

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea & Wivenhoe

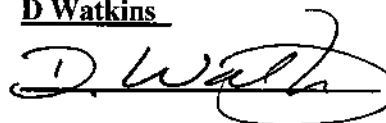




Colchester Borough Council

**TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
OF COLCHESTER, TIPTREE,
WEST MERSEA AND WIVENHOE**

June 2006

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Date: 22nd June 2006

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Environment Landscape Planning

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PREFACE

This report is one of a series of technical studies commissioned by Colchester Borough Council to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the new Local Development Framework.

This Townscape Character Assessment was undertaken by environmental planning consultants Chris Blandford Associates (CBA). It provides a baseline inventory and description of the townscape character of the Borough's main settlements – Colchester (including Marks Tey), Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.

In addition to the Townscape Character Assessment, the following associated technical studies have also been prepared separately by CBA on behalf of the Council:

- Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough
- Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough

These four studies provide a seamless inventory and description of the current spatial character, qualities and sensitivities of the townscapes and landscapes in and around the Borough's main settlements, and throughout the wider countryside. This comprehensive evidence base can be used to underpin the formulation of relevant policies in the new Local Development Framework that:

- Recognise both the differences and similarities between places
- Recognise what gives different places their special local identity and distinctiveness
- Protect and enhance special and valued characteristics
- Ensure that development is sympathetic to these special qualities
- Encourage good design and seek to improve the quality of places

The need to protect and enhance townscape and landscape character is recognised by Government planning policy on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. To ensure that full account is given to character issues in planning decisions, we commend to the Council the use of these studies as evidence bases for informing the application of appropriate policies in the existing Local Plan and the new Local Development Framework. They also provide the basis for developing Supplementary Planning Documents should this be considered appropriate in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of the Study was steered by officers from the Environmental Policy Division of Colchester Borough Council. We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Steering Group, namely:

- Karen Syrett, Principal Planning Officer
- Ian Ward, Principal Conservation and Design Officer
- Ruth Noble, Planning Officer

In addition, we appreciate the help of other Council officers and individuals from other organisations in Colchester who willingly assisted in the provision of data and information for the Study.

We would also like to give particular acknowledgement to the many individuals and organisations that attended the stakeholder consultation workshops in November 2005 and February 2006 (see **Appendix A** for details). The information gained from these stakeholders provided an important input to the characterisation process and evaluation stages of the Study.

*CBA
June 2006*

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF COLCHESTER, TIPTREE, WEST MERSEA AND WIVENHOE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This Townscape Character Assessment was undertaken by environmental planning consultants Chris Blandford Associates on behalf of Colchester Borough Council. The study provides a comprehensive baseline inventory and description of the townscape character of the Borough's main settlements - Colchester (including Marks Tey), Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.

The Council will use the Townscape Character Assessment to:

- Inform the Council of the existing townscape character of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.
- Inform the Council of the implications of the different forms and density of new development on the distinctive townscape character and sense of place within Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.
- Inform the Strategic Environmental Assessment and evidence base of the Local Development Framework of the impact of new development on the cultural heritage (architectural and archaeological) of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.
- Inform an Urban Capacity Study of the existing townscape character of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe by underpinning 'design estimates' that reflect the townscape character of the Borough.

Methodology

There is currently no specific standard guidance produced by national government or statutory agencies on the characterisation of townscapes within urban areas. The overall approach for undertaking the Townscape Character Assessment is based on the principles of character assessment developed for rural areas by the Countryside Agency, as extended to the assessment of historic towns and cities by the methodology used for the Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Landscape Setting published in 2002. The approach also reflects and is consistent with updated guidance on preparing Conservation Area Appraisals published by English Heritage in 2005. The methodology used for this Townscape Character Assessment has been discussed and agreed with English Heritage in the context of the new guidance.

In summary, the Study process involved the following main stages:

- Desk Study
- Field Survey
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Characterisation
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Evaluation
- Study Report Preparation

Influences on Townscape Character

Colchester is Britain's oldest recorded town and was recorded by Pliny the Elder in AD77. Since then the town has evolved from the former capital of Roman England (Camuldonum), into a thriving regional town within the East of England. The built environment is one of the most important assets that the Borough possesses. Colchester contains an eclectic mix of architecture and design from all eras. In addition, the Borough has an interesting maritime heritage and contains archaeological remains of national and international importance for archaeology.

The Borough has a rich cultural heritage and contains 22 conservation areas, including Colchester town centre. There are approximately 1600 listed buildings including the Grade One listed Castle and Red Lion Hotel. There are 40 Scheduled Monuments including the Castle and Upper Park, the Colchester town wall and Gosbecks playing fields. Castle Park is also designated as a park and garden of historic interest. In addition to national designations, the Borough also has a rich heritage of other undesignated buildings, archaeological remains and other features – such as the Victorian suburb of New Town, classic Essex Design Guide housing estates and Victorian Railway stations at Marks Tey, The Hythe and Wivenhoe, for example.

Managing Townscape Change

The Borough is implementing an ambitious regeneration programme that will redevelop four areas of Colchester; North Colchester, The Garrison, St. Botolphs and East Colchester. The redevelopments will collectively provide new housing and employment, a university research park, Visual Arts Facility and new football stadium. At a smaller scale, development is also needed to sustain the vitality of the Borough's other main settlements – Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea.

The study involves a process of townscape characterisation that provides a better appreciation of the composition and spatial distribution of townscape types, their evolution, the pressures for change that they experience, and the likely positive and negative effects of change on the underlying urban character. This improves our understanding of how changes in the urban environment may be positively managed to conserve, enhance or restore valued townscape characteristics for the future.

Applications of the Townscape Character Assessment

The Townscape Character Assessment provides a basis for promoting the integration of sensitively and appropriately designed new buildings and spaces into the existing urban fabric of the Borough's main settlements through the planning process. In this context, the key applications of the Study include:

- As an evidence base for informing the preparation of the Council's new Local Development Framework
- Providing a tool for informing development control decisions, the preparation of area masterplans and the design of new buildings and public realm spaces
- Providing a framework for more detailed character studies, including Conservation Area Appraisals, and strategies concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment and urban green spaces
- Providing a basis for informing design guidance to promote higher quality architectural and urban design

Content of the Report

Section 1.0 sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, and its aims and objectives, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology. It also describes the national, regional and local planning context for the Study.

Sections 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 of the report provide detailed and consistent analyses of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe respectively, in relation to the following headings:

- settlement profile – location, context and key features of the settlement
- the landscape setting of the settlement
- the historic evolution of the settlement
- the urban structure of the settlement
- the description of distinctive Townscape Character Types and Areas, and evaluation of sensitivity to new development
- principles for accommodating new development in and around the settlement

Section 6.0 provides guidance on the application of the Townscape Character Assessment, and outlines a framework for monitoring the impact of new development on townscape character and quality.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In September 2005, Colchester Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a study of the townscape character of the Borough's main settlements - Colchester (including Marks Tey), Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. The need to protect and enhance townscape and landscape character is recognised by Government Planning Policy¹ on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

1.1.2 Colchester is Britain's oldest recorded town and was recorded by Pliny the Elder in AD77. Since then the town has evolved from the former capital of Roman England (Camuldonum), into a thriving regional town within the East of England. The built environment is one of the most important assets that the Borough possesses. Colchester contains an eclectic mix of architecture and design from all eras. In addition, the Borough has an interesting maritime heritage and contains archaeological remains of national and international importance for archaeology.

1.1.3 The Borough has a rich cultural heritage and contains 22 Conservation Areas, including Colchester town centre. There are approximately 1600 listed buildings including the Grade One listed Castle and Red Lion Hotel. There are 40 Scheduled Monuments including the Castle and Upper Park, the Colchester town wall and Gosbecks playing fields. Castle Park is also designated as a park and garden of historic interest. In addition to national designations, the Borough also has a rich heritage of other undesignated buildings, visible archaeological remains and other features – such as the Victorian suburb of New Town, classic Essex Design Guide housing estates and Victorian Railway stations at Marks Tey, The Hythe and Wivenhoe, for example.

1.1.4 The Borough is implementing an ambitious regeneration programme that will redevelop four areas of Colchester; North Colchester, The Garrison, St. Botolphs and East Colchester. The redevelopments will collectively provide new housing and employment, a university research park, Visual Arts Facility and new football stadium. At a smaller scale, new development is also needed to sustain the vitality of the Borough's other main settlements – Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.

1.1.5 In meeting the Borough's regeneration and development needs, a key objective for the Council is to protect and enhance the special qualities that give different places their distinctive character and local identity, and to ensure that development is sympathetic to these qualities and improves the quality of places.

¹ PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005 and PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004)

1.1.6 Townscape Character Assessment is a tool that allows the townscape character² of urban areas to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and robust way, by mapping and describing the variations in physical and cultural elements that make one area distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Townscape Character Assessment also recognises how townscapes have changed over time, and acknowledges the changing influences of human activities and the impacts of economic development.

1.1.7 A better understanding of townscapes – their visual character and distinctiveness, sensitivity to change and their conservation and enhancement needs – is essential to help to work towards developing a coherent approach to halting the erosion of distinctive physical, cultural and natural characteristics that are causing a decline in the diversity, sense of place and identity, and quality of townscape within urban areas. This Townscape Study is thus a useful tool for guiding positive management of land use change within the Borough's settlements.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

1.2.1 The purpose of the Study is to provide a comprehensive townscape character assessment of Colchester (including Marks Tey), Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. See **Figure 1.1** for location and context of the settlements.

1.2.2 The key objectives of the Study are to:

- Provide a factual description of the location of each settlement, its regional context and its population.
- Analyse the historical development of each settlement and identify surviving landscape features.
- Undertake a visual analysis of each settlement according to plan form and skyline.
- Define broad generic Townscape Character Types and particular character areas, and identify any unusual features of the settlement.
- Identify broad principles for integrating new development within different areas of townscape character and at the urban fringe.
- Develop a framework to enable the yearly monitoring of the impact of new development on the townscape within each settlement.

1.2.3 The Townscape Character Assessment takes into account the influence of visible historic environment assets, but does not consider below ground archaeological deposits.

² The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of townscape.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 There is currently no specific standard guidance produced by national government or the relevant statutory agencies on the characterisation of townscapes within urban areas. The overall approach for undertaking the Townscape Character Assessment is based on the principles of character assessment developed for rural areas by the Countryside Agency³, as extended to the assessment of historic towns and cities by the methodology used for the Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Landscape Setting.⁴

1.3.2 The approach also reflects and is consistent with updated guidance on preparing Conservation Area Appraisals published by English Heritage.⁵ The methodology used for this Townscape Character Assessment has been discussed and agreed with English Heritage in the context of the new guidance.

1.3.3 The study process is illustrated in **Box 1**. In summary, this involved the following main stages:

- Desk Study
- Field Survey
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Characterisation
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Evaluation
- Study Report Preparation

Desk Study

1.3.4 This stage involved a desk-based analysis of the historical factors (physical and cultural) that have influenced the location and evolution of the urban form of each settlement. In analysing the historical development, the Study identifies and historically analyses traces of the former landscape that survive in the newly created townscape. This work drew on a variety of documents that analyse the physical and cultural history of the Borough (see Sections 2.3, 3.3, 4.3 and 5.3 and **Appendix D** for details).

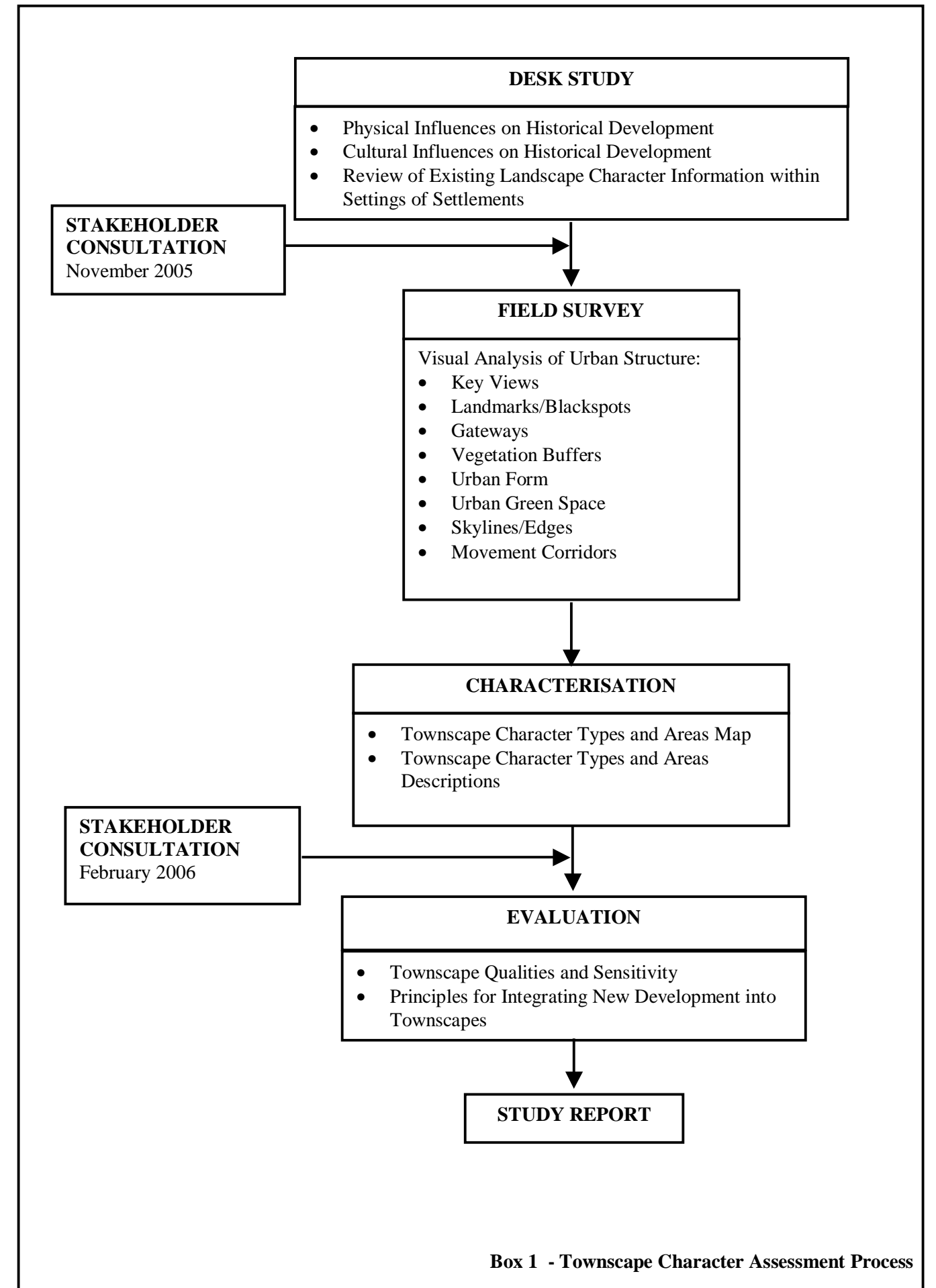
Field Survey

1.3.5 The purpose of this stage is to undertake a visual analysis of the urban structure of each settlement in its landscape setting.

³ Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

⁴ A Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Landscape Setting (Land Use Consultants for Oxford City Council/The Countryside Agency, 2002).

⁵ Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (English Heritage, August 2005).



1.3.6 The visual analysis of each settlement blended a broad ‘top down’ approach to establish distinctiveness of character, with a ‘bottom up’ approach to establish the urban features that contribute to a ‘sense of place’ and experience in different parts of the urban areas (see Sections 2.4, 3.4, 4.4 and 5.4 for details).

1.3.7 The analysis of views into and out of the settlements to establish the wider setting involved field survey work to supplement the existing analysis of the landscape settings of the settlements previously undertaken by CBA (see Sections 2.2, 3.2, 4.2 and 5.2 for details).⁶

Characterisation

1.3.8 The characterisation stage involved the identification and mapping of broad generic Townscape Character Types and Character Areas at 1:10,000 scale within each settlement.

1.3.9 For each generic Townscape Character Type, the overall character was described and its key characteristics identified.

1.3.10 For each unique Townscape Character Area, the following analysis was undertaken:

- Overall Character Description
- Analysis of Distinctive Characteristics, including:
 - * Topographical Features
 - * Street and Block Pattern (‘urban grain’)
 - * Private/Public Realm Interface
 - * Massing & Enclosure
 - * Architecture & Built Form
 - * Streetscapes
 - * Open Space
 - * Biodiversity
 - * Land Use, Culture & Vitality
 - * Movement Patterns
 - * Viewing Experience
 - * Designations

Evaluation

1.3.11 This stage involved making judgements about the inherent sensitivity of each Townscape Character Area to change, based on consideration of the particular qualities of the Character Area.

⁶ Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough (CBA for Colchester Borough Council, 2005)

1.3.12 The methodology for evaluating the sensitivity of the Townscape Character Areas is based on the criteria developed by the *Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Landscape Setting*. It also draws on the supplementary advice on criteria for judging sensitivity set out in an accompanying paper to the *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*⁷.

1.3.13 The criteria used to evaluate the intrinsic value of each Townscape Character Area are defined in **Box 2**.

Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities

- The number and contribution of positive visual qualities/characteristics (i.e. key landmarks, built form, streetscape elements) to townscape value/sense of place.

Biodiversity Value

- The contribution of positive ecological elements or features (i.e. street trees, shrubs/ municipal planting areas, vegetation within front gardens, ponds, streams) to townscape value/sense of place.

Visual Characteristics (Intervisibility and Visual Prominence)

- The degree to which an area is widely visible from, and positively influences the character of, surrounding areas.

Recreatability

- The degree to which the *intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities, biodiversity value and historic integrity* of an area can be re-created if eroded or lost.

Historic Integrity

- The contribution of positive visible elements of the historic environment within the area, taking into account the intactness and integrity of historic street patterns and the presence of historic environment designations within the area as indicators.

Box 2 - Townscape Evaluation Criteria

1.3.14 The criteria used to evaluate the relevant inherent sensitivity of Townscape Character Areas to change is defined in **Box 3**. It should be noted that the sensitivity assessment is only indicative, based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken for this Study.

⁷ Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland : Topic Paper 8 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Swanwick, 2004)

High Sensitivity

- High visual prominence/intervisibility, combined with either strong biodiversity value or strong historic integrity (or both) and thus, low re-creatability, and many intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities;

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Recreatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

- The area is highly sensitive to change, and inappropriate changes may lead to extensive degradation of important elements that contribute to the area's character and value.

Moderate Sensitivity

- Moderate visual prominence/intervisibility, combined with moderate biodiversity value or mixed historic integrity and many or some intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities;

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Recreatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

- The area is of moderate sensitivity to change and inappropriate changes may lead to some degradation of important elements that contribute to the area's character and value.

Low Sensitivity

- Low visual prominence/intervisibility, combined with moderate to low biodiversity value and/or mixed low historic integrity with few intrinsic townscape qualities.

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Recreatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

- The area is of low sensitivity to change and inappropriate changes may lead to only very limited, if any, degradation of important elements that contribute to the area's character and value.

Box 3 - Townscape Sensitivity Criteria

- 1.3.15 Using the analysis conducted in the previous stages, this stage also involved identifying broad principles for integrating new development within (i) different types of townscape character, and (ii) within the landscape setting of each settlement. These broad principles are intended to be translated into policies for development control purposes by Colchester Borough Council as part of the LDF preparation process.

Stakeholder Consultation

- 1.3.16 Stakeholder consultation was an important and integral element of the Study process. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about townscape character, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing decisions about change in urban areas. The adopted approach complied with the requirements of the Council's Draft Statement of Community Involvement.

- 1.3.17 The first stage of consultation in November 2005 involved two workshops: one for statutory bodies and the other for community/voluntary/special interest groups. The workshops took the form of participatory discussion groups, to explore stakeholder's views on what gives different places within each of the settlements their local identity and distinctive character (see **Appendix A** for further details). This information was fed into the characterisation stage of the Study to refine and validate the identification, mapping and description of townscape character within each settlement by the Consultant Team.

- 1.3.18 The second stage of consultation in February 2006 involved two further workshops on the same basis as above, and attended by the same stakeholders. The workshops took the form of participatory discussion groups to explore stakeholder's views on threats to valued townscape characteristics/areas; identify opportunities to enhance the character and sense of place of the Borough's urban areas; and to discuss in outline, principles for accommodating new development (see **Appendix A** for further details). This information was fed into the evaluation stage of the Study to inform judgements by the Consultant Team about the sensitivities of different townscape character areas to change, and to inform the development of principles for guiding change within different types of townscape.

1.4 Planning Context**National Planning Context**

- 1.4.1 National planning policy relating to townscape character is contained in PPS1⁸ and PPG15⁹.

⁸ Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005)

⁹ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 : Planning and the Historic Environment (ODPM, 1994)

Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development

- 1.4.2 PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It states that one of the Government's objectives for the planning system is that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable urban and rural development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside (para 5). In its key principles, PPS1 states that '*a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development*' (para 13.iii) and '*design which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted*' (para 13.iv). When preparing development plans '*planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character*' (para 27). PPS1 also requires new design to be integrated into the existing urban form and natural and built environments (para 35).

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 : Planning and the Historic Environment

- 1.4.3 PPG15 requires Local Planning Authorities to consider the impact of new development on the character of a Conservation Area and the setting of a Listed Building (paras 2.16, 2.17, 4.1 and 4.2).

Strategic Planning Context

The Essex Structure Plan

- 1.4.4 The Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan was adopted in April 2001. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Structure Plan will remain the operative development plan for Essex from 2004-2007. The Structure Plan and its policies are therefore saved for three years, unless the East of England Regional Plan is adopted sooner. Once the East of England Plan is adopted, the Structure Plan policies will be repealed and will have no effect.

The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy

- 1.4.5 The East of England Plan: Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England was published by the East of England Regional Assembly for consultation in December 2004. An Examination in Public into the draft RSS was held between November 2005 and March 2006.
- 1.4.6 The Draft RSS is based on the principles of sustainable development and promotes high quality design within the built environment (Policy SS16).

Local Plan Context

The Adopted Review Colchester Borough Local Plan

- 1.4.7 The Local Plan was adopted in March 2004. The Local Plan sets out a framework to create a more sustainable future for the Borough. It is environmentally led, whilst recognising the importance of meeting the local economy and supporting local communities. It seeks to make the optimum use of existing developed areas, so as to safeguard the countryside, but without destroying the character of those developed areas and losing valuable urban open spaces. It also provides for local housing and employment needs. It recognises that the Council must integrate the needs for development with the conservation of the Borough's environment and history.
- 1.4.8 The plan sets out five objectives for the urban environment and archaeology. These are:
- a) To safeguard and enhance the historic form and character of settlements and, in particular, to protect and enhance the character and setting of Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments, areas of archaeological importance and historic parks and gardens.
 - b) To ensure that the layout and design of new housing retains local distinctiveness; meets the highest standards in terms of visual appearance, treatment of the external environment and personal safety and security; and respects or enhances local character.
 - c) To encourage the highest standards of design for all non-residential development.
 - d) To improve those areas with poor environments.
 - e) To retain and enhance green wedges and greenlinks and incidental areas of value as far as possible.

The Colchester Borough Local Development Framework

- 1.4.9 The Colchester Local Development Scheme¹⁰ out the timetable for the production of the Local Development Documents (LDDs) that will comprise the new Local Development Framework (LDF), prepared under the new arrangements for development plans required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.4.10 The Council intends to prepare the Core Strategy LDD, together with the Statement of Community Involvement, first. These documents will be followed by Area Action Plans and Site Allocations.
- 1.4.11 It is intended that the outputs of the Townscape Character Assessment will be used as part of the evidence base of the LDF. As part of this evidence base, the Council are also undertaking other

¹⁰ Colchester Local Development Scheme 2004-2008 (Colchester Borough Council, 2004).

technical studies including an Urban Capacity Study, Retail Study, Employment Land Review and Landscape Character Assessment.

Other Council Initiatives

1.4.12 Other initiatives which contribute to the sustainable development of Colchester include:

- The Colchester Community Strategy (Colchester 2020 Partnership)
- Colchester Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007
- Colchester Local Transport Plan 2005 – 2011
- Colchester Housing Strategy 2003
- Local Economic Development Strategy 2004 – 2007.

1.5 Structure of the Report

1.5.1 The study report is structured as follows.

1.5.2 **Section 1.0** sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, and its aims and objectives, and outlines the approach and process behind the methodology for the assessment. It also describes the national, regional and local planning context for the Study.

1.5.3 **Sections 2.0 to 5.0** of the report provide the detailed and consistent analyses of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe respectively, in relation to the following headings:

- settlement profile – location, context and key features of the settlement
- the landscape setting of the settlement
- the historic evolution of the settlement
- the urban structure of the settlement
- the description of distinctive Townscape Character Types and Areas, and evaluation of sensitivity to new development
- principles for accommodating new development in and around the settlement

1.5.4 **Section 6.0** provides guidance on the application of the Townscape Character Assessment, and outlines a framework for monitoring the impact of new development on townscape character and quality.



2.0 THE CHARACTER OF COLCHESTER

2.0 THE CHARACTER OF COLCHESTER

2.1 Settlement Profile

Location and Context (see Figure 1.1)

2.1.1 Colchester is approximately 60 miles from London. It is Britain's oldest recorded town, and the existing urban character reflects the historic nature of the town. Colchester has an estimated population of 104,390 (based on 2001 Census¹¹). The town is based around the River Colne, and is perched upon higher land than the surrounding landscape, with the valley of the Roman River situated to the south of the town. The smaller settlement of Marks Tey is situated to the west of Colchester, connected to the town by the B1408 road. Colchester and Marks Tey are served by a regular mainline railway service to central London (journey time, approximately 1 hour to Liverpool Street). Colchester is also connected to the M25 via the A12, one of the main routes leading to East Anglia.

