildings

Sheds, garages and other outbuildings will be considered to be permitted development subject to the following limits and conditions:

- No outbuilding will project forward of the principal elevation fronting a highway.
- Outbuildings and garages to be single storey with maximum eaves height of 2.5m and maximum overall height of 4m with a dual pitched roof or 3m for any other roof.
- Maximum height is 2.5m within 2m of a boundary.
- No verandas, balconies or raised platforms are permitted.
- No more than half the area of land around the 'original house' would be covered by additions or other buildings.
- Buildings, enclosures, containers and pools at the side of properties will require planning permission.
- Within the curtilage of listed buildings, any outbuilding will require planning permission.

Planning permission will not normally be required for garage conversions, providing the work is internal and does not involve enlarging the building. It is, however, advisable to check with Basildon Borough Council before carrying out a garage conversion, particularly if the building is listed as it is likely an application for Listed Building Consent would be required in this case.

Fences, walls and gates

Planning permission is required if you wish to erect or add to a fence, wall or gate and:

- it would be over 1m high and next to a highway or footpath of such a highway; or over 2m high elsewhere; or
- your right to put up or alter fences, walls and gates is removed by an article 4 direction or a planning condition; or
- your house is a listed building or in the curtilage of a listed building; or
- the fence, wall or gate, or any other boundary involved, forms a boundary with a neighbouring listed building or its curtilage.

You will not need to apply for planning permission to alter or improve an existing fence, wall or gate if you don't increase its height.

Demolitions

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of the following structures in their entirety or a significant part of:

- a building of 115m³ or more; or
- a fence, wall, gate or other means of enclosure that is taller than 1m if adjacent to a highway or 2m elsewhere.

Conservation Area Consent is not required if no substantial demolition of an unlisted structure is involved. Listed Building Consent is, however, required for the demolition of all structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building (if it pre-dates 1948) and any demolition (however small) of a Listed Building itself.

If you are in any doubt about the need for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent or Planning Permission, please contact Basildon Borough Council.

Paving front gardens and decking

If the surface of a front garden to be covered is more than 5m², planning permission will be needed for laying impermeable driveways that do not control rainwater running off onto roads. Planning permission is not required, however, if a new driveway uses permeable (or porous) surfacing, which allows water to drain through.

Putting up decking, or other raised platforms, in your garden is permitted development, providing:

- the decking is no more than 30cm above the ground;
- together with other extensions, outbuildings etc, the decking or platforms cover no more than 50 per cent of the garden area.

For more information on permitted development rights, visit the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk/house where you will find helpful interactive guides. For more information on micro-generation and other sustainability issues, see section 5.9 of this Plan.

Please note that many of the projects outlined above will also require Building Regulations approval and the Building Control section of the Council should be contacted to discuss any work. However, within the Conservation Area, a flexible approach can be taken to the requirements of the Building Regulations and Fire Precautions Act where they would conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the Billericay Conservation Area's character or appearance.

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