Key Features (see Figures 2.1 and 2.1a)

- The town centre comprising a large range of shops and services along the High Street and within the New Lion Walk shopping centre (developed in the 1970's) and Culver Street West (1980's).
- The distinctive skyline of the town centre dominated by the clock tower of the Town Hall and the large Victorian water tower (constructed in 1882-3), locally known as 'Jumbo'.
- Castle Park, located in the northeast of the town centre and High Woods Country Park, forming a green wedge running northwards from the city centre.
- Historic Core defined by the Roman walled town.
- Colchester Garrison established in the mid to late 19th century, with the current army barracks situated to the south of the town centre surrounding Abbey Fields.
- Relatively high proportion of housing within the town centre.
- Georgian housing along the High Street, North Hill and Head Street.
- Victorian housing within the town centre (e.g. along Roman and Castle Road).
- Post-war housing to the east of Queen Street with several suburbs, such as Beacon End and Shrub End, outside the town centre.
- Modern residential development areas close to High Woods Country Park and the new Tesco's Hypermarket to the north of the town centre.

2.2 The Landscape Setting of Colchester

Overview

2.2.1 The *Landscape Character Assessment of Colchester Borough*¹² study defines and describes **Landscape Character Types and Areas at 1:25,000 scale** around Colchester (including Marks Tey).

2.2.2 Informed by the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment, the *Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough*¹³ study identifies in more detail **Landscape Setting Areas at 1:10,000 scale** within the fringes of Colchester (and Marks Tey).

Landscape Character Types within the Setting of Colchester

2.2.3 'Landscape Character Types' are broad tracts of land that share common characteristics of geology, landform, vegetation, land-use and settlement. They are generic landscapes which reoccur throughout the Borough.

2.2.4 The distribution of the three relevant Landscape Character Types within the setting of Colchester (and Marks Tey) are shown on **Figure 1.2**, and their key characteristics are summarised below:

A - River Valley

- V-shaped valley landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau;
- Main river valley served by several tributaries;
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor;
- Intimate character in places;
- Wooded character in places.

B - Farmland Plateau

- Elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau landscape;
- Network of narrow winding lanes and minor roads;
- Medium to large-scale enclosed predominantly arable fields;
- Long distance views across valleys from certain locations;
- Well wooded in places (with several areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland), interspersed with orchards.

¹¹ Census 2001: www.statistics.gov.uk

¹² Landscape Character Assessment of Colchester Borough (CBA for Colchester BC, 2005)

¹³ Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough (CBA for Colchester BC, 2005)

D - Drained Estuarine Marsh

- Areas of flat, artificially drained former salt marsh currently grassland and cultivated fields;
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats;
- Lack of large areas of trees or woodland;
- Network of visible drainage ditches.

Landscape Character Areas within the Setting of Colchester

2.2.5 'Landscape Character Areas' are geographically unique areas with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics, both physical and experiential, that combine to create a distinct sense of place.

2.2.6 The distribution of the eleven Landscape Character Areas within the setting of Colchester (and Marks Tey) are shown on **Figure 1.2**, and their character and key visual characteristics are described below.

A2 Wooded Roman River Valley

This character area encompasses the moderately steep v-shaped slopes of the narrow Roman River Valley, which are swathed in large areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland (encompassing Donyland Wood, Friday Wood and Chest Wood, alongside smaller patches of ancient woodland). The northern valley slopes are characterised by large fields, with their long axis at right angles to the west-east valley corridor. Bordered to the north by large patches of woodland, the field boundaries are substantially hedged. Land-use consists of a mixture of arable farmland and patches of rough grassland. At the confluence of the Colne and Roman rivers there is a concentration of smaller irregular fields, which are associated with and provide the setting to the small hamlet of High Park Corner. The small nucleated riverside settlement of Rowhedge, at the eastern edge of the character area, was of an intricate street pattern related to historical access to the river harbour. The western, upper part of the Roman River Valley corridor consists of regular fields with hedged field boundaries and large blocky areas of woodland. The wooded, enclosed nature of the valley sides, contributes to an intimate, roughly textured and diverse character along the valley slopes. The valley slopes are connected by a series of intricate north south running narrow lanes, which connect Colchester in the north to smaller villages within coastal farmland to the south.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Large woodland blocks restrict views across the valley and intervisibility between the valley floodplain and surrounding areas of coastal farmland and farmland plateau;
- Patches of woodland within adjacent farmland plateau to the north limit views towards the settlement edges of Colchester from northern river valley slopes;
- Expansive panoramic views over Abberton Reservoir can be gained from higher points on the valley slopes close to Abberton;

- Views along the length of the valley from the valley floor;
- Intimate views of Wivenhoe harbour across the River Colne from Rowhedge.

A3 Roman River Valley Floor

This character area encompasses the narrow, intricate meandering channel and flat floodplain of the Roman River in the lower reaches of the river valley. The floodplain becomes broader at its confluence with the River Colne and as the river corridor widens, several areas of marshy grassland (supporting riparian and wetland vegetation have established). An interesting and relatively remote region of wet marshland, dotted with single mature oak trees has developed to the east of Ferry Road. Although three-storey modern flats at the southern edge of Wivenhoe and the large warehouse buildings at Rowhedge overlook this marshland area, a sense of remoteness, tranquillity and inaccessibility is experienced where Ferry Road terminates opposite Wivenhoe. Water has a dominant presence within the landscape throughout the entirety of this intimate and enclosed character area. Settlement is absent along the Roman River valley floor; however, a group of relatively large warehouses (located to the south of Rowhedge) assert a human influence and the valley floor is overlooked by development at Wivenhoe Quay.

Key visual characteristics include:

- When accessible, panoramic diverse views along the Colne valley corridor and along the Roman River Valley can be obtained from the northern end of ferry road;
- A public footpath runs along the lowest part of the northern Wooded Roman River valley slopes, just to the south of East Donyland Hall. Views of the diverse meandering Roman River floodplain (containing patches of marshland) can be obtained from this footpath. To the south, the footpath crosses the Roman River, allowing views along the widening River corridor towards confluence with the River Colne;
- The heavily wooded Roman River valley sides are visible in views from within the floodplain of the River corridor;
- The southern riverside frontage of the Wivenhoe Conservation Area forms a strong visual focus with views to the north from the lower reaches of the valley.

A4 Colne River Valley Floor

This character area encompasses the narrow meandering course and floodplain of the River Colne and St. Botolph's Brook tributary within the upper reaches of the river valley. The valley becomes broader in the east towards Colchester. Land use within the river valley floor is influenced by the meandering river course. The valley is also an important wildlife corridor. Where meanders are strongest wet meadows are prevalent, whereas adjacent to less sinuous stretches of the river, land use consists predominantly of arable fields and pasture. Distinct areas of plantation woodland fringe the river in close proximity to disused workings to the east of Fordstreet. To the south of Fordham, the river is

particularly sinuous, with many small meanders. Fringing the river, and delineating its course, are many mature deciduous trees that emphasise its winding nature and create a distinctive landscape feature. The river is crossed by a series of roads and lanes, which allow access to it and facilitate diverse and interesting views along the river corridor. Chappel Viaduct (brick-built in 1847 with more than 30 arches) is a striking landmark structure, and central within many views from the surrounding Colne valley slopes. Several bridges, mills and weirs scattered along the river corridor are evidence of the importance of the Colne as an area of settlement and industry. An interesting weatherboarded – late Georgian example of a three-storey mill is located adjacent to a small church with a little spire at Chappel. There is a sense of remoteness and tranquillity within the valley floodplain.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Dramatic and interesting panoramic views to the east and west along the river valley corridor, from footpaths and small settlements such as Chappel within the floodplain;
- The Essex Way (promoted route and recreational path) follows the flat valley floor through part of the Colne Valley, providing opportunities to view and experience the intimate and diverse river valley corridor. The Colne Valley Path (to be launched summer 2005) will follow a route from Great Yeldham (Braintree District) through Chappel to Colchester.

A5 Colne River Valley Slopes

The v-shaped, relatively steep valley sides enclose the meandering course of the River Colne. The area also includes the lower slopes of the valley at Ballast Quay Farm, to the east of Wivenhoe. Woodland cover consists of a mixture of small patches and large regular blocks of woodland (for example Acorn Wood) which are spread across the valley slopes. Many of the narrow (sometimes sunken) lanes, which traverse the valley slopes in a north-south direction, are enclosed by hedges, which are generally in reasonable condition. Several single mature deciduous trees are also present in field boundaries (for example within fields to the south of Eight Ash Green). Small to medium-sized arable fields directly align the river whilst a mosaic of large regular arable fields cover the upper parts of the slopes. A patch of very regular (rectangular, subdivided) orchards, to the east of Wakes Colne Green (close to Rose Green) provides variety and assert regularity over the surrounding arable sloping valley sides. Settlement pattern within the area consists of small linear roadside village, such as Wakes Colne and Eight Ash Green, combined with a number of small hamlets and farmsteads, dispersed across the character area.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Attractive framed and panoramic views of the meandering river channel and associated floodplain from higher points along the valley sides, such as Hill House Farm to the south of Chappel;

- The church and viaduct at Chappel (within character area A4 Colne Valley Floor) are dominant landmarks in views from both the southern and northern valley sides around Wakes Hall Farm, Old Hall Farm and Wakes Colne;
- The spire of All Saints Norman church at Wakes Colne is a prominent landmark within the landscape, which is intervisible with the church at Chappel (also with a spire) in views from the east;
- Views along the river valley corridor.

A6 Ardleigh River Valley

This character area encompasses the lower reaches of the Ardleigh River Valley at confluence with the River Colne, which includes the Salary Brook and steep v-shaped southern valley slopes. The area also includes the northern valley slopes to the south east of Welshwood Park, to the north of Crockleford Hill. The river valley corridor abuts the southeastern settlement edge of Colchester (at Greenstead). Narrow, rectilinear fields are aligned to the brook, with their field boundaries comprising thick, mature vegetation, which are gappy in places. Further to the south, a series of medium to large-scale regular arable fields extend from the corridor. The river valley is fringed and overlooked to the east by a number of large woodland areas, which are located on the top of the valley slopes and within the adjacent Bromley Heaths Plateau defined in the Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Gaps in woodlands on top of the eastern valley slopes (Home Wood, the Strip, Thousand Acres and Churn Wood) frame views into the valley from the east;
- Views along the river valley corridor from the southern edge of Colchester and farmland plateau forging the town.

B2 Easthorpe Farmland Plateau

Rolling boulder clay plateau underlies this character area, which is dissected in the east by the upper reaches of the wooded Roman River valley. The open, expansive large triangular World War II airfield at Birch dominates the southern half of the area, with several large open arable fields adjacent. To the south east of the airfield, a large sand and gravel workings (Birch Pit) introduces further human influence to this area of the plateau landscape. The dominant enclosure pattern on the largely arable farmland plateau is one of medium-sized irregular fields with gappy-hedged field boundaries and small to medium-sized patches of woodland (e.g. Fan Wood). Enclosure pattern is smaller and more intricate, with more intimate thickly vegetated field boundaries consisting of overmature hedges with hedge trees, in close proximity to settlements such as Copford. Settlement pattern consists of a combination of linear (Marks Tey) and nucleated (Copford) small settlements, alongside small hamlets (Hardy's Green; Easthorpe; Copford Green) and small farmsteads. Settlements are connected via a network of narrow, sometimes winding lanes, enclosed by hedges in places. Roads running in an east-west direction tend to

be straighter (such as the Roman Easthorpe Road) and the Main A12. A number of halls, small reservoirs and ponds are dispersed across the character area.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Views across the farmland plateau from roads and public rights of way are limited and framed by hedged field boundaries and small patches of woodland; however, it is generally possible to obtain medium-range views across arable farmland;
- An attractive cluster of buildings consisting of Easthorpe church, a timber-framed house opposite and Easthorpe Hall to the west, are landmarks with views on approach to Easthorpe and along the Roman Easthorpe Road;
- The spire of Copford church (*'the most remarkable Norman parish church in the county'* - Pevsner, 1954:149) on the upper slopes of the Roman River valley is another prominent landmark in views from approach roads to the south and east.

B3 Southern Colchester Farmland Plateau

This area forms the southern extent of a broad area of plateau upon which Colchester is situated, to the north of the v-shaped Roman River valley. The northern boundary of the character area is formed by the southern edge of Colchester Urban Area. The fragmented enclosure pattern consists of medium-sized irregular arable fields (some with hedged field boundaries) interspersed with other land uses, including pockets of land in semi-derelict condition. Several large sand and gravel pits (some of which are flooded) are situated to the south of Stanway Green and north of Colchester zoo. An area of small, regular orchards diversifies the field pattern and landscape to the south of Stanway Green. Within the eastern half of the character area there are large areas of woodland (e.g. Friday Wood), which extend across the northern Roman River valley slopes to the south. These patches of woodland are interspersed with and lie within Middlewick and Friday woods military training area, which includes firing ranges. Military influence on the landscape is further emphasised by the presence of Berechurch Camp (where emergency barracks were constructed in 1939). As well as having a visual presence within the landscape, military activities can disturb the tranquillity of the area during firing sessions. When firing is not in action, a number of Public Rights of Way, including footpaths and bridleways, cross this part of the area giving access to the woodlands. The character of the landscape within this area is fragmented and strongly influenced by the diversity of land-uses within it: including agriculture, horticulture, recreation, gravel extraction and military activities. The area is crossed by roads, which radiate southwards from the centre of Colchester.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Large areas of woodland on the northern Roman River valley sides generally block views southwards into the valley;

- Views encompassing the varying land-uses within the area can be gained from several locations in the southern settlement fringes of Colchester;
- Views across the character area in an easterly direction are generally open or framed by small patches of woodland.

B6 Great Horkesley Farmland Plateau

This character area is located on an area of gently rolling plateau to the north of the Colne River valley. Parliamentary field enclosure pattern is visible within the predominantly post-1950's arable farmland landscape. A very small-scale, regular linear field pattern, to the south of Boxted, extends from the straight, branch-like arrangement of roads. Linear, regular fields abut Colchester's northern settlement edge to the north of Myland. A patchwork of small, medium and large-scale fields align these concentrations of regular fields. Small patches of deciduous woodland (e.g. Hill House wood) are found across the area, with some more linear mature belts at field boundaries. Generally, hedged field boundaries appear to be well managed and clipped in places. Poplars are prevalent within parts of the character area where they create striking field boundaries. Settlement pattern consists of a mixture of linear and nucleated settlements. Great Horkesley is an expanded linear settlement, whilst Horkesley Heath has a squarer, more nucleated form. West Bergholt, a large nucleated village, is fringed by fragmented orchards to the north. The area is traversed by several, relatively straight roads, which are closely related to field and settlement pattern. To the south of the area, a diverse and interesting landscape corridor (High Woods Country Park) links Colchester's settlement fringe with more open plateau to the north. The Country park includes areas of woodland, grassland, farmland and wetland.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Views from roads within the character area are limited by hedgerow vegetation;
- From several locations in the north of the character area, panoramic and framed views across the Stour Valley slopes and into the Black Brook river valley can be obtained.

B7 Langham Farmland Plateau

This plateau is bounded by the Stour River valley to the north and also includes an area of plateau to the east of Parson's Heath, overlooking the Ardleigh Valley to the south. Once covered by orchards, many of the regular fields contained within the outline of the former airfield at Langham, have been/or are in the process of being converted into crops, such as strawberries. Paddocks, enclosed by post and rail fences also contribute to the mixed landscape character within this area. Field boundaries comprise clipped straight hedges (for example those adjacent to Park Lane). A smaller-scale more intricate field pattern, comprising regular small fields, enclosed by hedgerows containing mature deciduous trees is evident in proximity to small settlements such as Langham, Lamb's Corner and Dedham Heath. The

settlement pattern of these small hamlets and villages coincides with the crossing points of minor roads across the River Stour. Small farmsteads are scattered throughout the landscape. Overall landscape character within this area is diverse and interesting combining both large and small-scale attributes. This character area extends to the east, into Bromley Heaths plateau (Tendring District Council Landscape Character Assessment). East of the A12(T) a series of very large prairie fields to the south of Birchwood Road create an expansive open landscape in contrast to wooded areas to the north.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Panoramic, long-range open and framed views across the Stour Valley slopes into the floodplain from several locations along the northern edge of the plateau at Dedham;
- Framed views into the intricate narrow valley containing the Black Brook (tributary of the River Stour);
- Views into the Ardleigh Valley from the southern edge of the plateau to the north east of Welshwood Park.

B8 Wivenhoe Farmland Plateau

This plateau character area rises gently to the east, and encompasses the eastern slopes of the Colne River Valley extending eastwards outside the Borough boundary into Bromley Heaths plateau (Tendring District Council LCA). Predominantly arable farmland encircles Wivenhoe Urban Area and is interspersed with features such as Wivenhoe Park (on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens) and Lodge. Disused workings to the east of Wivenhoe provide a contrast with the surrounding arable landscape. Enclosure pattern consists of medium-sized irregular fields, interspersed in places with small, irregular patches of woodland. Wivenhoe Woods is a distinctive larger linear area of deciduous woodland that separates the western boundary of Wivenhoe settlement from the beginning of the Colne Valley estuary to the east. Field boundaries are gappy, with some single mature trees. The Sixpenny Brook runs north south through the area, feeding the Colne to the south and providing diversify to the farmland landscape. A network of well-connected lanes and footpaths cross the plateau and link with Wivenhoe settlement edge in the north.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Views of the Colne Estuary from the western edge of the settlement are limited by Wivenhoe woods;
- Open views of the diverse and intriguing Colne River as it reaches its estuary, can be gained from the sloping eastern valley sides and from eastern parts within the farmland plateau.

D3 Colne Drained Estuarine Marsh

This area of flat, drained landscape forms a corridor, which aligns both sides of the course of the River Colne within its tidal reaches towards its confluence with the Blackwater Estuary and sea to the south. The area is fringed to the east by areas of coastal farmland and small patches of woodland (at Clevelands and to the east of Hyde Park corner). This landscape provides visual and physical separation between southern Colchester and Rowhedge to the west and the University of Essex and Wivenhoe to the east. The landscape has a generally open character and large-scale pattern, which is less intricate than that within other areas of drained estuarine marsh to the south. There is a sense of remoteness and tranquillity within parts of the character area, however, this is frequently disturbed to the east of the Colne by visual and noise intrusion associated with the railway line which crosses the character area.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Open, panoramic views across the River Colne to Wivenhoe waterfront development/ Conservation Area and farmland plateau to the east;
- Open, panoramic views to the historic harbour at Rowhedge from Wivenhoe, the River Colne, south of Colchester and the University of Essex;
- Direct short distance views of the 1960's visually dominant landmark tower blocks on the University of Essex campus.

Landscape Setting Areas around Colchester (see Figure 2.2)

2.2.7 The setting of the settlement has been analysed by discrete 'Landscape Setting Areas'. The visual analysis identifies:

- key open spaces
- visually significant trees and woodland
- significant water features
- ridgelines
- settlement edges
- harsh abrupt urban edges
- distinctive gateways
- key views to and from the settlement
- landmarks

2.2.8 Each Landscape Setting Area has been evaluated in terms of the following factors:

- *Intrinsic Landscape Qualities* – the number of positive visual, ecological and historic qualities/features;
- *Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting* - the extent to which an area has distinctive backdrops, distinctive approaches, green corridor linkages, allows critical outward and inward views;

- *Visual Characteristics (Visual Prominence and Intervisibility)* – the extent to which an area has prominent topography and/or is widely visible from surrounding areas.

2.2.9 This evaluation has been used to assess the degree of inherent sensitivity against the following criteria:

- *High Sensitivity* – Area unlikely to be able to accommodate even relatively small-scale changes without extensive degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to fully address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- *Moderate Sensitivity* – Area may be able to accommodate changes with some degradation of character and value, although mitigation measures would be required to fully address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- *Low Sensitivity* – Area should be able to accommodate major changes with only very limited, if any, significant degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures should be able to fully address all potential landscape/environmental issues.

2.2.10 The sensitivity and value of the Landscape Setting Areas around Colchester (including Marks Tey) are summarised in the following sections.

Colchester Southern Fringe between Eight Ash Green and Gosbecks

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value			
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low							
1		•			•			•									•	•	
2			•			•		•											•
3			•		•			•											•
4	•				•		•												•

Colchester Southern Fringe between Gosbecks and Berechurch

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value				
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low		
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low								
5		•		•				•				•				•			•	•
6		•				•		•				•				•				

Colchester Southern Fringe between Middlewick, The Hythe and Rowhedge

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value				
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low		
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low								
7	•			•				•				•				•			•	
8	•				•				•				•			•			•	
9	•			•				•				•			•				•	
10		•			•			•				•			•				•	
11	•			•				•				•			•				•	
12		•		•				•				•			•				•	

Colchester Southern Fringe between Greenstead, the University of Essex and Wivenhoe

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
13		•		•				•					•					
14		•			•			•					•					
15	•				•		•			•			•					
16	•			•				•					•				•	
17		•				•					•			•				•
18		•			•			•					•					•

Marks Tey Fringes

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1		•		•				•					•				•	
2		•			•			•					•				•	
3	•				•			•					•				•	
4	•			•				•					•		•		•	
5		•			•			•					•			•		•
6		•			•			•					•			•		•

Colchester Northern Fringe

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1	•			•			•			•			•		•		•	
2	•			•				•					•				•	
3		•			•		•						•				•	
4	•			•			•			•			•				•	
5		•			•			•					•				•	
6			•		•						•			•			•	•
7		•			•			•					•				•	•
8	•				•			•					•				•	
9	•			•			•			•			•				•	

2.3 Historical Evolution of Colchester

2.3.1 The physical structure of the landscape has had a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity around Colchester. The influence of human activity, in turn, makes a major contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape. The following section provides a summary of the evolution of Colchester, with particular reference to the growth of the urban form in relation to the surrounding historic settlement pattern and how this has shaped the character of the town today. It is largely based on the description of Colchester’s archaeological value set out in the Colchester Urban Archaeology Strategy¹⁴, supplemented by further relevant documentary sources (see **Appendix D**). The historical evolution of Colchester since the Iron Age is illustrated in **Figures 2.3, 2.3a, 2.3b**. The historical evolution of Marks Tey is shown on **Figure 2.3c**.

Early Origins (see Figure 2.3)

Late Iron Age

2.3.2 The earliest settlement within Colchester was the massive Iron Age territorial *oppidum* of Camulodunum. The *oppidum* was defended by an extensive dyke system enclosing some 3,200 hectares. The significance of this massive settlement was such that it was the main strategic objective of the

¹⁴ Draft Colchester Urban Archaeological Strategy (Radford & Gascoyne, Wise [ed], July 2003)

Roman invasion force in AD 43. The Emperor Claudius himself entered the *oppidum* as commander-in-chief of the victorious army of invasion.

- 2.3.3 The principal areas of Iron Age settlement were situated to the west and south west of the town, at Sheepen and Gosbecks. At Sheepen, extensive excavations between 1930-39 produced evidence of a major trading and manufacturing settlement dating back to around AD 5. To the southwest at Gosbecks, excavations and aerial photography have revealed an extensive native farm, based around a large trapezoidal farmstead enclosure and associated ritual enclosure. Coin evidence suggests the existence of a defended settlement here by 25 BC. Elsewhere important Iron Age prestige burial areas have been located at Lexden and Stanway.

Roman

- 2.3.4 In AD 49 the legionary fortress was converted into a *colonia* – the first capital of Roman Britain. Its high status was assured by the construction of the impressive Temple of Claudius in the city, built to worship the deified Emperor after his death in AD 54. The temple and city were burnt to the ground during the Boudican revolt of AD 60/61, but were rebuilt shortly afterwards. The difficulty of navigating the larger Roman ships up the Colne and the city's geographical isolation quickly led to London overtaking Colchester in terms of political importance. Nevertheless, Colchester remained an important provincial centre until the collapse of Roman rule in the 5th century, although the settlement may have declined significantly from the end of the third century, as the suburbs appear to contract after this time.
- 2.3.5 Today the richness of Colchester's Roman legacy can be witnessed in the exceptional upstanding Roman structures – including the town wall, Balkerne Gate, the Roman drains and the podium of the Temple of Claudius. What we see today is mostly only the core of the original wall, a mixture of coursed tiles and rubble from which the facing has been robbed. This wall which was 18 feet (5.49 metres) high and 8 ½ feet (2.59 metres) thick in places has played a strategic role in the town's history for it not only assured the continued existence of the *colonia*, but in later ages it encouraged the development of mints and markets within the town, whilst in terms of town form it discouraged building outside the wall and thus Colchester remained a compact hill top town for centuries. Balkerne Gate was the main entrance to the town from London and marks the beginning of the original main street of the town of which the greater part still remains as High Street. During the later Roman period the Gateway was partly blocked up and eventually Head Gate became the principal gateway for the route to London.
- 2.3.6 Like the wall the Temple has had a crucial influence on Colchester since the Roman Street plan (which remains the basis of the present town centre street plan) was arranged with the Temple as its core, a link

perpetuated by the Normans who built the Castle on the site of the Temple. The relationship between this site and the street plan has remained to the present day, although clearly the modern and ancient street plans are not identical, High Street for instance, then cut through the line of Head Street and North Hill instead of forming a 'T' junction as it does now. It is the order of this Roman plan, which gives us the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from the Dutch Quarter, Castle Park and North Hill.

Anglo – Saxon (5th Century – 1066)

- 2.3.7 Roman Colchester appears to have finally succumbed to Saxon settlers by AD 450. Three 'sunken-featured buildings' have been identified within the walls, the earliest dating to c.400-450 and the latest to the 7th century. Although imperfectly understood at present, the early Saxon settlement at Colchester is likely to have been as large as the better known examples at West Stow or Mucking, and as such would have constituted a significant episode in Colchester's history. The pattern of early Saxon settlement is dispersed and low level; pottery, coins, loomweights and brooches of the 5th – 8th centuries have been found spread across the walled area. Outside the walls a number of Saxon graves have been located at Mersea Road, Guilford Road Estate and Union House, apparently continuing the use of Roman burial areas. A Merovingian pot found at Old Heath could indicate that a small landing place was established here by the 7th century and it is possible that the town had become a royal villa by this time. If so, the settlement fortunes flagged in the 8th and 9th centuries when the record dries up and there appears to be a hiatus of activity.
- 2.3.8 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 917 the town was besieged and taken from the Danes by the English, although no archaeological evidence for a settled Danish presence has been found to date. The Chronicle also mentions the subsequent repair and restoration of the town by King Edward the Elder (AD 871-924), which could indicate the repair of the town walls and possibly the re-laying of the street grid at this time. Archaeological evidence for the 10th century is also sparse. However, once again history gives us some indication of the town's re-emerging urban status with the establishment of a mint in Colchester during the reign of Æthelred II (979-1016).
- 2.3.9 Basically the town served as a strategic centre, a function reflected in the name 'Colchester' which is of Saxon origin meaning 'the fortress on the Colne'. Until this period the town had been known by its ancient name – Camulodunum. Yet despite the poorer quality of building and its smaller population (probably under 2,000) Colchester became an important administrative and commercial centre since markets and mints were confined to the towns because of the disturbed state of the country and here the Roman Wall gave adequate protection. At the time of the Norman Conquest Colchester had already acquired its present boundaries with only minor modifications and was a borough.

Medieval to Late 19th Century (see Figure 2.3a)

Early Medieval (1066 – 1348)

- 2.3.10 By the time of the Norman Conquest Colchester was a thriving Saxon burgh with a number of churches within its walls, including Holy Trinity, whose tower, dated to c.1000, is Colchester's best surviving example of Saxon architecture. The Normans had a substantial and lasting influence on the town, including the construction of a castle, whose keep was of larger size than that of the Tower of London. In 1072 William the Conqueror granted the Borough to Eudo Dapifer who became very prominent in the Norman town. In particular, he founded St John's Abbey and the leper hospital of St Mary Magdalene. During Eudo's life a second monastery was created with the building of St Botolph's Priory, the first Augustinian foundation in Britain.
- 2.3.11 The Moot Hall, constructed around 1160, was demolished in 1843 to make way for a new town hall, but, miraculously, a number of 13th century structures survived until the 20th century. Six stone houses have been recorded inside the town walls and it seems likely that these buildings (now mostly demolished) were originally occupied by the town's Jewish population. None of the houses appear to have dated from after the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 and it is likely that the stone construction provided extra security for the occupants in these dangerous times.
- 2.3.12 Colchester achieved self government in the 12th century, a status that was to generate tension between burghers and local manorial lords, resulting in a number of sieges and confrontations over hunting rights and legal jurisdiction during the next two centuries. Another key event in the early Medieval history of Colchester was the re-location of the town port from Old Heath or Old Hythe to the New Hythe. The first reference to the 'New' Hythe is made in 1272, although it is possible that it had taken over from the Old Heath long before this. The town records note many attempts to improve the watercourse along the Colne, with only limited success, nevertheless the New Hythe did survive as a working port into the 20th century.

Late Medieval (1349 – 1540)

- 2.3.13 The Black Death makes its first appearance in Colchester in 1348-9, taking a third of the population, yet its return in 1360 did not stop the growth of the town's cloth industry. By the late 14th century immigrants from across the country were being attracted to Colchester and all five mills along the Colne had been adapted for fulling. The rapid growth of the town's cloth industry was interrupted by war in Europe in the 1420s, but resumed in the mid-15th century when the Hanseatic League was at its height.

- 2.3.14 From the 15th century religious non-conformity had been rife in Colchester when Colcestrians such as William Chivelyng were burned for heresy. After 1530 when Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church he proceeded to destroy all vestiges of the Catholic faith in England by two Acts of Parliament which saw the dissolution of the religious houses in Colchester, the Abbey and St Botolph's Priory being among those lost, although the Priory Church was allowed to remain as it was also a parish church.

- 2.3.15 At the close of the Medieval period the town was undergoing change. Medieval influences were bending the straight Roman streets, a huge castle now dominated the town, and all eight churches within the walls had appeared. These churches together with the Franciscan Friary and the Crouched Friary increased the number of important buildings in Colchester and by raising the level of the town's skyline must have given it a new face from within and without.

Post Medieval (1541 - 1700)

- 2.3.16 The early 16th century saw the cloth industry contract once again, only to be revived by the influx of Dutch immigrants in the 1560's. By 1573 there were about 500 Dutch and Flemings in Colchester and their arrival had a considerable effect on the town. Commercially, the aliens transformed a declining trade into an important thriving industry which brought wealth and fame to Colchester, the legacy of which can be seen today in the timber framed town houses of the Dutch Quarter and elsewhere. Plague returned in 1514, 1545, 1557-9, 1569-70, 1586-8, 1597, 1603-4, 1625-6, 1631, 1651, 1665-6, and 1679. The devastating death of half the population by the plague in 1665-6, could not stop the cloth industry thriving once again in the late 17th century.
- 2.3.17 By the late 17th century, the Dutch had become integrated and even today their presence can be seen in street names e.g. Sir Isaac's Walk (named after Sir Isaac Rebow who was of Dutch descent) and Winnock Road (after John Winnock a benevolent bay-maker). The area in which some of them lived is still known as the 'Dutch Quarter' where, although many buildings have been recently restored, the main structures and layout are original and examples of their houses exist in the Stockwell Streets, notably at the junction of West Stockwell Street and Stockwell Street.
- 2.3.18 In the mid 17th century the suppression of local minority religious sects was the cause of much distress, and produced problems, which were aggravated by the Siege of 1648 when the Parliamentarian General, Fairfax, besieged a Royalist force in the town. The siege lasted though June, July and August and was finally concluded when the Royalists acceded to the starving townspeople's demands to surrender after they learned a relieving Royalist force had been defeated. The siege works erected during this time surrounded the town, the remnants of which can be seen in the landscape surrounding Colchester today.

2.3.19 The effects of the Siege on Colchester were tragic; trade had been interrupted and great damage done to the prominent buildings such as St Botolph's Priory Church and the Abbey Gatehouse, and many houses, particularly on the south side of the town near Head and East Gates were burned. Although about 190 houses out of a total of about 1150 in the town were destroyed, many buildings damaged in the Siege remain, e.g. the tower of St Martin's, Abbey Gate and the famous Siege House. Fortunately the castle escaped damage since it had not been used as a fortress, and the town's walls withstood the bombardment although they were damaged by Fairfax's soldiers after the Siege. Naturally reconstruction took many decades; for example it was 65 years before St Mary-at-the-Walls was rebuilt and even by 1724 when Daniel Defoe (the author of 'Robinson Crusoe') visited the effects of the Siege were still evident; Colchester, he said, was still 'mourning in the ruins of the Civil War'.

Post Medieval (1701 – 1901)

2.3.20 Whilst the rebuilding of the ruined suburbs in wood and plaster began soon after the Siege, it was many decades before any evidence of major reconstruction in brick appeared. This new building work in brick was both a reflection of the accumulated wealth of the major families in Colchester, and of changing tastes in house construction as bay-makers and the large number of professional people in the town, or those who had retired to Colchester, built or refaced their houses in the Georgian period. North Hill, and to a lesser extent East Hill, developed as professional quarters where doctors, lawyers and clergymen used their houses as combined homes and offices. Here the neat brick Georgian facades such as Nos. 4-5 North Hill, East Hill House and the Minories, began to appear, although the plaster facings of the older methods of construction were still used as in East Street, or in the front of the Gate House near the top of East Hill. With this new building East Hill and the area bounded by Head Street, North Hill and Crouch Street developed as the most fashionable districts in the town.

2.3.21 The order and simplicity of the new building of this period contrasted strongly with the narrow streets, distinctive individuality and human scale of the late Medieval buildings, and added diversity to the urban scene. This was itself heightened by the diversity within overall uniformity which the Georgian architects attained; East Hill House had similar proportions and appropriate detailing, yet each was an entity in itself, part of a complete group and an attractive whole. On North Hill the new street picture was complemented by the tower of St Peter's, rebuilt in the second half of the 18th century, whilst in a tranquil precinct off Head Street, Sir Isaac Rebow promoted the reconstruction in 1714 of St Mary's-at-the-Walls. In 1872 the church itself was pulled down, apart from the tower, and rebuilt in Victorian brick. It is hardly surprising that Colchester became an attractive retirement centre for professional men and that visitors such as Dr Johnson, who came here in 1763, spoke highly of this flourishing provincial town, as he did of the White Hart where he 'talked of good feeding with uncommon satisfaction'.

2.3.22 In the 18th century the town got a glimpse of its future with arrival of a temporary garrison during the Napoleonic wars. This was disbanded in 1815, but the soldiers returned forty years later when a permanent garrison was established, which to this day occupies a swathe of land to the south of the town. Of the extant later barracks the Le Cateau and Cavalry Barracks are the only surviving examples of the innovative 1862 design (Douet 1998,137). The Crimean War brought a new camp between the Old Heath and Mersea Roads in 1854-56 and later over Abbey Fields; the Garrison Chapel still remains. In 1864 an exercise ground was established at Middlewick, Old Heath, and a cavalry camp alongside Butt Road. The garrison brought stability to the town's economy, especially in times of agricultural depression. In terms of town form it has created a wedge in the centre of Colchester and encouraged development to the south-east and south-west.

2.3.23 Throughout the 19th century Colchester continued to function as a market town, but industry also came to the town which was to encourage the development of a balanced and diverse employment structure locally and provide the impetus for rapid change. In 1792 Essex's first iron foundry was established just off the High Street and with the arrival of the railway in 1843 Colchester was primed to develop a thriving engineering industry in the late 19th century. Britannia Machine tools, Mumford's Marine Engineers and Paxman's Steam Engines and Boilers became the town's biggest employers, resulting in the spread of terraced housing for factory employees, expanding out of the Medieval suburbs and consuming the land previously occupied by the Napoleonic garrison and the parts of the former monastic precincts.

2.3.24 That Colchester was beginning to expand had been evident earlier in the century when business and professional men had begun to seek new homes in the suburbs and ended the tradition of having home and office or workshop under the same roof, which had been common in earlier times. This tendency enabled those businesses in the town centre to expand, e.g. when the Georgian vicarage of St Peter's was destroyed by fire in 1843, the site was used to relieve pressure in the Corn Exchange next door, which had been built on the site of the old Dutch Hall. Commercial pressures were gradually developing and altering the nature of the centre, a change emphasised by the removal of the old cattle market to Middleborough in 1862 and the demolition of Middle Row and St Runwald's in the High Street in 1878. Improvements were also being made in street lighting, paving and shop fronts. The Town Hall had twice been rebuilt in this period; in 1845 when the old Moot Hall was demolished, and again in 1898.

2.3.25 The movement away from the town centre was manifested in Colchester's residential expansion after the 1880's, and especially in the south-western sector of the town. The rate and scale of urban development here was not matched elsewhere mainly because of the unsuitability of the Colne Valley for housing, and the high value of land north and west of the river, whereas the large area occupied by the garrison which has been expanded since its inception in the 1840's and 1850's, precluded residential development here.

Modern (1902 – Present)

- 2.3.26 By 1900 expansion in all directions had changed the town centre radically, but nowhere was this more evident than in the High Street, which was largely rebuilt in the 19th century.
- 2.3.27 During WWII, Colchester town was completely encircled by anti-invasion defences and the borough contained part of the Eastern Command Line as well as coastal defences. Remnants of these defence lines include tank traps, pillboxes, coastal emplacements and air raid shelters.

Marks Tey

- 2.3.28 Despite early Medieval origins, Marks Tey did not become established as the village we see today until the building of the stations, Marks Tey and Marks Tey-Sudbury, in 1843 and 1849 respectively. The original focal point of the village, the road meeting point, coupled with the new railway stations, concentrated activity around the original village and throughout the latter 20th century it grew as a commuter village due to fast rail links to London.

Present Day Urban Form

- 2.3.28 The present day urban form of Colchester (and Marks Tey) is shown on **Figure 2.3b**. The key visible historic features surviving in the present day townscape are listed below:

Key visible historic features dating to the late Iron Age:

- Lexden Mount (private ownership but visible from road): Scheduled Monument
- Stanway tumulus: Scheduled Monument
- Bluebottle Grove (under Guardianship): Scheduled Monument
- Triple Dyke (under Guardianship): Scheduled Monument
- Gosbecks Archaeological Park

Key visible historic features dating to the Roman:

- Town walls & Rampart
- Balkerne Gate
- Roman drains
- Podium of the Temple of Claudius
- Grymes Dyke (used as bridleway)
- Berechurch Dyke (dyke with road along its crest)
- Street pattern within Town Walls
- Pitchbury Hillfort

Key visible historic features dating to the Anglo-Saxon (5th century - 1066):

- Holy Trinity Church tower
- St Botolph's Priory

Key visible historic features dating to the early Medieval (1066 – 1348):

- 'New Hythe': 1272
- Colchester Castle
- St Botolph's Priory (remains of)
- St Botolph's Church
- St Nicholas's Church
- St Martin's Church
- St John's Abbey, Gatehouse

Key visible historic features dating to the Post Medieval (1541 – 1700):

- Dutch Quarter
- Civil War siege defences
- Siege House
- Tudor Blockhouse, Cudmore Grove
- Tymperleys Clock Museum

Key visible historic features dating to the Post Medieval (1701 – 1901):

- Railway: 1843
- Siting of the Garrison: 1855
- Le Cateau and Cavalry Barracks: 1862
- Town Hall: 1898
- St Mary-at-the-Walls Church: 1872
- Holly Trees (Social History Museum)
- Garrison Chapel: 1854 – 56
- 4-5 North Hill
- East Hill House
- Minories
- Gate House, East Hill
- St Peter's Tower: late 18th century
- St Mary-at-the-Walls Tower: 1719

Key visible historic features dating to the Modern (1902 – present):

- University of Essex
- World War II remains including: tank traps; pill boxes; coastal emplacements; and air raid shelters
- World War II emplacements Cudmore Grove.

2.4 Visual Analysis of Colchester's Urban Character

- 2.4.1 The urban structure of Colchester is set out in plan form on **Figures 2.4a, 2.4b, 2.4c** and **2.4d**, and is illustrated by the photographs set out in **Figures 2.5a, 2.5b, 2.5c, 2.5d, 2.5e** and **2.5f**.

2.4.2 The urban structure of the settlement is derived from an analysis of the spatial relationships of the urban features and elements outlined below:

- **Nodes** – distinctive points within the structure of the settlement (such as junctions, crossings, convergence of routes, or other places of particular importance in townscape terms.).
- **Landmarks** – visually significant buildings or other physical structures (such as churches, memorials, town halls, squares, or buildings of special architectural/historical interest).
- **Gateways** – main points with strong sense of entrance and arrival to the historic core of the settlement along principal approaches.
- **Urban Areas** – the main built-up areas of the urban fabric
- **Vegetation Buffers** – areas of vegetation and/or open space that provides visual/physical separation between developed land uses.
- **Urban Green Space** – major areas of private and public open land within the urban fabric of the settlement such as parks, amenity open space, playing fields, cemeteries, etc.
- **Key Views** – views of the settlement within the urban areas and views out from the settlement linking it with the surrounding countryside.
- **Blackspots** – visually significant buildings or other physical structures that detract from townscape character.
- **Skylines** – visually significant urban skylines typically seen in profile.
- **Edges** – visually significant interfaces between different urban land uses.
- **Movement Corridors** – principal road and rail routes, and the network of minor roads, streets and lanes within the urban fabric.

2.4.3 The visual analysis of the settlement's overall urban structure has informed the definition of the Townscape Character Types and Areas set out in the following section, the descriptions of which should be read in conjunction with this analysis.

2.5 The Townscape Character of Colchester

2.5.1 Drawing on the historic analysis and visual analysis of Colchester within its setting, this section identifies, maps and describes the townscape character of Colchester.

2.5.2 Nine Townscape Character Types have been identified (see **Figures 2.6** and **2.6a**):

- A. Historic Core
- C. Urban Greenspace
- D. Victorian Suburbs

- E. Edwardian Suburbs
- F. Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs
- G. Garrison
- H. Post-1960s Suburbs
- I. 20th Century Retail, Commerce and Industry
- J. Mixed Age Suburbs

2.5.3 Each Townscape Character Type is broken down into Townscape Character Areas (see **Figures 2.6** and **2.6a**).

2.5.4 For each identified TCA, the following information is provided:

- Overall Character Description
- Distinctive Characteristics
- Historic and Architectural Interest
- Threats to Townscape Character
- Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

A. HISTORIC TOWN CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Colchester has the oldest recorded historic town core in Britain, which is largely contained within the surviving sections of the Roman town wall. The core of the town is situated in a hill top location, commanding views from several locations across the surrounding landscape and the valley of the River Colne. The core is a focal hub for commercial and retail activity for residents and visitors alike, with a diverse mix of overall land uses.

The historic core has a relatively dense pattern of development, centred on several busy and vibrant main street spines. Much of the historic street pattern and structure survives, alongside several historic and landmark buildings. The area also displays many characteristics, which are generic to other historic settlement cores, such as historic passages and narrow streets. There is rich variation in architectural styles, built-form, materials and details.

As is the case with several other such historic settlement cores, within West Mersea and Wivenhoe, Colchester is faced with the issues of balancing development needs (in particular congestion, access and transport) against the sensitivity of the surrounding historic environment.

Key Characteristics

- Oldest part of the settlement, comprising a mix of land uses, including residential and retail.
- Several historic and landmark buildings.
- Focal hub for residents and visitors.
- Rich variation in architectural styles, built form, materials and details.
- Relatively compact and contained street pattern.
- Inter-relationship between river and edges of settled area.

Townscape Character Areas

- A1. High Street
- A2. Lion Walk/Culver Centre
- A3. North Hill
- A4. Scheregate
- A5. St. Mary's Precinct
- A6. The Dutch Quarter
- A7. The Castle
- A8. Queen Street
- A9. St. Botolph's Priory and Priory Street
- A10. East Hill
- A11. St. John's Green

A1. HIGH STREET HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The High Street is the medieval market street, established on the older Roman town street, and the central spine of Colchester. It extends east from the junction with North Hill to Head Street at the west end. At the east end, by the Castle and the junction with Museum Street, it alters both character and name to become East Hill. The Character Area is limited to the Street and the plots that front onto it; both to the south and north the narrow passages (wynds) and streets that run away from High Street lead quickly to areas that have distinctly different characters. It curves in a gentle S-bend and falls slightly from west to east which provides a series of subtle changes in view as one moves through the streetscape. The S-bend is the result of the old street curving around the outer bailey walls of the Castle, now gone but still delineated by the street line and plot patterns. The view is closed at the west end by the half-timbered frontage of the Post Office and, behind it, the punctuation mark of the water tower, 'Jumbo'. The High Street also forms a central bustling retail and commercial spine for the surrounding town centre. A mixture of colourful shops and restaurants at street level, combined with on-road parking bays lining the wide street, create a varied character. Cars constantly moving and stopping along the High Street also evoke a busy and frenetic atmosphere. Although the street is wide, a sense of enclosure and containment is provided by relatively tall three storey buildings, with the distinctive town hall building towards the middle of the area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Situated on a hill, with three relatively steep roads, North Hill, Head Street and East Hill connecting to the main street.

Street & Block Pattern

- The High Street follows the path of the Roman road and is relatively straight.
- Original plot proportions appear from the town plan to be relatively long, about three bays in width, although these are interspersed with buildings from all periods that occupy wider plots (these earlier plot ratios are more evident in the eastern section of the High Street).
- The grander Victorian buildings at the west end of the street generally occupy two plot widths, occasionally three.
- Later 20th century developments have been constructed across two or three original plots as availability permitted.
- Building heights are reasonably consistent, although there is variation between one building and the next.
- The principal difference is in the roof profiles rather than the building height.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Few residential buildings exist along the main High Street with a predominance of commercial businesses, shops, bars, and restaurants.

- Access to these is straight from the pavement, usually with no private space between the pavement and door/entrance.
- Pavements along the High Street are relatively wide, with several unloading bays lining, yet set back from the road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively enclosed feeling with tall (predominantly three-storey) buildings lining both sides of the street. This is in contrast to some of the narrower and more enclosed side streets, adjacent to the High Street.

Architecture & Built Form

- Architecture of the High Street has a varied character, with a mixture of styles and ages of building and several historic landmark buildings.

Streetscapes

- Diverse and varied streetscape, with an interesting mix of building styles, particularly at the upper levels.
- General lack of street trees.

Open Space

- There is no open space within the Character Area.
- The medieval wide market street public space is still physically present but its division into traffic space, pedestrian space and traffic calming kerbs and hard landscape has eroded its quality of a wide boulevard. The sense of a wide, open street with free movement within a public arena has disappeared.

Biodiversity

- There is little vegetation along the High Street.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Premises along the High Street consist of a mixture of shops, bars, restaurants and occasional offices.
- Vibrant and bustling character, forming part of the historic and cultural heart of Colchester.

Movement Patterns

- Busy central pedestrian movement spine for Colchester. Busy traffic also moves frequently from west to east along the High Street, as part of the one-way system.
- Pedestrian and traffic connection to several surrounding streets.
- Although pedestrian crossings are provided, traffic restricts pedestrian movement from one side of the street to the other.

Viewing Experience

- Several landmark buildings (e.g. the Town Hall).
- Situated on a hill and thus has a vantage point across the surrounding landscape setting, views out from within the High Street, however, are relatively limited.
- Long distance, channelled views can be gained looking north along some of the narrow streets leading northwards from the High Street.
- View north along North Hill to adjacent Townscape Character Areas is dominated by the large ASDA supermarket (within Turner Rise Retail Park; Townscape Character Area I7).
- Panoramic views to the north can also be gained from the upper floors of some buildings along the northern side of the High Street, such as from the café within Williams and Griffin department store.
- The clock tower of the town hall is visible from several Townscape Character Areas outside the historic core, making parts of the area highly visible.

Designations

- Sixty Listed Buildings, of which approximately 60% are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them (Grade II) the others being more important (see **Appendix C**).
- Colchester Castle, southeast corner of the Roman Town in East Hill House Gardens, and the Town Wall are Scheduled Monuments.
- The Character Area is part of the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Colchester Castle Park is a (Grade II) Registered Historic Park and Garden.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The central street pattern has kept its Roman origins, with only slight changes occurring during the medieval period when some of the roads were altered due to the rebuilding of buildings including the Castle. Its prime location on a hilltop has meant that the area has been the height of activity from the Roman period to the present day. The High Street has evolved from a Roman capital to a modern, busy shopping area, incorporating old buildings with new.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, the following visible features can be found within this Character Area:

- Main Roman Road, Roman;
- Balkerne Passage, Medieval;
- Culver Street Roman Walls;
- St James Church, Medieval.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The building façades on both north and south sides of the street are more or less continuous, punctuated only occasionally by historic passages and narrow streets. Although the High Street is located along the top of a ridge, originally for military purposes, and previously sat, highly visible, above the medieval farm and outer settlement landscape, the continuous frontages offer few views through to the townscape on either side and little sense from within the High Street of the town's elevation.



A significant characteristic of the street and indeed of the Colchester Conservation Area generally is the visible impact of the rich variety of architectural style and quality of its buildings. It is evident that, unlike some other market towns, there was no major speculative development project in the Georgian or Victorian periods that replaced earlier individual properties with continuous terraces of uniformly designed town houses or commercial

offices. Although the buildings are of broadly similar heights the roofline is incoherent and untidy. The façades present an enormous range of styles and materials within each period of architecture. Virtually every building is distinct from its neighbour in period, style, roof profile and detail.

The lively variety is emphasised, for example, by the lack of consistency in window proportion and line. Although most buildings are of three storeys there is typically a lack of correlation between the window proportions and their positioning from one building to the next.

With the exception of a couple of notable examples, such as the Red Lion Hotel, little remains, on the frontages at least of the buildings of the medieval period, although there is some visual evidence in the roof forms and jettied upper storeys that many earlier buildings still exist within later Georgian reconstructions.

The east, lower end of the High Street retains more of the smaller scale Georgian frontages, mostly now only visible on first and second floors above 20th century shop fronts. These are generally three storey, flat fronted residential and commercial properties of three or four bays. Within this framework are occasional larger and more imposing buildings such as the George Hotel, a typical coaching inn.



At the upper end of the street the earlier buildings have generally been replaced by mid and late 19th century Victorian buildings - 'genteel recent banks ... gabled Gothic of 1878' as Pevsner has it - high commercial and cultural in nature; imposing and ornate bank and office frontages interspersed with theatres and the Corn Exchange. Punctuating the north façade is the Edwardian Town Hall with its highly decorated frontage and high Victoria Tower, a visual marker from both ends of the High Street.

Inserted into this street frontage are some Edwardian buildings, which are generally developments of the Victorian styles, and occasional mid- and later 20th century buildings. In common with shopping street infill development of the period, these do not make any concession to the characteristics of the earlier buildings, apart from overall height. The steel- or concrete-framed and flat fronted panelled buildings do not follow window lines or roof profiles; or have any decorative detail or other architectural embellishment.

Virtually all the buildings on the High Street now present shop fronts at street level, either retail outlets or commercial offices such as Estate Agents. Most of the bank buildings and Victorian commercial buildings have been converted to bars or restaurants. There is a distinct degradation in quality between the remaining Georgian and Victorian upper storeys, varied in character but with a consistency imposed by building materials, proportion and design styles, and the later street level shop fronts, with no consistency of quality, material, colour or other design regime.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- The Town Hall and Victoria Tower (1898-1902) designed by Sir John Belcher, in a flamboyant Edwardian style, scaled for its setting and with the high tower placed intelligently at the point where the High Street widens to the east;
- The Corn Exchange (1820) notable for its colonnade of Greek Doric columns of cast iron, the classical effect now diminished by the infill glazing of fast food outlets and travel agents windows;
- The Red Lion Hotel (c. 1470/1500) a timber framed building with jettied upper floors and a band of tracery panels on the street façade. The ground floor has been subdivided and let out as shop units, which use detracts from its impact as an historic coaching inn;
- The George Hotel, a timber framed coaching inn of the same period as the Red Lion but with an 18th century painted brick façade;
- There is also a selection of well-preserved late Georgian frontages (Nos. 11, 21, 22, and others), some with fine details such as pargeting.

Materials and Architectural Details

A significant characteristic of the High Street is the rich variety of materials used across all the design periods. There is little consistency of detail, material or design between one building and the next; virtually all plots are individually developed. Most buildings, however, have double hung timber sash windows and one feature of the townscape is that there are a number of three-light windows with timber mullions. Few of the windows conform to the Georgian ideal ‘golden section’ and there is a wide variety of proportions; many windows being wide in relation to their height.



There is a noticeable number of half-round or segmental bay and oriel windows from the Georgian and Victorian periods, in addition to other styles of projecting bay or oriel windows.

The medieval buildings of the late 15th and 16th centuries, often concealed behind Georgian or later fronts, can be identified by steep sloping pitched tiled roofs, jettied upper storeys and timber framing, although few of these façades remain intact. Many such buildings often have wide proportioned, double hung sash timber windows inserted in the frontage, an early Georgian improvement. These windows usually have the sash boxes exposed on the façade with an architrave cover detail. Few medieval casement or leaded light windows remain.

From the few examples that remain it is clear that there was a tradition of decorative plasterwork (pargeting) in the 17th century and earlier that can be seen, for example, on No. 39 High Street.

Georgian buildings are generally of face brickwork, painted or rendered and painted. Roofs are pitched front to back, tiled (some later replaced with slates) and concealed behind a parapet. Windows are double hung sash timber windows, usually narrower, closer to the ‘golden section’ ideal although with much variation. No original Georgian shop frontages appear to remain.

Victorian and Edwardian buildings are more usually faced with fine ashlar masonry in Portland stone or another more decorative stone, or are faced with red brick with stone dressings. There is a profusion of embellishment and decorative detail. The grander commercial and cultural buildings are consciously designed to impose a confident presence on to the streetscape.

Later buildings are in a variety of materials, including red brick and composite panels, and styles that add little consistency to the streetscape.

Threats to Townscape Character

- As with all modern shopping streets the uncontrolled variety of shop fronts inserted into the historic façade is intrusive and usually insensitive. There is no control of colour, signage, lighting or display.
- Generally the building fabric is well maintained. There are inevitably some examples of buildings in poor repair that detract from the quality of the streetscape.
- As is often the case, there are many examples of the inappropriate use of paint types and colours, modern doors and windows, rainwater downpipes etc. that detract from the quality of the historic environment. External fittings such as burglar alarms are intrusive.
- The plethora of public direction signs and information signs should be restricted to reduce the visual impact on the historic buildings.
- Limited attention has been paid to the quality of pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that the material and design is sympathetic to the historic context. Street paving and traffic control measures are designed for the control of vehicle rather than for the benefit of pedestrians, and are not in keeping with the historic streetscape.
- As with virtually all historic town streets the presence of vehicle traffic has a major impact on the quality of the historic environment, restricting pedestrian movement, limiting views, necessitating intrusive street signage and imposing a high level monotone noise.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The existing skyline of this Character Area is considered visually sensitive, with several landmarks visible from surrounding Character Areas and from the landscape setting of the town. The area is considered highly sensitive to change due to the intact historic street pattern and diverse mix of architectural styles from a range of periods. New development, particularly tall buildings, would be out of scale with existing skyline (predominantly three-storey buildings) and may compete with existing positive landmarks, such as the Town Hall, altering the existing rhythm of the urban grain.

A2. LION WALK/CULVER CENTRE HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Pedestrian shopping precincts south of High Street, bounded to the south by the properties of St. Isaac's Walk/Eld Lane/Short Wyre Street; to the west by Head Street and to the east by Queen Street. The historic north-south route of Trinity Street with its central square, which is occupied by Holy Trinity Church, separates the two precincts. Between Long Wyre Street and Queen Street is Priory Walk, a sub-junct of the Lion Walk precinct. The area has a busy, bustling character and contains several interesting cultural landmarks.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- A mixture of enclosed lanes, wide streets with modern frontages and public open spaces.
- In the 20th century precincts modern plots were imposed on the older townscape to meet the required commercial mix. These modern plots bear little relation to the older townscape pattern.
- Trinity Street plots are of a similar mix of size and proportion to the older High Street plots, as they have the same historical origins and development. The exceptions are Holy Trinity Church and Tymperleys, a 15th century house, now a clock museum, in its own grounds.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally, there is clear definition between public and private space within the area.
- The piazzas and streets are publicly accessible.
- Definition between public/private spaces is less clear within the courtyard of Tymperleys clock museum, which provides a semi-private, tranquil space. Although this space is open to the public, it is physically and visually attached to the building.

Massing & Enclosure

- Culver Square has an open feel, whilst Lion Walk feels generally more enclosed.
- A number of open spaces provide gaps within the streetscape.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly a mixture of modern shops units dating from 1970's (Lion Walk) and 1980's (Culver Street).
- Trinity Street exhibits a mixture of periods, styles and details along the façades (retaining much of the earlier building fabric of the area).

Streetscapes

- Relatively coherent, modern streetscape (Culver Centre and Lion Walk).
- Diverse streetscape along Trinity Street with medieval and Georgian frontages visible at first and second floors at the southern end.

Open Space

- The principal green open space is provided by Holy Trinity churchyard, which is a focal point of Trinity Street and Culver Street West, now truncated. The graveyard is enclosed by railings and so is seen rather than used.
- Culver Square provides an open meeting space at the centre of the west precinct. This is a planned urban meeting space for pedestrians and is well used. Street performers stage events here in good weather.
- Lion Walk precinct widens out into a small open space, in contrast to the enclosure of the covered walkway from High Street. This marks the original crossroad with Culver Street and is noted for the tower and spire of the former Congregational Church, built by Frederick Barnes in 1863 and rebuilt in 1884 following the earthquake. The majority of the church building was demolished when the shopping development was built. Lion Walk culminates at its south end, at the junction with Eld Street, in an open piazza.

Biodiversity

- A small pocket of vegetation is located within in the churchyard of the Holy Trinity.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Overall land use predominantly consists of shops and cafes, with occasional office premises.
- The area has a busy, bustling character and contains several interesting cultural landmarks (such as Tymperleys and Holy Trinity Church).

Movement Patterns

- The area is predominantly pedestrianised (with service access provided).
- It is one of the main shopping areas of Colchester town centre and therefore has high levels of pedestrian activity.
- Pedestrians are able to move freely through the area via a series of shopping streets and interconnected open spaces (piazzas).

Viewing Experience

- There are few views out of the area due to the narrower, more enclosed streets.
- Overall sense of place is provided by views to Holy Trinity Church and also by the recognisable pattern of shopping streets, interspersed with piazzas.

Designations

- Twenty-one Listed Buildings, of which 90% are of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Town Wall Scheduled Monument runs through this Character Area.
- This area is part of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Part of the original Roman town that was built after AD45, the area has evolved from an area of high-density housing to a modern shopping area. The area comprises medieval lanes that open up to areas of space and modern cafes and shops. The buildings still retain their medieval and Georgian frontage. Evidence of their age can be seen within the upper levels of the buildings as the ground level in many of the buildings has been converted to shops and restaurants. The area shows its evolution through history with buildings such as the Holy Trinity Church, with evidence in the church walls of reused Roman brick.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings present within this Character Area, additional visible archaeological features include:

- Route of Culver Street, Roman;
- Route of Long Wyre Street, (insular 29, 30, 37, 38a) Roman.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The Lion Walk precinct dates from the 1970s and the Culver Centre from the 1980s. The retail precincts are similar in style but each typical of its period, comprising a mix of shop units in modern/post-modern style. There is an open 'piazza' at the centre of each precinct that reflect, to some extent, the opening out of Trinity Square on Trinity Street. The piazzas are paved with concrete or brick pavements, with a fountain feature in the Culver Centre and a hard landscaped meeting area at the south of Lion Walk. The buildings are grouped around these piazzas and along pedestrian routes leading north and south to connect with High Street and St. Isaac's Walk/Short Wyre Street. Culver Square is much more open to the sky than the relatively closed Lion Walk area. Although the principal streets of the medieval town have been retained the precinct developments have kept nothing of the character of the older, closer grained townscape that they replace. The principal and most significant intrusion is that the Lion Walk development severs the historic Culver Street into two sections, east and west. A small number of older buildings have been retained within the pedestrian areas.

Trinity Street retains much of the earlier building fabric of the area. The Street was once the principal thoroughfare through the quarter with Trinity Square and the church at its core.

As with the High Street the building façades to the east and west are more or less continuous, of approximately similar building heights and of three storeys, and punctuated by occasional passages through to the rear of the plots. There is a similar variety of architecture style and quality of buildings together with an absence of

continuous speculative development of the Georgian or Victorian periods. As before, every building is distinct from its neighbour in period, style, roof profile and detail.

At the upper, north, end of the street the buildings on the west side face Holy Trinity Church in its small churchyard. To the south of Holy Trinity Church the parade of buildings on the east side of the street is interrupted by the Lion Walk shopping arcade. The lower, south, end of the street retains more smaller medieval and Georgian frontages only visible now at first and second floors above 20th century shop fronts. Virtually all these buildings now present shop fronts at street level, either retail outlets or commercial offices.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- None of any significance in the pedestrian shopping areas;
- Holy Trinity Church with its Anglo-Saxon Tower over the west door with a triangular head, the only pre-Conquest building remaining. The remainder of the church is late Victorian;
- Tymperleys is a late 15th century timber framed townhouse, much restored, in its walled garden, and which now houses a clock museum;
- Nos. 9 to 11 are also 15th century, L-shaped on plan;
- No. 6 is a fine early 18th century house, two storeys and five bays wide set back from the road with a front garden, an unusual feature for the town centre. The centre bay features one of the deep semicircular bay windows that are a characteristic of Colchester.

Materials and Architectural Details

The retail outlets in the precincts are generally of steel frame construction and clad with large areas of glazing or with composite panels, although there is some use of red brick and masonry in various colours. Roofs, where visible, are of red clay tile with hipped ridges.

Trinity Street is principally composed of medieval buildings of brick and rendered brick, with Georgian interventions in the same materials.

Roofs are pitched and clay tiled. Building frontages, both medieval and Georgian frontages display a variety of sash windows.

Holy Trinity Church exhibits another significant characteristic of older Colchester buildings also seen particularly in churches and in the Castle, the walls are of ragstone masonry or flint, in some cases, with reclaimed Roman bricks built in for strength. This liberal use of red tile in the pale masonry gives a texture and colour to the buildings that is unique to Colchester.



Threats to Townscape Character

- The 20th century pedestrian shopping precincts retain some of the principal earlier streets but otherwise have little of the characteristic of the medieval, Georgian and Victorian developments that they replaced, thus removing much of the historic quality of a significant portion of the town.
- The older façades on the main shopping streets enclose the newer development thus reducing the visual impact on the townscape, however the 20th century architecture ‘breaks through’ these façades at a number of points, particularly on Head Street and Queen Street, where its architecture is at odds with the older characteristic.
- As with all modern shopping streets the uncontrolled variety of shop fronts inserted into the historic façade is intrusive and usually insensitive. There is no control of colour, signage, lighting or display.
- The plethora of public direction signs and information signs should be restricted to reduce the visual impact on the historic buildings.
- Limited attention has been paid to the quality of pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that the material and design is sympathetic to the historic context. Street paving and traffic control measures are designed for the control of vehicle rather than for the benefit of pedestrians, and are not in keeping with the historic streetscape.
- As with virtually all historic town streets the presence of vehicle traffic has a major impact on the quality of the historic environment, restricting pedestrian movement, limiting views, necessitating intrusive street signage and imposing a high level monotone noise.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

There is a diverse mixture of architectural ages and styles within this Character Area; however, historic integrity is strong on account of the number of historic (listed) buildings and the presence of sections of the town wall along St. John’s Street (Scheduled Monument). Potential change or new development within this area should take account of the setting of the historic buildings (for example Holy Trinity Church and Tymperleys). Overall biodiversity value is low, with only small pockets of vegetation within the area. Although the area (and its skyline) is visible from adjacent Character Areas, few longer distance views to the area from locations outside the historic core can be gained. The area is therefore considered to be locally moderately visually sensitive and moderately sensitive to change overall.

SUB AREA A2a – CROUCH STREET HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

A shopping street running west from Head Street, one of the principal historic routes out of town. Defined principally as the street front properties between Head Street and the crossing with the Balcerne Hill ring road, which severs the original street. Buildings within this area are predominantly shops or cafes at lower levels, with residential or offices above. On-street parking is also a characteristic of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is relatively flat close to the High Street and then slopes quite steeply down to the area outside the Roman Walls.

Street & Block Pattern

- Overall continuous façades.
- Later 20th century developments have been constructed across two or three original plots as availability permitted.
- Building heights are reasonably consistent, mostly two- or three- storeys although with much variation between one building and the next. The principal difference is in the roof profiles rather than the building height.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Predominantly businesses, which are accessed directly from the pavement.

Massing & Enclosure

- Overall sense of enclosure provided by continuous façades.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly late Georgian development, retaining some older timber-framed buildings and also with some 20th century frontage insertions.

Streetscapes

- Mixed streetscape, which is relatively dominated by traffic.
- General lack of vegetation, seating and lamp-posts.

Open Space

- No open space within the Character Area and no significant green space on the street frontage.

Biodiversity

- Lack of greenspace/vegetation overall.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a mix of shops, office and restaurants, which promotes a busy and generally vibrant character during the day.

Movement Patterns

- Area contains a busy main road, with general competition between pedestrians and cars, leading to an incoherent mix of associated signage.

Viewing Experience

- Few key views out of the Character Area.

Designations

- See Character Area A2.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

- See Character Area A2.

Visible Archaeological Features

- See Character Area A2.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Crouch Street is largely a late Georgian development but retains some older timber framed houses; the properties forming a continuous façade on the south and north sides. There is a range of styles and quality of buildings and again there are no continuous terraces of uniformly designed houses or offices. The roofline and pitches vary from one plot to the next. There are some good examples of pedimented timber doorcases.

The great majority of these buildings have been converted for use as shops, offices or restaurants, with some 20th century frontages and insertions.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- Nos. 20 to 22 is a substantial brick building of the mid to late Georgian period, of five and a half bays with a central ‘Venetian’ window;
- The Bull Inn is a modest Georgian fronted public house in a prominent position but now damaged by insensitive decoration and ‘improvement’.

Materials and Architectural Details

There is great variety of materials and details. Georgian frontages are of brickwork, painted or rendered and painted. Roofs are pitched front to back, tiled or replaced with slates and some concealed behind parapets. Windows are double hung sash timber windows with much variation in proportion. No original Georgian shop frontages appear to remain. Some buildings feature bay and oriel windows and some have good timber pedimented doorcases.

Threats to Townscape Character

- As with all shopping streets the variety of shop fronts inserted into the historic façade is intrusive and insensitive. There is no control of colour, signage, lighting or display. The result is incoherent.
- Generally the building fabric is reasonably well maintained; there are some buildings in poor repair that detract from the quality of the streetscape.
- There are many examples of the inappropriate use of paint types and colours, modern doors and windows, rainwater downpipes etc. that detract from the quality of the historic environment. External fittings such as burglar alarms are intrusive.
- The plethora of public direction signs and information signs should be restricted to reduce the visual impact on the historic buildings.
- Some consideration should be given to quality and material used for pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that they are sympathetic to the historic buildings.
- As with virtually all historic town streets the presence of vehicle traffic has a major impact on the quality of the historic environment, restricting pedestrian movement, limiting views, necessitating intrusive street signage and imposing a high level monotone noise.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Frontages within this area are predominantly Georgian, however a mixture of details and materials are apparent. Overall historic integrity is mixed, with a limited number of Listed Buildings. The area has low biodiversity value with no open spaces or greenspaces. Views into and out of the area are limited by built form, however, views to adjacent residential Character Areas can be gained from the eastern end of the area. Overall this area is considered moderately sensitive to change.

A3. NORTH HILL HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Defined principally as the street front properties of North Hill, beginning at the south end by the junction with St Peter's Street and running up hill from close by the river crossing to the junction with High Street. The area is defined to the east by the backs of the North Hill plots, the tall houses obscuring the Dutch Quarter, apart from occasional views through. To the west the building frontage hides the campus of the Sixth Form College, which is limited on the west boundary by the Balkerne Hill ring road. North Hill runs from the high point of the ridge and there is a vista to the north of the wider landscape travelling down the hill.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Steep hill leading into and out of Colchester town centre.
- The college is situated on a hill with a sharp drop down to the dual carriageway to the west.

Street & Block Pattern

- One main street with a few smaller roads branching off it.
- Original plot proportions appear from the town plan to be relatively long, about three bays in width, although these are interspersed with buildings from all periods that occupy wider plots. These earlier plot ratios are more evident in the eastern section of High Street.
- The grander Victorian buildings at the west end of the street generally occupy two plot widths, occasionally three.
- Later 20th century developments have been constructed across two or three original plots as availability permitted.
- Building heights are reasonably consistent, heights have been successfully controlled to three storeys although there is variation between one building and the next with the principal difference being in the roof profiles rather than the building height.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Relatively wide street with wide pavements facilitating pedestrian movement into and out of cafes, restaurants and shops.

Massing & Enclosure

- Although the street is faced with fairly continuous façades, the wide nature of the corridor provides a more open feeling than within the adjacent narrower medieval streets.

Architecture & Built Form

- Diverse mix of architectural styles (including early medieval and Georgian).
- Area includes more modern buildings such as the college (medieval streets).

Streetscapes

- Diverse and interesting streetscape, containing many distinctive buildings.

Open Space

- There is no significant green space on the street frontage apart from the elevated graveyard of St Peter's Church.
- The back plot development occupied by the Sixth Form College stands in its own landscaped grounds, but is not specifically a public garden or park.
- North Hill originated as part of the Roman town and developed as a coach road leading out of the later town. This is not a market street or public space and is still principally a vehicular route.

Biodiversity

- A few trees mainly around the sixth form college and St Peters Church but little vegetation along the main road.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Busy main street containing a collection of restaurants.
- Bus traffic has a key influence on character within the area.

Movement Patterns

- One of the main, busy roads leading into and out of town.
- Also a key pedestrian north-south link, which connects to the High Street.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled, long distance view to the north across adjacent Character Areas. ASDA supermarket (Turner Rise Retail Park) is dominant within the view from the junction with the High Street.

Designations

- Twenty-nine Listed Buildings all of which are of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Town Wall runs through this Character Area.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area covers the majority of this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Providing one of the main roads leading into and out of Colchester town centre today, North Hill would have been the 'North Gate' during the Roman occupation leading to the River Colne. The area has always been a principal part of the town. The 3rd century Roman town walls survive, as do a number of Listed Buildings date from the 16th century. There is also evidence of medieval jettied houses visible. The lower end of North Hill contains examples of 15th and 16th century timber framed buildings.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings within this Character Area, the following visible archaeological features are present:

- North Hill Brewery, 18/19th century;
- Colchester Head Street & North Street, Roman;
- Colchester North Gate, Roman;
- Cameo Cinema St Johns Street, 20th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

As with High Street the buildings form a more or less continuous façade on the east and west sides, interrupted by occasional passages and narrow streets.

There is a similar variety of architecture style and quality of buildings on North Hill as on High Street although with fewer late Victorian ‘commercial palaces’. The earlier medieval houses are still evident with a few remaining examples also evidenced by the jettied upper floors.

The north, lower, end of the Hill retains more smaller scale medieval and Georgian buildings, many now only visible above 20th century shop fronts. These are generally two storeys. The lower stretch of the street also contains the better remaining examples of 15th and 16th century timber framed houses.

As the street rises up to the junction with High Street the character changes as the older buildings are replaced by, or re-fronted as, fine Georgian town houses, many with excellent decorative pedimented door cases and some oriel windows. Again there are no continuous terraces of uniformly designed houses or offices. The roofline and pitches vary from one plot to the next; the façades present a range of styles and materials within each period.

There are Victorian and later insertions into this street frontage but generally in a more modest style than the excesses of the High Street, and more in keeping with the prosperous taste of the Georgian houses.

Virtually all these buildings are in use as offices or shops, with some small restaurants. There is some inevitable alteration to the older ‘townhouse’ characteristic but there is also a consistency resulting from the retention of the building frontages, materials and proportion.

Towards the top of the hill on the east side is St Peter’s Church, standing in its graveyard raised high above street level and behind railings.

The area behind the street frontage plots on the west side of the Hill has been cleared, presumably removing an older medieval street pattern and stew of small houses. The land is now occupied by the grand and extensive Victorian institutional building, with 20th century additions, within landscaped grounds that houses the Sixth Form College.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- St. Peter’s Church is a severe redbrick church of the mid 18th century, with some white brick decorative detail to the tower quoins and parapet;
- The Marquis of Granby is a fine mid 16th century inn, heavily restored, but still holding an imposing and decorative presence on the street;
- Nos. 13 to 15 and No. 24 are good examples of 15th century timber framing;
- There are many fine Georgian frontages, Nos. 4, 5 and 8, Nos. 19 and 20 with a Venetian window, Nos. 59 and 60.

Materials and Architectural Details

Less variety of styles and materials than in High Street although the characteristic generally becomes more Georgian and finer as the terraces rise up the Hill. Georgian frontages are fine brickwork, painted or rendered and painted. Roofs are pitched front to back, tiled or replaced with slates and some concealed behind parapets. Windows are double hung sash timber windows, proportioned as the ‘golden section’ ideal although with some variation. No original Georgian shop frontages appear to remain. Some buildings feature fine half-round or segmental bay and oriel windows and a variety of good timber pedimented doorcases.

The medieval buildings, some concealed behind Georgian fronts, can be identified by steep pitched tiled roofs, jettied upper floors and timber framing. Many of these have wide proportioned, double hung sash timber windows. There is less of the tradition of decorative plasterwork than can be seen on High Street.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Generally the building fabric is well maintained; there are examples of buildings in poor repair that detract from the quality of the streetscape.
- Some consideration should be given to quality and material used for pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that they are sympathetic to the historic buildings.
- Some examples of the inappropriate paint types and colours, modern doors and windows, rainwater downpipes, external fittings such as burglar alarms etc. that detract from the quality of the historic environment.
- The vehicle traffic has a major impact on the quality of the historic environment, restricting the free flow of pedestrian movement and imposing a high level of noise.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area is considered to be visually sensitive as a result of its position partly on a steep hill leading up to Colchester town centre. Potential tall new development within this area would be highly visible from surrounding Character Areas to the south and may alter the existing rhythm of the skyline (which is consistently three-storeys high) and urban grain. The area has strong historic integrity with several distinctive and Listed Buildings, a diverse mixture of styles, sections of the town wall (Scheduled Monument) and a predominantly intact historic street pattern. Potential new development should have regard to the setting of the Listed Buildings. Although the area is considered to have moderate biodiversity value, overall sensitivity to change or new development is considered to be high on account of the visual and historic sensitivity of the area.

A4. SCHEREGATE HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Scheregate is a medieval gateway cut through the Roman town wall at the south end of Trinity Street. The Scheregate Character Area is a jumble of medieval streets and buildings outside the gate grouped around St. Johns Street, and defined by the properties abutting the Roman wall to the north, and by the connection with St. John's Priory to the south, now severed by the Southway ring road.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Slopes gradually downhill in a southerly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Original plot proportions appear to be relatively small with a few long plots.
- Later 20th century developments have been constructed across two or three original plots as availability permitted.
- Building heights are reasonably consistent although there is variation between one building and the next. The principal difference is in the roof profiles rather than the building height.
- Informal medieval street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall good definition between public and private space within Character Area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure is generally mixed, with an enclosed feeling along the medieval streets, but more open in close proximity to the ring road.

Architecture & Built Form

- The buildings are mostly two, sometimes three, storeys, medieval in character but with some Georgian and Victorian interventions. Again, there is a rich variety of style and quality of buildings, plot by plot; the medieval houses are still very evident.

Streetscapes

- Diverse and interesting streetscape, which is predominantly medieval, with Georgian and Victorian interventions.

Open Space

- There is no significant green space within the building group but the area does have views across the ring road to St John's Priory.

- Some informal open space resulting from the loose street arrangement and from later alterations and insertions.
- No formal spaces apart from the 'promenade' that leads south towards St. John's Priory.

Biodiversity

- Occasional pockets of vegetation, however, overall lack of diversity within the streetscape.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a mixture of shops, offices with accommodation above, occasional pubs, and restaurants.

Movement Patterns

- Relatively busy pedestrian route.

Viewing Experience

- Views to St John's Priory can be gained, looking across the ring road.

Designations

- 21 Listed Buildings of which 90% are of special interest (Grade II), the remaining 10% being of more than special or exceptional interest (Grade II* and Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Town Walls run through the Character Area.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area is partly within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area is just outside the Roman walls of the town centre, created by a medieval gateway, the Scheregate, which cuts through the Roman wall at the south end of Trinity Street. This area is less organised than the pattern of Roman development inside the walls and has more medieval characteristics. The area has evolved from medieval housing to a variety of shops and restaurants all holding their own distinct character, which is mainly medieval with some Georgian and Victorian interventions. There is an area of Georgian housing along the east side of the street connecting with St John's Priory.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings within the Character Area, the following visible archaeological features are present:

- Lion Walk Bastion 8, medieval;
- Roman road running through general medieval street pattern;
- Scheregate and tower, medieval.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Unlike the planned townscape within the Roman wall, the Scheregate area is a looser collection of buildings grouped around an informal medieval street pattern. There are several good example of medieval buildings close to Scheregate itself, around a triangle defined by St. John's Street and Osbourne Street. To the south, the original street connection with St. John's Priory now goes through an underpass beneath the ring road. This street is lined on the east side by a continuous development of three storey Georgian town houses, one of the few examples of this type of development in the town centre. The majority of the buildings are now in use as shops and offices with some accommodation above. There are small restaurants, pubs and the Scheregate Hotel. There is much inevitable alteration to the older medieval characteristic.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- Scheregate Steps, a medieval passage and gateway cut through the Roman wall, leading north to Trinity Street.

Materials and Architectural Details

The medieval buildings can be identified by steep pitched tiled roofs, jettied upper floors, timber framing and wide proportioned, double hung sash timber windows. Some of the timber framed buildings are concealed behind Georgian and later frontages. The Georgian terrace is an intervention into the older townscape rather than an integral part of its character. The frontage is of fine dark brickwork, occasionally painted. Roofs are pitched front to back and concealed behind parapets. Windows are double hung sash timber windows, proportioned as the 'golden section'. There are no half-round, segmental bay or oriel windows within this development.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Generally the building fabric is less well maintained than within the town wall; there are many examples of buildings in poor repair and inappropriate 'improvement'.
- The foremost impact on the area is the ring road that now severs the historic connection with St. John's Priory. The vehicle route connections to the ring road result in ragged and unpleasant edges to the area.
- Consideration should be given to improving the quality and material used for pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that they are in keeping with the historic context.
- The area is dominated visually by the new National Car Parks commercial development; a massive late 20th century block that is visually intrusive both as a backdrop to the area from the top of the Roman wall, and from within the area itself. The block is an inappropriate intrusion into the townscape in massing, height, style and material.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has strong historic integrity on account of the visible intact medieval street pattern, several historic buildings (from medieval to Georgian). Re-creatability of the diverse mix of built styles and qualities, which contribute to the character of the area, is therefore considered to be low. Although this Character Area is visible from some surrounding areas, views in and out are restricted by the continuous façade (with relatively consistent building heights). Overall this Character Area is considered to be moderately sensitive to change.

A5. ST. MARY'S PRECINCT HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The Character Area is bounded by the street front properties of Head Street to the east and Crouch Street to the south and by the line of the Roman wall to the west. To the north it merges with the back plots of North Hill and the landscaped grounds of the Sixth Form College. The area comprises a combination of shops, office, cafes and restaurants, a church, a water tower and a theatre and forms part of the bustling town centre area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat with a steep slope downhill towards the dual carriage on the opposing side of the Roman walls.

Street & Block Pattern

- A combination of narrow streets (running west from Head Street) and areas of open hardstanding.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Along narrower streets, buildings are slightly set back from the pavement.
- The theatre has a recognisable lobbied entrance.
- St. Mary's-at-The-Walls Church is entered via the churchyard at the front, providing clear definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Buildings along Church Street are arranged relatively closely together, providing a general sense of enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Varied architecture ranging from the water tower (1882) to the Victorian/Gothic Church.

Streetscapes

- Predominantly narrow roads and pavements, with a few interesting buildings and limited vegetation.

Open Space

- It is a characteristic of the area that there are a sequence of open urban and planted spaces between and connecting individual buildings.
- Private landscaped grounds of the Sixth Form College.
- Series of small public space with some Local Authority planting.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value within planted are for example surrounding the Mercury Theatre, and also within the grounds of the Sixth Form College.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Combination of shops, office, cafes and restaurants, a church, a water tower and a theatre.

Movement Patterns

- Trinity Street and St. John's Street are busy pedestrian and traffic routes within the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- The Water Tower, 'Jumbo', is a key landmark within both long and short distance views from adjacent Townscape Character Areas.
- Channelled view east along the High Street from Head Street at the boundary with Character Area A1.

Designations

- Twelve Listed Buildings of a Mixture of importance (Grade I, II* and II) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Monuments of Balcerne Gate, and the Town Wall are within this Character Area.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area covers this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

During the Roman period, settlement comprised housing adjacent to the Balcerne Gate. Since then it has evolved into an area of mixed building ages and styles with some interesting features in relation to the centre of Colchester. The Balcerne Gate still stands as the only remaining Roman gateway within the Roman walls. In the medieval period this area would have been a mass of small streets with houses and shops concentrated around St Mary's Church. During the Georgian and Victorian periods however the site was cleared of some of these streets. The buildings that replaced them stand quite isolated in an open area. 'Jumbo', the Victorian water tower, dominates any remaining medieval buildings. The subsequent building of the Odeon cinema and the Mercury Theatre as well as the 20th century housing estate near the water tower show evolution from Roman to Modern periods more clearly than any other part of inner Colchester.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, the following visible archaeological features are present within the Character Area:

- St Mary's Steps, Roman.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

At some point in medieval times the area was presumably a stew of small streets and passages, with a jumble of two and three storey houses and shops on small plots around St. Mary's Church. Much of this characteristic has been cleared by development in the Georgian period and particularly in the Victorian period and 20th century. The

narrow medieval streets running west from Head Street are still there and retain some of their early buildings and character, however they quickly open up into a much later townscape of substantial, isolated buildings in an open landscape of hard standing and municipal planting.

The remaining small plots and older houses on Balkerne Passage, Church Walk and Church Street are now dominated by Jumbo, the imposing brick Victorian water tower, by the 20th century Mercury Theatre, by the rear of the mass of the Odeon cinema building and more recently by a substantial 20th century housing development. Older buildings include occasional fine Georgian and Victorian buildings such as the Friends' Meeting House and the old Court House as well as the Georgian almshouses, now converted as modern secure accommodation set in its own grounds. To the west are the remains of the Roman wall and Balkerne gate, still in use by pedestrians, which is flanked by the medieval 'Hole in the Wall' Public House. To the south of these is St. Mary's Church, standing in its churchyard.



Distinctive individual buildings include:

- St. Mary-at-The-Walls Church is a Victorian church but with an earlier Gothic style tower in ragstone and with Roman brick. The upper tower was rebuilt in brick after being damaged in the siege (1648);
- Jumbo, a grandiose water tower erected in 1882 and named because its four feet and size reminded a local vicar of the famous elephant in London Zoo;
- Mercury Theatre built in 1972, a steel framed and glazed theatre building of the period;
- Balkerne Gate the only surviving Roman gatehouse that is still used as a gate through the wall;
- No 8 Church Street the former County Court Office, now a tea room and restaurant. A low, five bay very late Georgian court building (1802) with arched windows and a stuccoed façade.

Materials and Architectural Details

The character of this area is of individual and isolated buildings set in an open municipal townscape. Very different buildings with no overriding characteristic dominate the space, either in material, building height or form. The later 20th century housing development, which extends the scope of the older almshouse range, has been built facing the central focus point formed by 'Jumbo'.

Threats to Townscape Character

- The building fabric is mostly well maintained, however, some of the smaller open spaces have a slightly neglected air. More could be made of the contrast of this area, as an oasis within the more compact townscape, by providing more seating and meeting areas.
- The back elevation of the Odeon cinema building imposes on the area.
- Some examples of the inappropriate paint types and colours, modern doors and windows, rainwater downpipes, external fittings such as burglar alarms etc. that detract from the quality of the historic environment are evident within the Character Area.
- The vehicle traffic has some impact on the quality of the environment, restricting the free flow of pedestrian movement.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area is visually sensitive along the western side on account of its highly visible position at the top of a slope, which leads up to the town centre. 'Jumbo' water tower is also visible from several surrounding Character Areas and also as a landmark within the skyline of the historic core from several locations at further distance from the town centre. The area also has strong historic integrity. It is contained along the western edge by the Town Wall (a Scheduled Monument) and also contains several historic and landmark buildings (including the Balkerne Gate which is also a Scheduled Monument). Overall, the Character Area is considered to be highly sensitive to change or potential new development, which may affect the setting of historic buildings/features and may also block views to the landmarks within the area. New tall development within this area may also alter the existing rhythm and form of the skyline.

A6. THE DUTCH QUARTER HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The Character Area encompasses a substantial portion of the town centre, occupying the greater part of the area north of the High Street as far as the line of the Roman wall, and from North Hill in the west as far as the Castle Precinct in the east. The Dutch Quarter (predominantly a residential area) is generally concealed by the Georgian and Victorian street frontages to the west, south and north, although often visible as a distinct townscape through narrow street entrances. The Quarter is named after the Flemish refugees and weavers who were encouraged to settle here as in many parts of England under the Protestant reign of Elizabeth I with more than 500 arriving in the town by 1575.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area slopes gradually downhill in a southerly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Predominantly Roman street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses along George Street and Maidenburgh Street have no front gardens, with little separation between entrances and the pavement.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure provided by relatively continuous housing façades along streets leading off the High Street.

Architecture & Built Form

- Fairly consistent architectural style with occasional Georgian interventions.

Streetscapes

- Relatively tranquil and uniform streetscape.

Open Space

- The only open space in A6 is the grass area by St Helen's Chapel. There are however a few front gardens in the more modern area of housing opposite the church green, which gives the illusion of more space than there really is.
- The houses are set close to one another and the only green space is attached to churchyards, notably at St Helen's Chapel.

- There is little open space within the restraint of the medieval street pattern. Streets are not particularly narrow but there are few public spaces.

Biodiversity

- There are a limited number of green areas, notably the green by St Helen's Chapel and a few front gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of modern and older housing.
- Nunn's Road – Converted chapel and an old Tudor house.

Movement Patterns

- No vehicular access along George Street.
- Side streets provide pedestrian access to housing.

Viewing Experience

- Long distance views across adjacent Townscape Character Areas to the north, along several of the narrow streets.

Designations

- Fifty-two Listed Buildings that are predominantly of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Monuments of the Town Walls is within the Character Area.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area covers this Character Area.
- The Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Colchester Castle Park (Grade II) is within the Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The area currently has a different character than would have been seen during Roman occupation. The Roman Forum (now offices) would have been found in the area, along with the Roman theatre (little remains today). Two main Roman roads flanked the area, one leading from North Gate to Head Gate and the other from Rye Gate to South Gate. The North Gate is still in use as a main road going in and out of Colchester. Rye Gate is no longer a main access, now made up of tightly knit housing and with a street pattern that has altered since the medieval period. This particular area is known as the 'Dutch quarter' as under the reign of Elizabeth I many Flemish refugees were encouraged to settle here. The quarter is concealed by Georgian and Victorian frontage on the west, south and north sides, but the tight winding lanes are visible at street entrances. Listed Buildings from the 11th century onwards are present within the area, and the Rye Gate is a key building. The area retains its medieval street pattern and contains timber-framed buildings from this period. There are several churches, St Helen's Chapel dating from the 11th century and St Martin's Church with 12th century origins. Most of the area, however, was restored in the 14th century. The area is rich in history and provides a fine example of the different periods of intervention, but also a fine example of a mixture of periods.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Building the following visible archaeological features are within the Character Area:

- North-South Street of Roman Colchester from the west;
- Rye Gate, Roman/medieval;
- The Castle Brewery, 19th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The area retains its medieval street pattern and many of the timber- framed buildings from the period remain. The area is much more consistent in its architectural style and use of materials than other parts of Colchester, despite the occasional intervention of Georgian fronted office, Victorian public houses and 20th century insertions, most of which are respectful of the qualities of the historic housing area. A large section of the Dutch Quarter was restored by the Local Authority in the 1950s and was awarded prizes.

The weavers' houses were constructed on the older townscape and a small number of older buildings were retained; remains of the Roman amphitheatre are visible at No. 74 Maidenburgh Street and St. Helen's Chapel, dating from at least the 11th century, stands nearby. Adjacent to St. Helen's is the Quaker burial ground.

West Stockwell Street and East Stockwell Street, which were the principal spine streets through the Dutch Quarter, have a greater mix of later and finer buildings, together with some grander 15th and 16th century timber framed houses.

On Northgate Street, the north boundary of the Character Area, the earlier housing has been replaced by a Victorian terrace development of the 1880s, with modern housing development facing across the street.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- St. Helen's Chapel, first recorded in 1097 and constructed on part of the foundations of the Roman theatre.
- St. Martin's Church originally Norman with a 12th century tower, and later gothic nave and chancel. Much of the church is 14th century.
- Nos 3 to 6 West Stockwell Street, a fine timbered frontage, 15th century, the upper storey jettied out on figured brackets and with the original doorway to the screens passage. Some apparently original window tracery.
- The Old Stockwell Arms a heavily restored 15th century house.
- Several other 15th century houses in good repair include Nos. 53 to 55 and Nos. 29 to 31 West Stockwell Street.
- Nos. 8 to 9 is a good five bay early Georgian house and Nos. 59 to 60 West Stockwell Street is also a fine double fronted house of the same period, with a tall central pediment and 'Venetian' windows.

The quality of the area is not in any individual building, although many of the medieval houses are fine and well restored, but in the overall impact of the historic material, scale and detail.

Materials and Architectural Details

Almost entirely two storey in the smaller streets, the houses are finished in painted render in various moderately bright colours. Roofs are pitched and tile covered, either pitched front to back or with gables at the fronts, pitches vary from one house to the next giving a coherent but complex roofscape.



Windows are double hung sash timber windows, with wide proportions, some very wide, these are mostly painted white in the Victorian fashion. One or two houses have slightly projecting oriel windows to the upper floor. At least one house has kept the early weaver's strip window at ground floor level.

Doors have mostly been replaced with modern doors and many are inappropriate in style, but brightly painted.

Threats to Townscape Character

- The building fabric is very mostly well cared for and consciously in keeping however there are some examples of the inappropriate modern doors, particularly, paint types and colours, and external fittings such as burglar alarms etc.
- As previously, some thought should be given to improving the quality of materials used for pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that they are in keeping with the historic buildings.
- The vehicle traffic is relatively light and has little impact on the quality of the environment.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has strong historic integrity on account of the predominantly intact Roman street pattern, the presence of many timber-framed medieval buildings that exhibit consistency in style and materials, the sections of the Town Wall (Scheduled Monument) and also a large number of Listed Buildings. The area is also visually sensitive due to its position on rising ground leading up to the town centre. Overall the Character Area is highly sensitive to change. Potential new development may be visible from several surrounding Character Areas to the south and may also be out of context with the intricate scale, detail and form (predominantly two-storey) of the existing character of the area.

A7. THE CASTLE HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The Castle Character Area occupies the northeast quarter of the of Town, bounded to the north and east by the line of the Roman wall, to the south by High Street and its continuation as East Hill, and to the west by the Dutch Quarter. The area is principally the landscaped park within which the Castle stands, with a number of notable buildings on the High Street/East Hill frontage. The area includes Hollytrees Meadow.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Situated on a hill, with sloping parkland towards the town walls and beyond to the south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Several long streets stretch from the High Street to Castle and Roman Road (residential area) and to the Roman walls in the south.
- Castle Park, a relatively large open space, dominates the pattern of the area to the west.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Several modern flats do not have private garden spaces.
- Relatively clear definition between public and private space along Castle and Roman roads.

Massing & Enclosure

- Close-knit pattern of housing along Castle and Roman roads.
- Open areas of greenspace surrounding the Castle.
- Some sense of enclosure to the park provided by housing to the east.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly a mixture of different architectural styles and materials.

Streetscapes

- Castle within its landscaped setting provides a distinctive streetscape.
- Castle and Roman Roads exhibit coherent character.

Open Space

- The area is defined by the open space that is the Castle Park, with its historical and topographical features. Since the creation of the new opening to the Park in 1923 the open space is now more visible from the High Street and perhaps intrudes on the urban townscape more than it did in earlier times.
- The formal setting of the War Memorial enhances the junction with Queen Street to the south, otherwise surrounded by older townscape, and forms a grand entrance to the Park.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees and shrubs within Castle Park provide biodiversity value.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Combination of housing (Castle and Roman Road), Castle Park and Castle.

Movement Patterns

- Several key footpaths leading around the park, the main one being around the Castle that then branches off to follow the Roman Walls through the park.
- The area is generally a busy thoroughfare for people entering and leaving the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- The Castle is a key landmark within views from surrounding Character Areas.

Designations

- Five Listed Buildings of which four are of special interest (Grade II) and Colchester Castle is of exceptional interest (Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- Colchester Castle to the west of Roman and Castle Road and the Town Wall are Scheduled Monuments.
- This Character Area is within the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Colchester Castle Park is an English Heritage, Grade II Registered Park and Garden.
- Colchester Castle Park is also a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Since Roman settlement this area has never been an area of high-density occupation. The Temple of Claudius dominated much of this area as well as an additional temple. The Castle that is still standing today commenced building in the 11th century and dominates the northeast quarter of the town on the site of the once Roman Temple of Claudius. Around the Castle is Castle Park in which remains of a Roman Forum and a Roman street have been found. Many medieval buildings survive along the High Street in this Character Area, although the usual Georgian, Victorian and 20th century modifications have been made. Outside the castle and opposite the Natural History Museum stands the war memorial, which was put up in 1923 showing a clear evolution from the Roman period to the 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, the following sites of visible archaeological interest are within this Character Area:

- Roman road and drain;
- Pavement & wall, Roman;
- Pavement, 1st century;
- 6 Queen Street, 15th century;
- Road, wall, cobbled surface, Roman;
- Medieval Bastions;
- Greyfriars Monastery, Medieval;
- Wall to Greyfriars Monastery, Medieval;
- WWII air raid shelter.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The area is dominated by the Castle, with a late 11th century Norman Keep. The Keep is the largest that remains in existence.

Castle Park contains many Roman remains including evidence that this was the site of the Forum. Excavations in the past have revealed a Roman street, and, in Hollytrees Meadow, a large Romano-British building.

The line of the High Street curves to the south here identifying the former position of the Bailey. The buildings on the northwest sector of the High Street within the Character Area continue the plot pattern and character of the High Street but are generally medieval in origin, and of two storeys rather than three. Many of the timber-framed buildings from the period remain but with the usual the Georgian, Victorian and 20th century modifications. The flint tower of All Saints' Church dominates the south side of the Street at this point.

Opposite All Saints' Church, the continuity of the north street frontage is broken by the War Memorial, which was erected in 1923 and was when a new entrance to Castle Park from the High Street was also created.

To the east of the War Memorial stands The Hollytrees, a very fine Georgian house of about 1715 with a later west wing. The house is of red brick, three storeys and five bays with segmental arch headed windows. The Hollytrees has been left standing rather isolated by the creation of the War Memorial but is nevertheless one of the finest buildings in Colchester.

To the east of The Hollytrees the continuation of the street frontage reasserts itself with a sequence of singular houses of various dates; from here the character changes into that of the west end of East Hill.

On the east boundary of the Park and within the line of the Roman Wall a substantial sector of the original Park was developed as Victorian terraced housing; two long, straight streets of modest Victorian two storey villas.



Distinctive individual buildings include:

- The Castle, with its Roman archaeological remains and ditched defences;
- The War Memorial, 1923, with its immediate formal landscaped setting;
- The Hollytrees, 1715 with a west wing dating from 1748.

Materials and Architectural Details

The larger buildings do not conform to any common characteristic but dominate the area in their different styles and materials.

The buildings on the continuation of the High Street frontage are mostly of two storeys, finished in painted render of various colours. Roofs are pitched and tile covered, generally in a medieval pattern, pitched front to back or with gables at the fronts, pitches vary from one house to the next giving a complex roofscape. Windows are wide proportioned double hung sash timber windows, mostly painted white in the Victorian fashion.

The street frontage buildings are mostly shops at ground floor level, with the same interventions that have been noted before.

Threats to Townscape Character

- The open nature of the townscape here, the isolation of individual buildings such as The Hollytrees and the War Memorial is not in keeping with the wider Georgian townscape of Colchester, although the setting within the landscaped Park is very pleasant.
- The views from the Castle mound to the east and northeast are now dominated by the terraced streets of the Victorian speculative housing development and by the later housing projects in the wider floodplain area, removing much of the impact of the Castle within the landscape.
- Vehicle traffic is relatively heavy at this street junction and has the same impact on the quality of the environment, referred to before.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area is considered to be highly sensitive to change or new development. Overall the area has strong historic integrity on account of the presence of the Castle (Scheduled Monument) and other landmark buildings such as The Hollytrees (a fine Georgian building). Colchester Castle Park (English Heritage Registered Park and Garden) is also situated within the area. Potential new development should take account of the importance of the setting of the Castle and other Listed Buildings within the area. There is moderate biodiversity value within Castle Park (mature trees and grassland). Although the Castle is relatively well hidden from the High Street (approached down a relatively narrow road), the area is generally highly visible within views from the north and is therefore visually sensitive.

A8. QUEEN STREET HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The Queen Street Character Area falls into a number of sub-areas. Queen Street itself is a commercial street running south from its junction with High Street at the War Memorial, crossing the line of the Roman Wall in the centre of its southern extent and continuing as St. Botolph's Street to meet the terminus of the rural railway line at the town station. This part of the Character Area is defined by the commercial street front properties. Behind these plots on the east side of Queen Street the area is largely occupied by the Bus Station with its wide tarmac parking area, with the line of the Roman Wall to the east. Where the Bus Station meets the line of the High Street and East Hill, the older townscape has been retained, masking the Bus Station from the north.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Overall the Character Area is relatively flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- The Bus Station is open in comparison with surrounding street and block pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- The Bus Station provides a key area of public open space.
- The entrances to most of the buildings open directly onto the street, with no significant interface space on the street frontage.

Massing & Enclosure

- The area around the bus station feels relatively open.

Architecture & Built Form

- Queen Street is predominantly Victorian (with occasional Georgian buildings).
- Modern Bus Station (1960's)

Streetscapes

- Diverse, mixed streetscape, containing commercial properties and the bus station, with few street trees.

Open Space

- There is no open space in this area. It is built up and distinctly urban, with only a few mature trees, mainly in the churchyard of the Natural History Museum.
- There is no significant green space or urban space on the street frontage.

Biodiversity

- Group of mature trees and shrubs within the grounds of the Natural History Museum, provide habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Area contains 'The Minorities' arts and cultural centre.
- Busy area for pedestrians and traffic.
- Predominantly shops, offices and institutions.

Movement Patterns

- Very busy area for cars (with associated congestion and noise).
- Queen Street is a bustling pedestrian route, providing one of the main access routes to the Bus Station from the High Street.

Viewing Experience

- The Castle is visible within views north from the northern end of Queen Street.
- Views to the tower of All Saints' Church and St. James the Great Church from adjacent Character Areas.

Designations

- 10 Listed Buildings of which 8 are of special interest (Grade II), with one being of more than special interest (Grade II*) and one of exceptional interest (Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- There are three Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area including: SE corner of Roman Town in Easthill House Gardens; St Boltoph's Priory; and the Town Wall.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area covers this Character Area.
- There is no Designated Open Space within the Character Area, it is proposed that Priory Street, Colchester becomes designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

At the eastern end of Colchester town centre this Character Area contains a mix of ages of buildings. The Bus Station now stands where it is thought the Roman Baths would have been and the area is open to accommodate the amount of traffic flowing in and out of the town walls. The area is largely Victorian in character with a few Georgian buildings and a substantial number of 20th century intrusions. The buildings fronting onto High Street and East Street hold more character with their medieval origins, but still with modern improvements. St James the Great Church still stands above East Hill, being medieval in origin, with the use of Roman brick in its walls.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, the following visible archaeological features are within the Character Area:

- St Botolph’s Priory South Gate, medieval;
- St Botolph’s Priory Gate, medieval;
- Bastion 5, Roman;
- Bastion 3, Medieval;
- East Hill House, Roman;
- Bastion 1, 18th century;
- Head Street, Roman Road.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Queen Street is now mostly Victorian in character with occasional Georgian buildings of interest and with more noticeable 20th century intrusions from the pedestrian shopping precincts to the west. The properties form a continuous façade on the east and west sides with a wide range of styles and quality of buildings within the general Victorian style which, as has been noted, is a common characteristic of Colchester. Again there are no continuous terraces of uniformly designed houses or offices. All of the buildings are used as shops, offices or restaurants, with some 20th century frontages and insertions.

The Bus Station garage has a frontage on the east side of Queen Street. The bus parking area has no buildings of interest and is defined more by views of the rear elevations of buildings to the north and west.

The north boundary of the Character Area is defined by the buildings fronting on to High Street and East Hill. These buildings are a link with the older townscape, now absent from the Bus Station development. They are an eastern extension of the High Street characteristic, medieval in origin but with Georgian and later improvements and replacements. The sector includes some particularly fine and individual buildings such as The Minories and East Hill House, with All Saints’ Church to the west and St. James the Great Church to the east, just within the line of the Roman Wall.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- The Minories, a Georgian town house built in 1776 for Thomas Boggis, with its walled garden and Gothic style summerhouse;
- East Hill House, a very fine early 18th century house, seven bays with a pedimented door case;
- All Saints’ Church, mid 19th century but with a notable flint tower;
- St. James the Great, a large medieval church standing high above East Hill with an early tower, where the use of Roman brick in the construction suggest that it is Norman in origin.

Materials and Architectural Details

A great variety of materials and detail within the Victorian frontages, brickwork, masonry, decorative embellishments and shop fronts. Some typical prominent oriel windows; a characteristic Colchester shopping street frontage, but not as fine as the High Street or Head Street.

The characteristic of the East Hill frontage is of fine individual Georgian buildings, built as town houses for the wealthy, now used by offices and institutions.

On Queen Street the plot proportions are relatively short compared to the High Street and Head Street plots.

Later 20th century developments have been constructed generally within the older plots apart from the Priory Walk precinct development, which is relatively wide and massive.

Building heights are reasonably consistent, mostly two or three storeys but with much variation between one building and the next. The principal difference is in the rooflines and profiles rather than the building height.

Threats to Townscape Character

- As with previous comments on shopping streets, the variety of shop fronts inserted into the historic façade is uncoordinated and usually insensitive. There is no control of colour, signage, lighting or display, the result is incoherent.
- Generally the building fabric is reasonably well maintained; there are some buildings in poor repair that detract from the quality of the streetscape.
- There are many examples of the inappropriate use of paint types and colours, modern doors and windows, rainwater downpipes etc. that detract from the quality of the historic environment. External fittings such as burglar alarms are intrusive.
- The plethora of public direction signs and information signs should be restricted to reduce the visual impact on the historic buildings.
- As with virtually all historic town streets the presence of vehicle traffic has a major impact on the quality of the historic environment, restricting pedestrian movement, limiting views, necessitating intrusive street signage and imposing a high level monotone noise.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Whilst this area is visible from adjacent Character Areas, it is considerate to have moderate visual sensitivity on account of the limited views that can be gained to and from the more distant landscape setting. The area has mixed historic integrity, resulting from a combination of modern and older (predominantly Victorian) architectural styles. Examples of historic landmark buildings (for example The Minories) are located within the generally mixed streetscape. Overall biodiversity value within the area is weak. A combination of these factors determines that the area has moderate overall sensitivity to change, with potential capacity to accommodate new development in accordance with the existing townscape character of the area.

A9. ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY AND PRIORY STREET HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

From the ruins of St. Botolph's Priory in the west, along the line of Priory Street to its junction with East Hill, with the line of the Roman Wall to the north and west, and the plot boundaries of the properties facing, it this Character Area is predominantly residential in character.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively flat in close proximity to the Roman Walls.
- Sloping gradually downhill to the south and east.

Street & Block Pattern

- Pattern comprises gently curving Priory Street, with a series of straight, short roads leading off to the south.
- Open space surrounding St Botolph's Priory.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Victorian terraced housing along Priory Street has no front gardens (with front doors leading straight onto the pavement).
- On-road parking.
- Houses generally have back gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- Compact and enclosed feeling along the roads leading off Priory Street.

Architecture & Built Form

- Combination of Victorian housing along Priory Street and ruins of the early Norman St. Botolph's Priory.

Streetscapes

- Relatively uniform streetscape in terms of housing along Priory Street.
- Diversity and interest provided by ruins of St. Botolph's Priory and associated landscaped grounds.

Open Space

- The landscaped setting of St Botolph's Priory ruins is an open space close to the town centre, although not used as much as it might be because of its relative seclusion.
- The only significant urban space is the tarmac car park that runs along the base of the Roman Wall along its length and detracts from its quality.

Biodiversity

- Landscaped grounds of St Botolph's Priory provide potentially valuable habitats for wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Housing area in close proximity to the town centre.
- Area contains car park, which is frequently used for the town centre.

Movement Patterns

- Priory Street is a busy area for pedestrians and also provides one of the main vehicular links to the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- Views to the east to Tesco's (The Hythe) and the railway line from the grounds of St. Botolph's Priory.

Designations

- Four Listed Buildings of which three are of special interest (Grade II), whilst 9 and 10 East Hill are of exceptional interest (Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Monument of St Boltolph's Priory is within the Character Area.
- The Character Area is within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area is just outside the Roman walls, but contains Colchester's most important ecclesiastical monument, the remains of St Botolph's Priory, an 11th century Norman priory church. Like most other Norman buildings in Colchester, the Priory is built from rubble stone with the use of Roman brick for decoration in the walls. Towards St Botolph's Priory, Roman walls are clearly seen beside a car park, showing a contrasting an distinct evolution from the Roman period to 20th century. This stretch of Roman wall is one of the longest stretches of remaining wall in Colchester town centre.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no sites of visible archaeological interest in addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The ruins of St. Botolph's Priory stand in the landscaped remnants of the Priory grounds and gardens, and adjacent to the Victorian St Botolph's Church. The monument stands in a secluded spot, half hidden behind the frontages of the shopping streets to its west and north, with the front façade of the church visible from St. Botolph's Street

through a narrow entrance. From the garden there are views of the roofscape of the town centre rising above the town wall.

The Roman Wall is still much in evidence. The wall is about three metres thick, of concrete core construction with cut stone faces and brickwork bonding courses. The wall has several medieval bastions added to its external face along the south facing stretch. The space in front of the wall has been cleared to create car parks. The tarmac surface and municipal hard landscaping and street signage do little to enhance the qualities of the wall. Facing and following the line of the wall on the far side of Priory Street is a continuous development of small housing, mostly Victorian terraced housing, which gives it its dominating characteristic. These are standard two storey, brick fronted houses typical of speculative development of the period, not as fine as the houses in Castle Park.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- The ruins of St. Botolph's Priory, the remains of an early Norman priory church, founded in the 11th century. Colchester's most important ecclesiastical monument.
- St. Botolph's church, 1837, built in the Norman style and therefore intended to relate to the Priory ruins, but because of its mass and height, overbearing in relation to the monument remains.
- Roman Wall. One of the longest extant stretches of the remaining wall, in relatively well-maintained condition, but still in need of repair and reinstatement of damaged sections.

Materials and Architectural Details

St Botolph's Priory is constructed, like all Norman building in Colchester, of rubble stone walling with liberal use of re-used Roman brick as bonding courses and for decorative effect. In this it has much in common with the original Roman construction of the wall and thus creates the predominant characteristic construction of the area.

St. Botolph's Church is built in the Romanesque style but in a white brick, now dirty and darkened.

The terraced housing with its brick facework, often painted and stuccoed, with slate roofs and timber sash windows, is indistinguishable from many similar developments, although as a large area of single development, it is relatively uncommon in Colchester.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Above all, the use of the land in front of the Roman wall as a car park is the major threat to townscape character. While recognizing the need for parking close to the town, there are potentially many better uses for this important historic monument than its present use;
- Although modest, the Victorian terraced housing is a relatively intact example of housing of the period and its control and improvement, as period housing would also improve the quality of the heritage setting of the wall.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has some biodiversity value within the grounds of St Botolph's Priory (mature trees). Overall the area has moderate visual sensitivity (on account of the flat gently sloping topography). The area is visible from adjacent Character Areas to the south, but not from the High Street or from viewpoints within Colchester's landscape setting. The area does, however, have strong historic integrity, containing one of the longest stretches of intact Roman Wall within Colchester and the remains of St. Boltoph's Priory. Overall, the character is however mixed, with modern car parks situated alongside relatively uniform Victorian housing and the Priory. The Character Area, therefore has moderate sensitivity to new development, with potential capacity to accommodate new development, which respects the historic character of the area, the setting of the Priory and the existing uniformity of Victorian housing within the area.

A10. EAST HILL HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Defined as the principal road eastbound from the town centre, generally the extent of the area is limited to the rear plot boundaries to the north and south of East Hill. The Character Area extends from the line of the town Roman Wall in the west as far as the major road junction and railway crossing in the east. The area is predominantly residential with occasional businesses and shops.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively straight road, sloping downhill to the east.

Street & Block Pattern

- Relatively compact buildings lining East Hill, laid out along a Straight Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Buildings face directly on to the main road, with no private space in front.

Massing & Enclosure

- The street feels relatively enclosed, with relatively continuous building façades along both sides of the street.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mix of medieval, Georgian and Victorian housing, with 20th century infill in places. A large proportion of the buildings are two-storey buildings with the occasional three-story building.

Streetscapes

- Distinctive streetscape with a number of distinctive Georgian houses, exhibiting variety in material and detail.
- Medieval houses contribute to the distinctive streetscape, adding colour to the character of the area.

Open Space

- There is no significant green space on the street frontage apart from the green at the bottom end of East Hill.
- The river crossing presents an open aspect interrupting the ribbon development of the street.
- There is no significant urban space on the street frontage. The original Coach Road junction in front of the Rose and Crown Public House would once have been an important meeting place for travellers and local residents but is now taken over by traffic.

Biodiversity

- Lack of street trees, with few areas of vegetation.
- Predominantly built-form within the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential with occasional businesses.

Movement Patterns

- Key access route for traffic entering and exiting the town centre to and from the east.
- Busy traffic and pedestrian link.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled views eastwards along East from the High Street.
- The Siege House and the Rose and Crown Public House stand out as landmarks within views into and within the area.

Designations

- 50 Listed Buildings which are predominantly of special interest (Grade II), two of more than special interest (Grade II*) and one of exceptional interest (Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- This Character Area is within the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- The River Colne Site of Importance for Nature Conservation is within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Known as the East Gate, one of the principal roads in and out of Colchester town centre, and originally part of the main Roman road cutting through the town. From the time of Roman settlement until now the Character Area has evolved with 15th and 16th century timber framed buildings and later Georgian town houses and Victorian houses. Its historical integrity has stayed relatively intact, there has been the normal intrusion of modern buildings or modernisation of older buildings such as the Rose and Crown, a 14th century hotel. This once coach road running through this Character Area has been replaced by a busy main road.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings within the Character Area, the following features of visible archaeological interest are present:

- Concrete Firing Post, East Bridge;
- A 33' long crenellated wall built of concrete;
- Roman road opposite Crowthers Factory;
- East Bridge.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

East Hill continues the line of High Street, through the former east gate of the Roman Wall, and beyond. It was and is a principal coach road into and out of the town. From the town it descends downhill towards the crossing of the River Colne and thus affords views of the wider landscape as one travels east. East of the river crossing it is known as East Street, in the Roman fashion. East Hill is lined more or less continuously with residential plots, an early strip development. Medieval in origin, many fine medieval timber framed houses still remain on both sides of the street, although in the closer approaches to the town these have been replaced with increasingly fine Georgian town houses.



At the river crossing, East Bay, the area's historic use as a dock or wharf is still evident from the Georgian and Victorian mills, commercial buildings and houses that cluster there. This group of houses and factories has the air of an independent settlement. The importance of the road junction further east is marked by the 16th century Coaching Inn, the Rose and Crown. This is, or could be, a spectacular medieval street with many fine examples of early jettid timber framed houses and the later Georgian town houses that replaced them on the better plots, closer the town, Its origins and historical development are clear in the preserved buildings.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- At the top of the Hill, many imposing early Georgian town houses: Nos. 9 and 10, a double house with twin doorways; No. 82, with seven bays of segmental arch headed windows; and No. 86 has an impressive Doric columned porch. These create the increasingly impressive setting approaching the town along the coach road;
- The building of the Colchester Brewing Company is now being converted to residential, with additional development behind, as on several other back plots;
- To the east, on both sides of the Hill there are numerous good 15th and 16th century timber framed houses, rendered, with jettied upper floors and later, wide proportioned windows. There are many with individually notable details and surviving medieval elements, particularly lower down in East Street, on both sides where there are entire rows of contemporary houses;
- The Siege House, a late 14th century timber framed house famous for being damaged in the town siege. The present owner has marked all the bullet holes with red plastic circles, which does not add to its appearance;
- The Rose and Crown Coaching Inn, also late 14th century, has been modernised as a hotel, pub and restaurant;
- On the north side of the river crossing, the former mill of Messrs. Marriage, now converted as apartments. On the opposite side is a small village green with a short row of Victorian terraced housing, presumably accommodation for local workers, together with the Miller's House adjacent to the river.

Materials and Architectural Details

The Georgian houses on the upper reaches of East Hill are faced with fine brickwork of red or yellow stock bricks, some with later rendering and painted. Most are generously large proportioned two-storey houses, with occasional

three-storey buildings. The roofs are steeply pitched, in slate, and partly concealed behind parapets. Many have classical pedimented timber doorcases and there are many examples of projecting oriel and bay windows. There is a wide variety of material and detail within the classical Georgian style. Despite this dominating characteristics, there are occasional Victorian houses, one in the polychromatic brickwork typical of the mid 1870s.

The medieval houses are all two-storeys, generally rendered, some with the timber-framing showing, and painted in a wide range of colours. Many have the roofs pitched front to back but there are also many gable-fronted houses. A substantial number have jettied upper floors. Some have modest decorative door cases in imitation of their finer Georgian neighbours. There is a variety of timber double hung sash windows, most very wide proportioned and much larger in proportion to the house frontage that the earlier casement windows would have been. Occasional houses have more ornate, Venetian headed windows, and there are some houses with small roof dormers. The Victorian houses on the green are modest and insignificant by comparison.



Threats to Townscape Character

- East Hill is a busy vehicle route out of the town and the historic quality of the locality is much damaged by vehicle movement, noise and pollution. A large proportion of the building façades are dirty and, probably as a consequence, poorly maintained.
- Generally the building fabric is reasonably well maintained higher up the hill and on the more obviously fine medieval buildings, however too many are in need of repair and conservation and detract from their quality.
- Despite the obvious deliberate conservation of many early features and materials there are many examples of the inappropriate use of paint types and colours, doors and windows, downpipes, external fittings such as burglar alarms and etc. that reduce the quality of the historic streetscape.
- Due to the vehicle traffic there is a heavy incidence of street signs, road markings and lights that have a visual impact on the historic buildings.
- No attention has been paid to quality of pavement surfaces, kerbs and other hard surfacing, to ensure that the material and design is sympathetic to the historic context.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has strong historic integrity on account of the predominantly intact historic street pattern, a distinctive eastern approach to the Town Centre, which is lined by a large number of fine medieval and Georgian buildings (many of which are listed). There is both architectural variety (in age and style) and consistency (building form

and height) within the streetscape. Although the Colne River corridor crosses the centre of the Character Area (a diverse and important wildlife habitat) biodiversity value along East Hill is generally low. The area has high visual sensitivity, being visible within views looking downhill from the Town Centre to the west and also from surrounding Character Areas. Overall the area is therefore considered to be highly sensitive to change or new development.

A11. ST. JOHN'S GREEN HISTORIC CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

St. John's Green is a small settlement outside the medieval town walls, on the old road leading south from Scheregate and based around the gatehouse of the 11th century Benedictine Abbey. Nothing remains of the Abbey apart from the 15th century gatehouse, and the Character Area is now separated physically and visually from the town by the four-lane traffic ring road and by the mass of the NCP car park building. The area is bounded to the north by the ring road and to the south, beyond the gatehouse, by the MoD barracks. To the east it is isolated by the new traffic roundabout at the junction of the ring road with Military Road and Magdalene Road.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Area slopes gradually upwards in a southerly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is based around a triangular arrangement, comprising the dead-end of Lagstaff Road, which links to two small side roads to the east.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally good definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Building heights and massing are reasonably consistent as all buildings are two-storeys.

Architecture & Built Form

- Plot proportions appear very small in comparison to those closer to the town.

Streetscapes

- Relatively consistent and coherent streetscape.

Open Space

- The buildings are grouped around the Green, which is the defining characteristic of the area.
- The river crossing presents an open aspect interrupting the ribbon development of the street.
- No significant urban spaces.

Biodiversity

- Some biodiversity value within the Green.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area, containing the Roman gatehouse.

Movement Patterns

- Area provides a relatively busy through-route for pedestrians moving to and from the town centre to adjacent residential areas.

Viewing Experience

- Area is not dominant within views south from the High Street, which are generally obscured by the modern car park.
- Limited views to adjacent Character Areas.

Designations

- Six Listed Buildings of which one, St John's Abbey Gatehouse is of exceptional interest (Grade I) and the remainder are of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Monuments of Benedictine Abbey is within the Character Area.
- The Town Centre Conservation Area covers part of this Character Area.
- St John's Green, Colchester and land adjacent to 53 St John's Green, Colchester are designated open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area is situated outside the Roman walls to the south and based around the gatehouse to the 11th century Benedictine Abbey. Only the gatehouse remains of the 15th century abbey, providing evidence of the fact that this area was once a very important historical site. Now however it is clear that this Character Area is modernised and evolved from the historic setting that it is so close to.



Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings recorded within this Character Area, visible archaeological features include:

- St Giles' Church - inhumation cemetery, tower, wall.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Dominated by the Gatehouse, an imposing structure of knapped flint with much reclaimed Roman brick. The Gatehouse faces the Green, which is a group of small triangular turfed spaces divided by local roads. These are surrounded by modest groups of Victorian and Georgian houses on small plots and, sitting high over the ring road, St. Giles' Church.

The characteristic of the area is relatively open space with small isolated groups of buildings set in a settled landscape.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- The Abbey Gatehouse which was the north gatehouse to the 11th century Abbey and is now all that remains. The outside face comprises highly decorated flint work panels set in ornate masonry tracery. The internal face is less ornate. As with all the contemporary structures there is free use of reclaimed Roman brick in the masonry;
- St. Giles' church, a late Gothic church that appears heavily restored or reworked in brick in later centuries, notable for its timber weather boarded west tower.

Materials and Architectural Details

Apart from the Gatehouse and church, a modest mix of conventional Georgian and Victorian houses, brickwork and render, tile and slate roofs.

Threats to Townscape Character

- The settlement is seriously affected by the immediate presence of the ring road, which apart from the intrusive traffic noise and pollution severs the historic connection of the Green with the town centre. The road to Scheregate is diverted under the ring road via a pedestrian underpass accessed by circuitous ramps and passages that obstruct rather than assist.
- The ring road also obstructs the historic visual link between the rise on which the Gatehouse sits and the higher town centre. Although the roofscape of the town is still partly visible across the road, it is largely obscured by the intrusive mass of the NCP car park building, which is inappropriate for its setting in every aspect of storey height, massing, material and design.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has generally strong historic integrity with a predominantly intact historic street pattern and the 11th century Abbey gatehouse. Visual prominence is high, however the modern NCP car park building generally obscures views to and from the town centre. Overall, this area is moderately sensitive to change or new development. New, tall buildings may be visible from the historic buildings and should take account of the setting of the Abbey gatehouse.

C. URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Townscape Character Areas

- C1. Cymbeline Way Camping and Caravan Site
- C2. Hilly Fields
- C3. Riverside Walk
- C4. Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve and Lexden Springs Park
- C5. Bourne and Distillery Ponds
- C6. High Woods Country Park
- C7. Castle Park and Cricket Ground
- C8. Colchester Cemetery
- C9. The Hythe Urban

Generic Description

Areas of urban greenspace comprise large, publicly accessible open spaces between and amongst areas of built development. Such areas of greenspace may have either an organic, natural character or a more designed nature and in the case of Colchester, include Nature Reserves, playing fields, riverside greenspaces and designed parkland amongst others. Urban greenspaces are often of moderate or high biodiversity value, providing key habitats for urban wildlife within the surrounding built form. Urban greenspaces typically also provide space for outdoor sports and recreation activities.

Key Characteristics

- Areas of greenspace which are publicly accessible and provide space between areas of built development
- Comprises a mixture of organic or natural greenspace and designed greenspace
- Often has high biodiversity value, providing habitats for urban wildlife
- Often plays a key role in public outdoor activities

C1. CYMBELINE WAY CAMPING AND CARAVAN SITE URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area comprises a camping and caravan park (with approximately 250 pitches) and associated shop and amenity facilities. Located close to the A12 Cymbeline Way, the area is easily accessible. Several mature trees and hedges at the boundaries of the site provide a sense of enclosure and privacy. Mature trees and hedges also enhance the character of the site and further enhance the internal space. The camping and caravan site is situated in close proximity to the several other urban greenspaces (Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve, Lexden Springs Park and Hilly Fields), which form a local green finger or buffer and help to provide a sense of place to surrounding Townscape Character Areas. The Character Area is also situated in close proximity to the open countryside to the north.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Overall, the Character Area is flat and situated on the southern edge of the floodplain of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- The site is generally open, allowing space for caravans and tents in a number of plots or pitches.
- Groups of pitches are often divided by banks and ditches, which are delineated with mature trees and hedgerows.
- There are a few buildings on-site consisting of shower toilet blocks, a shop and associated administration buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- The site is separated from surrounding areas by mature vegetation, at the boundaries.
- Once inside the site, although there is division between groups of plots, there is little division between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- The Camping and Caravan Site is relatively enclosed by vegetation at boundaries, and several mature trees and hedges provide some sense of enclosure within the site, even though the site is predominantly an area of open grassland.

Open Space

- Camping and Caravan Site is situated adjacent to Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve and in close proximity to Hilly Fields.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees within the Camping and Caravan Park and vegetation at boundaries to the site provide important nature conservation habitats.
- The site is in close proximity to Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- The site is used for camping and caravanning and can be a seasonally busy area.

Movement Patterns

- The site is situated close to the busy A12 and also adjacent to Cymbeline Way, which is a main road with links to the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few views into and out of the site.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building, Malting Farm House, of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area of land was in agricultural use until the 20th century when the area was first used as a caravan park and campsite

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building, there is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature vegetation within and at the boundaries to the site (due to old age or expansion) allowing caravans/tents to be more visible from surrounding Landscape Character Areas and impinging on rural character.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Although the site is enclosed by mature vegetation at the boundaries and there are also several mature trees within the site, which enhance the biodiversity value of the area, overall the area is considered to have low sensitivity to change. Historic integrity of the site is weak and re-creatability is therefore considered to be high.

C2. HILLY FIELDS URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of greenspace, situated on the relatively steeply rising southern Colne Valley side, exhibits a diverse patchwork of wildlife habitats, including acid grassland, hawthorn/bramble scrub, wet grassland and swamp. Extensive panoramic views across Colchester towards High Woods Country Park can be gained from the higher slopes. The area is a local recreational resource, and also helps to form a 'green' approach to the town centre from the west.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Greenspace is situated on the southern, steep side of the Colne Valley.
- Ground slopes upwards from north to south.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Publicly accessible greenspace, which can be accessed from Cymbeline Way and adjacent Townscape Character Areas.

Massing & Enclosure

- Space is lined along northern edge by the avenue of trees lining the Avenue of Remembrance.
- Sense of enclosure varies, moving through different parts of the space, depending on proximity to tree and shrub cover.

Open Space

- Open space plays an important structural role in terms of local pattern and form, providing greenspace between town centre development and adjacent mixed housing development.
- Hill Fields provides a key recreational space and contributes to a green approach to Colchester (from the A12).

Biodiversity

- Provides several important wildlife habitats, including hawthorn/bramble scrub, mature oaks, acidic grassland and swamp.
- Diverse range of flora, including Pedulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*).

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This greenspace is an informal public recreational space, which appears to be frequently used by local residents.
- Areas of delineated informal playing fields.

Movement Patterns

- Several footpaths provide pedestrian links between suburban residential Character Areas and the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- Extensive panoramic views across the River Colne, towards High Woods Country Park to the north, from the higher northern area of Hilly Fields.
- Extensive views across Colchester urban area to the north and east.

Designations

- Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area include the Site of pre-Roman Settlement and Lexden Dyke at Spring Meadow.
- Part of the Character Area is within the Town Centre Conservation Area
- The southern half of Spring Lane Park is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Hilly Fields is a local nature reserve.
- Lexden Spring, Lexden and Cymbeline Way, Colchester are designated open spaces and the land to the Rear of Oaks Drive is a proposed open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Within this area was situated the Iron Age capital of Camulodunum. Excavations in 1947 showed the area to be a large Iron Age bronze working industrial area. This capital was then re-used by the Romans in AD49, with non-visible remains at Sheepen Farm of Roman Kilns, wells and a Roman Temple. The area was raised to the ground during the Boudican revolt of AD 60/61 and abandoned by AD75. The eastern part of the site was used as a small cemetery during the 4th century. Between Roman abandonment and the 17th century there was little recorded activity. In 1648 this area was the site of the Cromwellion fort, Fort Ingoldsby, used during the Civil War attack on Colchester. The only evidence of use of the land after the 17th century is the remains of a World War II Pillbox.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments recorded within this Character Area, visible archaeological features include:

- Pillbox;
- Site of Cromwellion Fort (founded in 1648 in 'Fort Field');
- Sheepen Farm (site of pre-Roman settlement);
- Roman military metal working site.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential encroachment on greenspace from expansion of surrounding Character Areas/new development.
- Loss of important wildlife habitats through lack of landscape management.
- Loss (and non-replacement) of mature single trees, through old age, leading to loss of sense of place.
- Potential loss of avenue of trees lining the south of the site (along the Avenue of Remembrance).
- Potential tall development within the Colne floodplain, which may interrupt panoramic views to High Woods Country Park and Colchester's skyline.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area contains several important wildlife habitats (recognised by designation as a SINC). The relatively prominent and steep gradient/topography of the site, especially the elevated northern end, determines that change within this area could potentially be visible from several surrounding Townscape Character Areas. Although, little visible archaeology remains, the area was once the site of a pre-Roman settlement and is designated as Scheduled Monument, providing cultural links with the historic evolution of Colchester. Overall, therefore, the area is considered to be highly sensitive to change.

C3. RIVERSIDE WALK URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the gently meandering course of the River Colne and an adjacent riverside footpath. The course of the river is lined with several mature willow and poplar trees, with mown grassland immediately along the riverbank. A concrete path runs along the riverbank, following the course of the river and connecting Castle Park with residential and commercial areas further to the east.

Views along and across the river can be gained from several locations along the course of the riverside walk. Occasional seats are positioned along the route, providing relatively tranquil resting points. The river is fringed with reeds and provides an important wildlife corridor and habitat for coastal birds.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, within the river floodplain.
- Bank rises slightly to the south, adjacent to housing area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This area is publicly accessible.
- There are no boundaries (other than vegetation along the river bank) to restrict access to the river edge.

Massing & Enclosure

- Some sense of enclosure provided by single mature trees, however site feels generally open, with views along the corridor.

Open Space

- Provides a green corridor and linking space informal recreational space, in close proximity to the town centre.

Biodiversity

- Several mature trees scattered within the close-cut grassland; also mature willows and poplars fringing the riverbank and lining the course.
- River (with associated reeds and bank side vegetation) provides an important wildlife corridor, running through Colchester.
- River also provides a habitat for coastal birds.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Informal recreation space, which allows residents and visitors to walk along the river corridor.

- Occasional seats overlooking the river, provide opportunities to stop and look across the river.
- Overall feeling of tranquillity, despite close proximity to the town centre.

Movement Patterns

- Riverside walk provides a popular route for pedestrians, which connects Colchester Castle Park, the town centre and adjacent residential areas.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled views along short stretches of the river corridor can be gained whilst moving along the route of the riverside walk.
- Mature riverbank, poplars and willows, and the gently meandering nature of the river generally restrict long distance views further along the corridor.

Designations

- Colchester Castle Park is a Registered Historic Park and Garden.
- The River Colne and parts of its floodplain is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Bull Meadows is a Local Nature Reserve.
- Castle Park is a Designated Open Space and the by-pass Nurseries site, Cowdray Avenue and land at Mill Hotel are proposed open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been no development on this land due to the proximity of the River Colne. It was not until the end of the 19th century that a small area of this land was crossed by the railway and then in the late 20th century the A129 was constructed to the southeast

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and loss of mature vegetation (willows and poplars) along the river corridor as a result of old age.
- Flood defence or new development (and associated drainage) upstream which may result in changes to the flooding regime of the river.
- Expansion of adjacent residential or commercial areas, which would block views and access along the river corridor and lead to the loss important wildlife habitats.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Several mature trees line the river corridor and the river provides an important wildlife link through the centre of Colchester (reflected in its designation as a SINC). The area is therefore considered to have high biodiversity value. Although the area is flat, long distance views throughout the area are restricted by vegetation along the river corridor. The area is, however, visible from several adjacent Townscape Character Areas. The path of the River Colne has changed little since the time at which the first town originated. In terms of historic integrity, however, there are few positive historic elements within the area. Overall the area is considered to be moderately sensitive to change.

C4. LEXDEN GATHERING GROUNDS NATURE RESERVE AND LEXDEN SPRINGS PARK URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Urban Greenspace Character Area consists of two parts, which are separated by the Avenue of Remembrance (A133), Lexden Gathering Grounds (a nature reserve) to the north and Lexden Springs Park (a recreational park space) to the south. Lexden Gathering Grounds contain a diverse mosaic of habitats (including Scots pine, beech and oak semi-natural woodland, acidic meadow grassland; and hazel and alder coppice) and are managed as a Nature Reserve by Essex Wildlife Trust. This site was previously a ‘gathering ground’ for water (until the 1970s), which fed the area via flowing springs. Lexden Springs Park is predominantly an informal grassland recreational area for adjacent housing areas.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Areas slope from a southeast to a northwesterly direction and are situated on the southern Colne valley side.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Lexden Gathering grounds is a publicly accessible greenspace, which is managed as a Nature Reserve (Essex Wildlife Trust).
- Lexden Springs Park provides a publicly accessible recreation space.

Open Space

- Both greenspaces are situated adjacent to Cymbeline Way Camping and Caravan Site Urban Greenspace (C1) and in close proximity to Hilly Fields Urban Greenspace, which in conjunction with each other, provide a green northern edge to the built area of Colchester.

Biodiversity

- Value within semi-natural woodland (Scots Pine, beech; hazel and oak coppice) and also other habitats (such as acidic grassland) within Lexden Gathering Grounds.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Lexden Gathering Grounds is managed as a Nature Reserve and although it is in close proximity to the A12 and A133 roads, is relatively tranquil in places.
- Lexden Springs Park is predominantly mown amenity grassland and functions as a recreational space for adjacent residential areas.

Movement Patterns

- Lexden Gathering Grounds are accessible from the A133 via a footpath.
- Several footpaths connect Lexden Springs Park to adjacent residential areas.

Viewing Experience

- Views across the floodplain of the Colne can be gained from higher areas of Lexden Gathering Grounds; however, intervening areas of woodland restrict long distance views.

Designations

- Part of this Character Area is within Lexden Park Conservation Area.
- Woodland within Lexden Gathering Grounds is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Spring Lane Park, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the 19th century the land remained open farmland. During the 19th century Maltings Farm was expanded and Lexden House were built. Maltings Farm house was possibly a medieval hall, with 18th century additions. The rest of the area was to remain arable land until the 20th century when it became Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve and Lexden Springs Park.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded evidence of any archaeological interest in this area..

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential encroachment from new development/expansion within adjacent residential areas.
- Maturing and eventual loss of mature woodland vegetation (Lexden Gathering Grounds).
- Vandalism of park furniture (Lexden Springs Park).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area is considered to be moderately sensitive to change. Lexden Gathering Grounds provides many important habitats and therefore has high biodiversity value. Woodland within the Gathering Grounds also contributes to the quality of the area, in terms of vegetation. There are few positive visible historic elements within the area. Although the area can be viewed from adjacent Character Areas, it is not visible from the historic core, leading to an overall moderate level of intervisibility.

C5. BOURNE AND DISTILLERY PONDS URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a linear corridor of woodland, tall grassland and stream habitats, which line the corridor of a tributary to the River Colne. Two large ponds (Bourne Pond at the eastern end and Distillery Pond at the western end) introduce a 'watery' element to the character of the area. Bourne Mill and waterwheel (originally a fishing lodge which was built in 1591) is situated adjacent to Bourne Pond and is surrounded by mature Sweet Chestnut woodland and low scrub to the south.



Bourne Mill and pond are overlooked by post-1960s housing to the north. Mature woodland lines the corridor, which connects with Distillery Ponds, further to the east of the Character Area. Distillery Ponds is surrounded by reeds and an intricate mixture of willow and alder woodland. At the eastern end of this green corridor, new development (Albany Gardens, built on the site of the old Albany Laundry) overlooks Distillery Ponds.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This Character Area is predominantly flat and is situated within the valley floor of a relatively narrow tributary of the River Colne.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This area is predominantly accessible the public, however there is delineation between public and private space close to Bourne Mill (in the west).

Open Space

- This area provides a green finger of open space, which runs between several adjacent housing areas.

Biodiversity

- Diverse, mature woodland along the corridor (including Sweet Chestnut woodland to the south of Bourne Pond and willow/alder woodland surrounding Distillery Pond).
- Area also includes tall grassland, stream and lake habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Although this area is situated in close proximity to several residential areas, there are no public footpaths leading through the area, meaning that this is generally not a busy area for pedestrians.

Movement Patterns

- See above (Land Use, Culture & Vitality).

Viewing Experience

- The area is overlooked at the western end (Bourne Pond) by housing situated on the northern, slightly sloping valley side.
- Views along this green corridor are restricted by mature woodland vegetation.

Designations

- Bourne Mill is a Listed Buildings of exceptional interest (Grade I) (see **Appendix C**).
- Bourne Mill is a Scheduled Monuments.
- The Character Area is part of the Distillery Ponds Conservation Area.
- Woodland along Distillery Lane is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Bourne Pond and Distillery Pond, Colchester are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The land is predominately arable with the only development being Bourne Mill and its associated buildings established in 1591. It was originally built as a fishing lodge, but then converted in the 19th century to a mill for fulling and then to a flourmill. The waterwheel is still in working order and the whole site is in the care of the National Trust. Cannock Mill was also built in the 19th century. Between the end of the 19th century and the end of the 20th century the land had been separated by Old Heath Road and residential housing had developed along its route.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Building there are no additional recorded visible archaeological features.

Distinctive individual buildings include:

- Bourne Mill (originally a fishing lodge, built in 1591).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and eventual loss of mature woodland vegetation along the corridor.
- Potential damage to habitats through lack of appropriate landscape management or encroachment from surrounding new development/expansion of residential areas.
- Loss or damage to setting of Bourne Mill (positive historic feature).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area contains an intricate network of valuable habitats, including woodland, tall grassland and stream habitats, which contribute to high biodiversity value. The corridor is overlooked and enclosed on both sides by built development. Potential expansion of this built development would lead to a severance of the green corridor, and would be visible both within views along the corridor and from surrounding Character Areas. Bourne Mill (including the gate lodge, watercourse, pond, watermill) add to the historic integrity and value of the area. Overall this Character Area is considered to be highly sensitive to change.

C6. HIGH WOODS COUNTRY PARK URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large greenspace runs northwards from the town centre, to countryside (farmland plateau) north of the A12. The area is designated as a Country Park and contains a diverse mixture of wildlife habitats, including woodland, grassland and lake. High Woods, a predominantly deciduous ancient woodland with diverse woodland floor, separates the northern and southern halves of the park and also provides a sense of enclosure. Residential areas surround the park to the east and west, however open views of farmland plateau and towards the skyline of the historic core can be gained from the northern and southern ends respectively. Mature vegetation surrounds the lake and several mature parkland trees are dotted throughout the park. The park provides an important recreational resource (walking, fishing, playing and relaxing) for Colchester, whilst also providing a green link between the town centre and countryside to the north.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Encompasses a small, gently sloping tributary valley of the River Colne at the southern end.
- Flatter towards the northern end of the area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This area provides a large area of publicly accessible greenspace.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure varies throughout the area, depending on proximity to woodland.
- There is a sense of openness at the northern end of the Character Area, where the Country Park approaches farmland plateau to the north of the A12.
- The central section of the area is enclosed by mature woodland, whilst the park becomes more open at the southern end, approaching the town centre.

Architecture & Built Form

- Small, brick visitor centre/information building and toilets in the southwest of the park (off Turner Road).

Open Space

- This Character Area provides a large greenspace link between the town centre and countryside at the northern edge of the built up area.
- It provides a recreational resource for the northern residential areas of Colchester and is also a nature conservation resource.

Biodiversity

- High Woods is a mature deciduous woodland (comprising a mixture of oak, sweet chestnut, hazel, lime and silver birch) with diverse understorey.
- Mosaic of grasslands, scrub and lakes (which support a good population of frogs and toads)¹⁵.
- Tall grassland to the south of the park.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area provides a local recreational resource both for adjacent residential areas and for the whole of Colchester.
- Fishing takes place on the lake.
- The park frequently has a busy feel, especially during summer and is popular with dog walkers.
- Seasonally, the area also hosts large public events, such as re-enactments events.

Movement Patterns

- Several marked footpaths link grassland and woodland areas to the lake.
- Footpaths also connect the Country Park with surrounding residential areas.

Viewing Experience

- Views to the park can be gained from adjacent residential areas, however, entrances to the park are relatively concealed.
- Views to farmland plateau from the northern end of the park.
- Views to the park from the main railway line.
- Open views to the skyline of the historic core (including 'Jumbo' and the Town Hall) from the southeastern and southwestern sides of the park.

Designations

- An unclassified earthwork is situated within the Character Area and is recorded as a Scheduled Monument.
- Friars Grove and High Woods are Ancient Woodlands.
- High Woods Grasslands is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Highwoods Country Park is a Designated Open Space. There is also a proposed extension to this open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is an unclassified earthwork in Brinkley Grove towards the north of the area. There are also two Ancient Woodlands in the area, Friars Grove and High Woods and have been woodlands since at least 1650. It was not until the 19th century when the railway was built that any form of development encroached into the area. In the 19th century there was a small farmhouse on the Severalls Estate and in 1884 it was converted into a borough isolation hospital for non-paupers. Several temporary buildings were erected for the smallpox epidemic. In 1938-40 two permanent blocks were added as well as two temporary military wards. The hospital was taken over by the National Health Service and renamed Mylands Hospital. More beds were added in 1952 for the Tuberculosis

¹⁵ *Nature Conservation Colchester: A Reference Guide* (Essex Wildlife Trust and English Nature, 1992)

outbreak, but by 1988 the number of beds had fallen. In 1989 the hospital was closed and demolished. By the end of the 20th century, the only other change to the area was the addition of a car park to the north.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Scheduled Monument there is no recorded visible archaeology.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and potential loss of woodland vegetation.
- Lack of management of wildlife habitats.
- Potential conflicts between recreational and nature conservation uses.
- Potential encroachment from expansion of or new development within adjacent residential areas.
- Tall new development within Character Areas to the south of the park, which would be highly visible within, or may block views to the historic core.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area contains mature woodland (most of which is designated as ancient) and a range of important and valuable wildlife habitats. The Country Park provides a key green link between the town centre and countryside to the north and also is an important local recreational resource. High Woods (and the surrounding grassland) are visible from parts of the historic core and landmarks within the historic skyline, such as ‘Jumbo’ and the Town Hall, are visible from the southern end of the Park. This Character Area is considered to be highly sensitive to change, particularly to new residential or commercial development within adjacent Character Areas to the south, which may block views into and out of the historic core.

C7. CASTLE PARK AND CRICKET GROUND URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the lower part of Castle Park (an amenity grassland recreational area with formal gardens, providing a setting to Colchester Castle) and a relatively large sports field/cricket ground to the north. The River Colne corridor (and associated vegetation) separates the two areas. Both areas predominantly consist of mown amenity grassland, dotted with mature deciduous parkland trees. Castle Park lies adjacent to the



town centre and contains some formal planting and seating and also colourful children's play equipment. The cricket ground is a large, formal open space which is surrounded by housing and the Cowdray Centre to the north. The River Colne, which runs through the centre of the area, is lined by mature vegetation and a concrete footpath that follows the course of the river and connects to Riverside Walk townscape Character Area (C3) to the east.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This Character Area slopes gently downwards to the north into the floodplain of the River Colne.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This area provides a publicly accessible greenspace, which is close to the town centre.

Massing & Enclosure

- Greenspace has a generally open feel, with mature vegetation at the edges and occasional mature trees within the space.
- The River Colne (which is relatively enclosed by vegetation along its banks) separates the northern and southern parts of the space,

Open Space

- This greenspace is situated adjacent to the Riverside walk (to the east) and the upper part of Castle Park (to the north), and therefore forms part of a green corridor and linking space to the north of the town centre.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value is provided by single mature trees and vegetation lining the river corridor.
- The diverse river corridor is also an important wildlife resource.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a recreational greenspace, which is used for both informal activities and formal sport (i.e. cricket).
- Due to its close proximity to the town centre, the space appears to be well utilised.

Movement Patterns

- The greenspace provides a key pedestrian link between the riverside walk and town centre and also residential areas to the north of the town.

Viewing Experience

- Open views along the corridor of the River Colne and into the adjacent section of the river corridor to the east.
- Open views to the skyline of the historic core (including 'Jumbo' and the Town Hall clock tower) from several viewpoints within Castle Park and the Cricket Ground.

Designations

- Colchester Castle Park is a Grade II Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- The River Colne corridor is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Castle Park is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been activity in this area since the Roman occupation in AD49. Defensive walls were built around the capital and parts are still clearly seen in the park today. The park itself was possibly kept as open land due to the Roman Temple that was built in the location of the Castle. Keeping openspaces around prominent and important buildings like the temple were important for the activities that went on around them and also because of the importance of the building and the impact it would have needed to impose on the people and area around it. The exact same is true for the later building of the castle, which commenced in c.1076, which was to be the largest Norman keep in Europe. Later this open space directly adjacent to the Castle was to become the Castle Park and has evolved into a social area for visitors to Colchester. Middle Mill to the north of Castle Park was a grain mill until the Black Death in 1347. After this the mill was converted to fulling, but was re-used for grain in the 15th century. The 20th century saw the space utilised in the defence of Britain during World War II with anti-tank blocks being erected.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Anti-tank blocks
- Roman Walls.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential loss of greenspace through expansion and new development within the town centre.
- Potential decline in management of open space for recreation/leisure activities.
- Loss of vegetation along the River Colne corridor.
- New built development that alters the rhythm of the skyline of the town centre

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The northern half of this area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location on the southern valley side of the River Colne, sloping upwards towards the town centre. Development within this area would be highly visible and may block views to the skyline of the historic core. The river corridor (and associated vegetation) has high biodiversity value and provides an important wildlife resource in close proximity to the town centre. Overall, this area is considered to be highly sensitive to change.

C8. COLCHESTER CEMETERY URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the main cemetery for Colchester. The cemetery is surrounded at its boundaries with mature trees and a tall wall. Several single mature trees also punctuate the space, providing separation between different areas of grave. Informal paths lead through the area, which has a strong local sense of place and also a sense of tranquillity. The space is enclosed by housing areas to the north and south, whilst it is also situated in close proximity to greenspace to the east (Bourne Pond) and west (Garrison). As a result of its function, this greenspace has similar characteristics to other cemeteries within the Borough.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat, but slopes gently downwards at the northern end, towards Bourne stream.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This space is semi-private, although it is accessible to the public throughout most of the day.

Massing & Enclosure

- Some sense of enclosure is provided by mature single trees within the space.
- The cemetery is separated from adjacent Character Areas by a wall.

Open Space

- Although this area does provide publicly accessible greenspace, its function determines that it is not a recreational space.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value within this Character Area is in the form of mature single trees within and at the edges of the site.
- Localised biodiversity value is added with shrubs and graveside vegetation.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is delineated as a cemetery.

Movement Patterns

- Several informal interconnecting footpaths run throughout the area.

Viewing Experience

- There are limited long distance views from the central part of the cemetery.
- Occasional views to adjacent Character Areas from the edges of the cemetery are possible however are restricted by mature trees and the surrounding wall.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Since 1856 the area has been used as Colchester’s main cemetery. When the cemetery was first opened it was 12 hectares (30 acres), but was enlarged in 1940 to 27 hectares (67 acres). The cemetery includes graves from both World Wars. From World War I the graves totalled over 300 and there is an area for the World War II fallen, including those killed at sea after being evacuated from Dunkirk.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Mid 18th century obelisk direction pillar, formerly standing on the High Street, now re-used as a gravestone.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and eventual loss of mature woodland vegetation within and at the boundaries of the space.
- Potential vandalism of graves and cemetery.
- Deterioration in condition of boundary wall.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The relative tranquillity of this area and mature trees, dotted within the cemetery help to create a localised sense of place within this Character Area. The mature trees also have biodiversity value. It is possible to gain occasional views into and out of the cemetery from surrounding Character Areas (moderate visual sensitivity), however overall the area is considered to be moderately sensitive to change. Its overriding use as a cemetery, however, determines that this area would not easily be able to accommodate new development.

C9. THE HYTHE URBAN GREENSPACE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated close to the Hythe and encompasses part of the River Colne and floodplain. The river is lined with mature vegetation, with rough grassland and scrub also lining the corridor. An informal footpath follows the southern bank of the river. The Character Area is situated between two industrial areas and is also in close proximity to a railway junction where two railway lines cross. Tranquillity within the area is therefore interrupted by noise from the adjacent industrial areas and from trains. An area of housing is also situated adjacent to the eastern edge of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, within the floodplain of the River Colne.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Publicly accessible greenspace area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Mature trees along the river corridor provide some sense of enclosure, however, there is also a general sense of openness.

Open Space

- This area provides an informal area of publicly accessible greenspace amongst a predominantly industrial area, however there is no space within the area to create a recreation or sport area

Biodiversity

- Mature trees and scrub along the river corridor and the River Colne provide habitats for wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly an area of rough grassland along the river corridor, which is not arranged formally for recreation or sport.

Movement Patterns

- An informal footpath follows the course of the river and links housing to the east with the space.

Viewing Experience

- Open views along and across the river corridor.

Designations

- The River Colne is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Although there is no designated open space in this Character Area there is a proposed designated open space at The Moors, Hythe.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has always remained open land due to of the River Colne running directly through it. This area has been part of the flood plain for the River Colne, thus has not been ideal land for development. The only development to have been built on this site however was a World War II Pillbox, which is situated on the bank of the River Colne, perhaps to act as a defence for the city from a river attack.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Pillbox on the bank of the River Colne.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and pollution from surrounding industrial areas and also from the railway line.
- Poor pedestrian access from adjacent areas.
- Loss of mature vegetation along the river corridor.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The river corridor has high ecological value, which is reflected in its designation as a SINC. Overall, the Character Area is not visible from the historic core and there are no views to the historic core, however the area is overlooked by adjacent Character Areas, leading to moderate overall visual sensitivity. The sense of tranquillity is disturbed by adjacent industry and its proximity to the railway line. Overall the Character Area is considered to be moderately sensitive to change. Whilst some change/new development could be accommodated, this should have regard to the setting of the river corridor.

D. VICTORIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Townscape Character Areas

- D1. Barrack Street
- D2. Maldon Road
- D3. Old Heath Road

Generic Description

Victorian suburbs are generally within close proximity to the historic core, and represent a period of expansion dating to the period between 1837 and 1901. Such suburbs within the Borough have a regular street and block pattern, with consistency in materials and architectural detail. Houses are often terraced and in some cases are interspersed with larger 'villa-style' houses. The character of the streetscape is often visually interesting as a result of pockets of vegetation within front gardens, avenues of mature trees and patterning within brickwork. Local variation in character is often based on subtle differences in architectural details, such as stained glass window details within front doors.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential area with architecture dating to the period between 1837 and 1901.
- Mixture of smaller terraced houses and larger villa-style houses.
- Regular street and block patterns.
- Predominantly red brick houses, often with bay windows, tile detailing, brickwork patterns and stained glass in front doors and windows, providing a colourful and varied streetscape.
- Often wide streets, sometimes lined with avenues of trees.
- Uniformity in architectural style and detail.

D1. BARRACK STREET VICTORIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses several parallel terraces of two-storey housing, which dates to the Victorian period. There is consistency in architectural style and detailing (red brick, tiled roofs, and white windows with white lintels). Several properties also have bay windows. On-street parking is a key characteristic of most streets within this area. The streetscape is uniform, but also hard, with few trees or vegetation detracting from the symmetrical nature of overall built form. Streets within this area feel generally quiet; with housing set back from main routes (such as Barrack Street and Old Heath Road) leading into and out of the town centre.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat, with a gentle slope towards the northern end of the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- The area is situated between two main roads which connect to the town centre (Barrack Street and Old Heath Road).
- Housing is set out along several parallel roads, which are joined towards the middle of each terrace by short connecting roads.
- Block pattern is regular and geometric.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall there is clear definition between public and private space.
- A limited number of houses have large front gardens, usually with just a small grass or planted area directly in front of the house, which is separated from the main road by a low brick wall.
- On-street parking is a key characteristic of most of the streets within this area.

Massing & Enclosure

- There is a general sense of enclosure within each street, provided by the predominantly continuous terraced nature of housing.
- Plot sizes and building styles are uniform and consistent, particularly along Morant and Harsnett Roads.

Architecture & Built Form

- There is general consistency in architecture and built form throughout the Character Area.
- Housing is set out in long terraces and exhibits several characteristics that are typical of Victorian housing areas throughout England (red brick-work, tiled roofs, symmetrical design, white sash windows and white lintels above the doors and windows).

Streetscapes

- The streetscape is coherent in terms of building style and arrangement.

- Although the streetscape is clean and well maintained, there are few street trees and on-street parking is a key characteristic of the area, which detracts from consistency in colour within the area.

Open Space

- There are no public open spaces within the Character Area, However housing is situated in close proximity to a large recreation ground immediately to the south of Harsnett Road.

Biodiversity

- There are few habitats for urban wildlife within the streetscape, with occasional small shrubs and patches of grassland in front of houses.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly residential and feels relatively quiet and tranquil, set back from the main Barrack Street and Old Heath Road.

Movement Patterns

- None of the roads within this area form main routes into Colchester and therefore traffic within the area is generally localised.
- Traffic can move relatively freely between parallel roads via short connector roads.
- There are few designated public footpaths within the area, however access to the recreation ground to the south can be gained via pavements along adjacent roads.

Viewing Experience

- At the northern end of the area, views to the entrance to part of the barracks can be gained.
- At the eastern end, the adjacent industrial area is visible within views.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Townscape Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The first recorded built evidence we have in this area is the Victorian houses that are still standing today. The Character Area is relatively close to The Hythe, an important naval area throughout history from the Romans to the Napoleonic Wars.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Materials and Architectural Details

Housing within this area is predominantly built from red brick with tiled roofs. There is consistency within both materials and details. Houses are generally terraced with white windows and white lintels above the windows and doors, providing contrast with the red brick. There are a limited number of the larger ‘villa-style’ Victorian houses within this area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Home improvements on a plot-by-plot basis (for example replacement windows) which may result in changes in the regularity and consistency of architectural style.
- Deterioration in original characteristic materials and details and potential replacement with new styles, which are out of character with existing Victorian streetscape.
- Infill development on backland (back garden) sites which does not respond to the street and block pattern, which is typical of the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Historic integrity within this Character Area is considered to be strong on account of consistency in architectural form, detail and style from the Victorian period. Overall, there is low biodiversity value within the Character Area. Whilst it is possible to see the Character Area from several adjacent Townscape Character Areas, there are no views to or from the historic core (and visual sensitivity is considered to be moderate). The area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Whilst there is some potential to accommodate small-scale development, this should reflect the coherent form, pattern, detail and skyline height of existing housing.

D2. MALDON ROAD VICTORIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Maldon Road Victorian Suburb encompasses a series of parallel streets. To the west of Maldon Road terraced houses are built from buff grey bricks, with white windows (often bay) with curved headers above upper floor windows. To the west of Maldon Road, detached and semi-detached houses are grander, predominantly red brick with large front bay windows, usually white. Occasional small trees line the relatively enclosed streets and there is varying vegetation within front gardens. On-street parking is a key characteristic of this area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, sloping gradually upwards in a southeasterly and northwesterly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Housing within this area is set out along a series of parallel roads running between Butt Road (in the east) to Maldon Road (in the west).
- Block pattern is regular and geometric, with generally larger plots to the west of the B1022.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall there is clear definition between public and private space along streets within this Character Area.
- Small front gardens are separated from the road by a series of low walls, usually red brick, occasionally painted white.

Massing & Enclosure

- The area is relatively enclosed by adjacent housing to the north and west.
- To the east the area faces part of the Garrison, which although contains open space, also gives a sense of enclosure through views to the relatively high brick walls surrounding the barracks.
- Streets feel on the whole enclosed by a generally continuous façade of terraced houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings within this area consist predominantly of terraced Victorian houses a combination of terraces and larger Victorian ‘villas’ with red or buff brick detailing.
- Housing is predominantly brick with tile roofs and characteristic white windows (some of which are original, others replaced).
- Several houses along the terraced streets have front bay windows, which are generally more ornate to the east of Maldon Road).

Streetscapes

- Overall consistency in streetscape design and detailing.
- On-street parking is a characteristic of most streets within the area.
- Occasional small trees and hedges/bushes within front gardens soften the urban streetscape.

- Narrow streets with a sense of enclosure.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Private shrub and flower planting within some of the front gardens provides habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This is predominantly a housing area which feels relatively quiet, set-back from the main Maldon Road.

Movement Patterns

- The busy Maldon Road, connecting Colchester to the north to countryside to the south (and eventually Maldon), runs through the centre of the Character Area.
- One public footpath runs through the area along Cambridge Road.

Viewing Experience

- The area is situated in close proximity to the southern edge of the historic core, however, views to and from the town centre are limited by intervening mixed-age development.
- Views are channelled along relatively enclosed straight terraced streets.

Designations

- There are three buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The first recorded built evidence we have in this area is the Victorian houses that are still standing today. The Character Area is relatively close to The Hythe, an important naval area throughout history from the Romans to the Napoleonic Wars.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building the only visible archaeological feature is the Essex County Hospital; 19th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Materials and Architectural Details

- Terraced and semi-detached ‘villa-style’ housing to the east of Maldon Road is predominantly red brick with wooden sash and bay windows (typically painted white).
- Housing to the west of Maldon Road consists predominantly of terraced and semi-detached buff or grey brick houses with white features.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition of sections of Victorian housing and replacement with modern development which is out of character with the surrounding predominantly terraced housing.
- Backland/back garden development (particularly to the west of Maldon Road) leading to modern infill which is out of character.
- Replacement of traditional Victorian features (such as windows and front doors), with modern alternatives, which reduce overall consistency in architectural style.
- Replacement of front gardens with hard surfaces to provide parking spaces/front drives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has strong historic integrity on account of the largely original red and buff-brick Victorian houses within the area. Terraced housing is rich in architectural detailing which is relatively consistent throughout the area. Although the area has overall low biodiversity value, visual sensitivity is considered to be moderate with channelled views along terraces from surrounding roads and Character Areas. Overall, sensitivity is moderate, with potential to accommodate small-scale new development, which is in keeping with local townscape character and does not detract from consistency within the streetscape.

D3. OLD HEATH ROAD VICTORIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Old Heath Road Victorian suburbs are split into three interconnecting areas, which lead off Old Heath Road, a main road link to and from the town centre. Predominantly housing with occasional short parades of shops, this area exhibits consistency in built form and streetscape. Generally housing is two-storey and terraced and built from red brick with distinctive detailing, including original white windows and colourful wood-panelled front doors. Street and block pattern are geometric and regular, providing free-flowing access between connecting parallel streets. The large Old Heath/Recreation Road recreation ground is surrounded by mature trees and punctuates the surrounding urban environment. Overall, there is a sense of tranquillity and quiet away from the main roads.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is generally flat to the south west of Old Heath Road.
- Topography begins to slope gradually downhill in a northeasterly direction across the Character Area (to the east of Old Heath Road), towards the floodplain of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is regular and geometric, with several long parallel roads connected by smaller short roads.
- Although now divided by mixed-age development along Old Heath Road (Character Area J16), the three main housing areas are all connected to Old Heath Road.
- Block pattern within the area is generally permeable, but also intricate.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally clear definition between public and private space, with small front gardens divided from the road and pavement by low walls.
- Along some streets houses face directly onto the pavement, with no space between the pavement and front door.

Massing & Enclosure

- Streets within this area feel enclosed by the continuous terraced façade and are generally secluded.
- Although some housing within the area is located in close proximity to open spaces (such as Bourne Ponds), houses usually face inwards with back gardens rather than fronts overlooking open space.

Architecture & Built Form

- Architectural style within the area is generally uniform and consistently red or buff brick terraced housing.
- Housing is typical of Victorian style with occurrences of bay windows (usually white), lintels above windows and doors and detail within the brickwork.
- St George's New Town Junior School (Canterbury Road) is a large red brick building, which dominates the streetscape within this part of the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Uniformity (in materials) and interest (colourful front doors and architectural detail) within the general streetscape.
- Occasional small trees and patches of vegetation within front gardens soften the streetscape, which is generally hard and urban.
- On-street parking is predominant along most streets within the area.

Open Space

- The recreation ground (on the corner of Old Heath Road and Recreation Road) provides diversity and an element of openness within the area.
- The recreation ground is surrounded by mature trees and also provides a relatively large and accessible area of amenity grassland, punctuating the surrounding high-density urban character.
- Several pavilions, a sports area and colourful children's play equipment are situated within the recreation ground.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees within the recreation ground are important habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Generally quiet residential area, away from the main Old Heath Road.
- Vibrant row of local shops along Claudius Road add diversity to the area.
- School and church along Canterbury Road also punctuate the residential surroundings.

Movement Patterns

- Housing is set back from Old Heath Road (a main road leading into and out of Colchester), however, traffic moves easily through the connecting smaller roads.
- A designated pedestrian route runs to the east of Port Lane and connects with other public footpaths which run along the course of the River Colne and connect with the town centre.

Viewing Experience

- Views are generally channelled along the terraced streets and although some houses do face the recreation ground, it is generally the gardens rather than the fronts which face adjacent areas of public open space.
- To the west of the area (Gordon and Berechurch Roads) there are views to adjacent Garrison land.
- At the northern edge (junction of Mersea Road and Magdalen Street), views to the Abbey Gatehouse and town centre can be gained.

Designations

- There are five buildings of special interest (Grade II) and one building of exceptional interest (Grade I) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Recreation Road is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has been predominately undeveloped since the Roman period until the 19th century when it was developed around the Army Barracks, the Hythe and woodlands. This Character Area borders with Magdalen

Street, which has been a major route to The Hythe since the Roman period, thus the area around the road also evolved during this time.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Building the following are also of visual archaeological interest within the Character Area.

- Magdalen Street, Roman Origins
- Ring Ditch

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Materials and Architectural Details

- Predominantly terraced, two-storey houses consisting of red brick with white detailing (windows) and often colourful front doors.
- Intricate brickwork detailing visible in some properties.
- Coherence of red brick dominates the character of the area, particularly around Claudius Road and Canterbury Road.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition of blocks of Victorian housing and replacement with modern development which is not in keeping with local townscape character.
- Replacement of traditional Victorian features (i.e. wooden windows and doors) with modern (often plastic) alternatives.
- Increased pressure for on-street parking, detracting from coherence of streetscape.
- Small-scale incremental changes to streetscape, such as additions of highway signage, adding clutter.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area is moderately sensitive to change or new built development. Historic integrity is strong as a result of the distinctive street and block pattern, regularity of streetscape and coherence in materials and architectural details. The northern part of the Character Area (at the junction of Mersea Road and Magdalen Street) is visible from the southern half of the historic core, which heightens its visual sensitivity. The area is also visible from D1 (Barrack Street Victorian Suburbs) across the recreation ground. The regular street pattern, coherence of urban form, architectural style and streetscape is key to the character of this area and therefore changes or new/infill development should respect and reflect this.

E. EDWARDIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential area, dating to the period between 1901 and 1915
- Uniformity in architectural style and detail
- Often terraced houses, built from red brick, very similar to Victorian housing, however with slightly less intricate detailing and patterning
- Regular street and block pattern

Townscape Character Areas

- E1. Severalls Hospital
- E2. Elmstead Road

Generic Description

Edwardian suburbs do not generally represent a period of large urban growth within Colchester Borough. Housing within this townscape character has uniformity in architectural and detail, which often has a very similar character to Victorian housing, but with slightly simpler and less intricate detailing and patterning. Street and block pattern is generally regular, with on-street car parking a key characteristic of this Townscape Character Type.

E1. SEVERALLS HOSPITAL EDWARDIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the main buildings (central, two-storey accommodation blocks linked by corridors), water tower, chapel and outlying separate villas of Severalls Hospital. The hospital was designed by Frank Whitmore (County Architect) and opened in 1913. Buildings are set within a diverse and attractive parkland landscape, containing several mature parkland trees and areas of formal planting. A circular link road surrounds the central buildings and connects to Boxted Road via entrance gates at the eastern edge of the site. Red brick dominates the architectural and visual character of the site, with consistency in built form and details. Although some of the buildings are still in use by North West Essex Mental Health Authority, a large majority of the site is derelict/abandoned, which leads to a feeling of desolation and tranquillity¹⁶.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Severalls Hospital is situated on flat land.

Street & Block Pattern

- The hospital site is distinctly separate from nearby blocks of housing.
- Form consists of a series of interconnecting buildings, which are roughly circular in overall formation and are surrounded by a circular access road from Boxted Road.
- Several smaller satellite villas and houses are situated off the main link road on the periphery of the main hospital group.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Severalls Hospital site is distinctively separated from surrounding urban Colchester to the south by mature parkland landscape, which is surrounded by metal fencing.
- Public access to the site is via an entrance lane, leading from Boxted Road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Arrangements of 'courtyard' buildings generally face towards the centre of the circular layout, creating a series of intimate spaces between buildings.
- Buildings are generally two-storeys in height, with lower connecting corridors.
- Several separate buildings, including a chapel and tall water tower.
- General sense of enclosure at the centre of the site provided by buildings and interspersed mature trees.
- Overall, the site is enclosed by suburban housing to the south and southeast and open agricultural land to the north and northwest.

¹⁶ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk/northcolchester>

Architecture & Built Form

- 'Echelon-style' hospital.
- The entirety of the main hospital buildings are consistently red brick with white glass block windows.
- A two-storey lodge masks the entrance to the site.
- A distinctive red brick landmark water tower has oblong round arch windows and is separate from the main group of hospital buildings.
- The chapel also provides interesting diversity in architectural detail, but is again predominantly red brick.
- Several glass-paned seating shelters are also dotted within the grounds of the hospital.
- Separate villa buildings are also red brick and predominantly two-storey.

Streetscapes

- The streetscape is private, with the main circular road, which surrounds the main group of buildings, creating a path through mature parkland trees which are underlain by cut grassland.
- A series of intimate spaces is created amongst the trees and buildings. However, there is also a sense of the vastness of space and general large-scale nature of the site.
- Informal paths also connect buildings and spaces.

Open Space

- The main group of buildings is surrounded by a mature parkland landscape (predominantly cut grassland), which is interspersed by several single as well as groups of mature deciduous and coniferous parkland trees.
- An overall sense of being within a 'designed' rather than a natural landscape.
- There is also detailed landscaping and planting within the grounds or 'airing courts' for former patients.
- Derelict remains of a former kitchen garden are also visible to the northwest of the building.

Biodiversity

- Large number of trees and rhododendrons provide habitats alongside formal planting areas.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A large proportion of the site is now derelict, however, some of the buildings are still used by North West Essex Mental Health Trust.
- Former use of the main buildings was as a mental hospital, including accommodation, kitchens, laundry and detached chapel.
- A series of private villas (each set within their own grounds) including Chestnut Villa, Willow House and the Oakwood Centre also housed patients.
- A new Masterplan for redevelopment of this site is currently in preparation (March 2006)¹⁷

Movement Patterns

- A main circular road encloses buildings and connects to Boxted Road in the east.
- There are several informal footpaths connecting outlying villa buildings with the main site (and also within the main site). However, access is restricted due to the derelict nature of part of the site.

Viewing Experience

- Open views into and out of the site are often restricted by mature parkland trees.
- Hospital buildings (in particular the water tower) are visible from several adjacent Character Areas.

¹⁷ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk/northcolchester>

Designations

- Severalls Hospital, is a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area of land has been relatively untouched until the 20th century when Severalls Hospital was opened in 1913. The hospital was designed by Frank Whitmore (County Architect) and replaced a rectangular pattern of agricultural fields. The wards were each intended to be occupied by a different medical class of patient, including sick and infirm, recent and acute and epileptic. The airing courts were arranged adjacent to the wards as in earlier asylum designs, and wooded parkland enclosed the building and courts. Accommodation for private patients was provided in detached villas scattered in the grounds around the main building. Much of the detailed landscaping was carried out from 1913 by patients as part of the therapeutic regime.¹⁸ 4,000 troops were billeted on the site during the First World War. Several peripheral buildings were added during the mid 20th century, including a nurses' home. The hospital closed in 1997.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Severalls Hospital; 20th century

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Main hospital buildings, separate villas, chapel and water tower are consistently red brick, usually with white windows. The layout for this building (several interconnecting wings and corridors), follows the 'echelon' style which is typical of other such hospitals used for the same purpose from this period. Even though large parts of the hospital are derelict, built form remains intact and consistency in colour and detail can still clearly be seen.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration of existing Edwardian fabric, leading to eventual loss through lack of management/conservation.
- Vandalism, due to the derelict nature of parts of the site.
- Loss of mature parkland trees due to old age or decay.
- Severance of footpaths which link the site to surrounding countryside.
- Encroachment from expansion of adjacent residential areas.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The layout of this hospital and its position within mature parkland is unique within Colchester Borough and the surrounding area. Although several buildings are derelict and require maintenance, conservation and or restoration, overall original built form is still clearly visible. The site is secluded and tranquil, yet also in a position which has easy access to open countryside (agricultural farmland plateau) to the north. The mature parkland landscape (including trees and planting areas) are key landscape and ecological features. Although the site is predominantly flat and therefore not highly visible from a distance, the water tower and chapel are landmarks which can be viewed from surrounding areas. This Character Area has high sensitivity to change on account of the original and unique layout, consistency in materials and architectural style and its position within mature parkland landscape.

¹⁸ English Heritage (Revised Version) Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England : Essex and Hertfordshire. GP3489 : Severalls Hospital (English Heritage, N.D.)

E2. ELMSTEAD ROAD EDWARDIAN SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a short row of housing, which lines Elmstead Road (a main pedestrian and bus link from the University of Essex to the town centre). The area is close proximity to the River Colne, the Hythe and the University of Essex. Housing within the area is generally isolated from other nearby residential areas within the Hythe by roundabouts and the large Tesco supermarket, which is opposite. Houses are generally raised from street level (with steep steps leading up to front doors and raised front gardens) and are predominantly brick, with consistency in architectural details. The area has a busy character on account of its proximity to several main roads and junctions.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area slopes downhill in a southwesterly direction and is on the eastern valley side of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- This short row of terraced and semi-detached houses is somewhat separated from adjacent areas of housing by the A133 and also the large roundabout which connects to the A1344.
- Housing follows the line of the main bus route and feeder road for the University of Essex.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is clear separation between private front gardens associated with housing and the main road.
- Houses and gardens are raised by up to two metres from road and pavement level (with gardens sloping upwards) and front doors accessed via several steps.

Massing & Enclosure

- A combination of semi-detached and terraced houses line Elmstead Road.
- Although a shelter belt of trees/hedge lines part of Elmstead Road, there are still open views to new development on the other side of the road.
- This row of housing feels relatively isolated.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing within the area is predominantly red brick.
- Several houses have front bay windows and varying detail within brickwork patterns.

Streetscapes

- Short section of streetscape which is relatively consistent in material, colour and detail.
- Immediately in front of housing, the western dead-end of Elmstead Road provides space for on-street parking and utilitarian street lighting.
- Varying small trees and shrubs within front gardens add diversity.

Open Space

- There is no open space within this Character Area, however housing is situated in close proximity to the Colne River corridor and also the corridor of Salary Brook (a tributary of the Colne).

Biodiversity

- Some diversity provided within front gardens, however generally few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is wholly residential and although partly lines a dead-end road (at the western end), has a generally busy feel, in close proximity to several busy roads and roundabouts.

Movement Patterns

- Housing lines one of the main pedestrian and bus routes to the campus of the University of Essex and is also in close proximity to the large Tesco supermarket, making Elmstead Road a busy link.

Viewing Experience

- Views to new residential development on western side of the road can be gained, which generally blocks views of the river corridor.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area was first developed in the Edwardian period next to the Hythe marshes, before this date it was open agricultural land.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within this area dates to the Edwardian period and is predominantly brick with tiled roofs and white detailing.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of original details such as windows and front doors leading to possible replacement with modern alternatives and a deterioration in character.
- Deterioration in built form through lack of management, leading to eventual need for replacement.
- Pressure from expansion of surrounding roads, encroaching on relatively isolated row of housing.
- Severance of link, which Elmstead Road provides between the University of Essex and the town centre.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate visual sensitivity on account of views to the river corridor and adjacent Character Areas. There are, however, no views to the historic core. Potential new development within the area may lead to a loss of consistency in block pattern and architectural style within the Character Area. Overall the area has moderate sensitivity to new development, however mitigation measure would be required to address potential visibility issues.

F. INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs within the main settlements of Colchester Borough are generally set out around a number of crescents and cul-de-sacs. There is strong consistency in architectural style and detailing, with townscape character dominated by pre-fabricated materials of a mass produced nature. Consistency in building materials contributes to a cohesive character and streetscape, which is often relatively bland, with utilitarian street lighting and paving detail. Where front gardens exist, there is usually mixed definition between public and private space, with often-stark boundaries consisting of low walls, fences and hedges. Large areas of playing fields and smaller areas of incidental green space, which are sometimes surrounded by mature vegetation, often punctuate built fabric. Predominant materials include yellow or buff brick; pebbledash and render (inter-war) and red brick lower storeys with rendered upper storeys (post-war). On-street parking is a key characteristic of inter-war housing, whilst private front drives are more of a feature of post-war areas. A common threat to townscape character within inter-war areas is conversion of front gardens to areas of hardstanding to create car parking space, leading to loss of associated wildlife habitats/biodiversity value.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential area containing a mixture of inter-war (1918-1942) and/or post-war (1946-1959) housing.

Inter-War

- Regular layout based around a number of crescents and cul-de-sacs.
- Predominantly a mixture of short terraces and semi-detached houses.
- Often weak sense of place, with standard layout and design details, using materials which have been mass produced.
- Private front gardens often enclosed by a combination of low walls, hedges and fences
- Often on-street parking.
- Houses often rendered and/or painted in cream or other light pastel colours.
- Streetscape is often utilitarian and can have a bland or harsh character .

Post-War

- Predominantly rectilinear street pattern with a mixture of semi-detached and detached houses.
- Houses often have private front gardens, containing hedges, and also private drives.
- Metal and timber casement windows.
- Houses often have red brick lower storeys with white or cream rendered upper storeys.

Townscape Character Areas

- F1. Villa Road
- F2. Halstead Road
- F3. Collingwood Road
- F4. Boadicea Road to Butt Road
- F5. Monkwick Avenue and Wethersfield Road
- F6. Defoe Crescent
- F7. Cowdray Avenue
- F8. Ipswich Road to Harwich Road
- F9. Rosebery Avenue
- F10. Canwick Grove and D'Arcy Road
- F11. Hawthorn Avenue
- F12. St. Andrews Avenue
- F13. Cheveling Road
- F14. The Commons
- F15. Boadicea Way

F1. VILLA ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of predominantly semi-detached, two-storey housing lining Villa Road which is a busy vehicular route. Residential properties have small front gardens, which provide varying habitats for wildlife, and are approximately post-war in date. Shops and a library at the northern end of the area contribute to a relatively busy character. Although views to the north and south along Villa Road are generally enclosed by housing which faces the road, in places views to the east across playing fields and west, across farmland, can be gained.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular pattern with houses lining and facing Villa Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space, with low walls or fences separating small areas of front gardens from Villa Road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density housing lining Villa Road.
- There is a sense of enclosure along Villa Road provided by semi-detached houses along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness in places along the road corridor, with views across playing fields to the east and open farmland to the west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing within the area is predominantly post-war with brick being the predominant building material with small front gardens and larger back garden plots. Houses are generally semi-detached.

Streetscapes

- Occasional street trees along Villa Road and vegetation within small front gardens provides visual interest and enhances the character of this area.

Open Space

- Small patch of amenity grassland to the west of Juniper Road.
- Few areas of public open space, however, the Character Area is in close proximity to the school playing fields which face Winstree Road and is also contains school playing fields at the northern end.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees provide habitats for urban wildlife.
- Some biodiversity value within gardens along Villa Road.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area with a row of shops and library at the northern end of Villa Road at junction with London Road.
- Area also contains a school and associated playing fields at northern end.
- Generally a busy and bustling character as a result of traffic flow along Villa Road.

Movement Patterns

- Villa Road is the main traffic link between London Road in the north and countryside to the south.
- A public footpath connects housing to Tollgate commercial and retail area to the northwest.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled views north and south along Villa Road.
- Views across playing fields to the east.
- Open views to countryside in the west.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Before development in the post-war period this area had been predominately agricultural in nature throughout recorded history.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Stanway Villa; 20th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses along Villa Road with new modern development which breaks the line of the streetscape and is also not consistent with massing, form and materials of existing houses.
- Busy traffic along Villa Road.
- Potential new development within countryside/landscape setting to the west, which would block open views out of the area.
- Deterioration of built fabric (without maintenance) on a plot-by-plot basis.
- Loss of mature vegetation (trees) within playing fields and along Villa Road.
- Planting of ornamental trees or shrubs within gardens, which are not in keeping with native species.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. There is some biodiversity value within gardens along Villa Road and mature trees contribute to this valuable habitat and also to the character of the streetscape. Historic integrity is weak, however, massing and plot pattern are consistent throughout the area. Visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to the area from countryside to the west and from playing fields.

F2. HALSTEAD ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This residential (predominantly post-war) suburb is situated at the northern edge of the urban area in close proximity to London Road. Housing is contained to the north by the corridor and embankment of the A12. To the northeast, character feels more open, with housing backing onto Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve. Street pattern is fairly regular, with housing lining Halstead Road and shorter, dead-end roads leading off this. The area has a relatively bustling character in the south, close to London Road. Character is generally quieter and more secluded in proximity to Lexden Gathering Grounds, despite proximity to the A12 corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Sloping upwards from northwest to southeast across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Fairly regular street pattern, with houses set out along two roads (Halstead Road and Felstore Drive).
- A couple of shorter, dead-end roads lead off the above roads.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space overall.
- Front gardens along Halstead Road are separated from the pavement by low walls or fences.
- Along Felstore Drive, houses face directly onto the road with little space between property and pavement.

Massing & Enclosure

- Lack of enclosure along northern edge of area, where housing backs onto Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve.
- Relatively high-density housing area with few incidental greenspaces scattered amongst the built form.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing is predominantly post-war with consistency in architectural style and detail.
- Houses are red brick with white windows.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland streetscape with little visual interest and utilitarian paving materials and lighting.

Open Space

- Few patches of incidental publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.
- Area is situated in close proximity to Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve to the north.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value within gardens of houses.
- Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve provides an important and valued wildlife resource adjacent to the northern edge of this area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A relatively secluded residential suburb, despite proximity to the A12.

Movement Patterns

- Area is situated adjacent to the A12 (dual carriageway), however, is not directly accessible from this road.
- Halstead Road provides the main vehicular access and is a relatively busy route which crosses the A12.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpsed views to Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve from northern edge of area.
- Views into and along London Road corridor from southern edge of area.
- Short-distance views to embankment of the A12.

Designations

- Firststone Drive, Colchester is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

A small area close to Lexden Park which was predominately agricultural land until the first half of the 20th century. Lexden House was situated in this Character Area as well as a limited number of other buildings, by 1881 as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. However, it was rapidly developed in the post-war period and still retains this character.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic within the A12 corridor and also lighting.
- Traffic and congestion along Halstead Road, particularly in proximity to London Road.
- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development which alters the line of the street and is not consistent with massing and form of existing housing.
- Deterioration of built fabric.
- Planting of ornamental trees or shrubs within gardens which are not in keeping with local or native species.
- Street clutter (bus shelters, lights and signage), particularly when close to London Road.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate overall sensitivity to change or new development. Biodiversity value is average within gardens, and the area is in close proximity to Lexden Gathering Grounds Nature Reserve. Overall historic integrity is weak but visual sensitivity is moderate with views to and from London Road and Lexden Gathering Grounds.

F3. COLLINGWOOD ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large inter-war/post-war suburb is fairly centrally located within the urban area and is set between Straight Road (Lexden) to the east and Lexden King George Field to the west. There is uniformity in streetscape and architectural style throughout the Character Area. Houses have a combination of terraced and semi-detached form and are usually two-storeys. Street pattern is regular and geometric, with Straight Road and London Road providing peripheral form to the area and also providing the main feeder roads to the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Fairly regular and geometric street and block pattern.
- Houses are set back from Straight Road around a number of straight, interlinking roads (e.g. Collingwood Road) and dead-end roads.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses generally have very small front gardens, or face directly onto the road.
- There is confusion in some areas between start of public space and end of private areas.

Massing & Enclosure

- Area is generally enclosed along northern, eastern and southern edges by other housing areas.
- Sense of openness/space along the western edge, where the area meets the edge of Lexden King George Field.

Architecture & Built Form

- A combination of inter-war and post-war housing with consistency in architectural style and detailing.
- Housing along Ratcliffe Road and adjacent streets is relatively distinctive in use of colours and materials with distinct 'garden-city' influences.

Streetscapes

- Some visual interest in the small front gardens along Oaklands Avenue.
- Generally bland, utilitarian streetscape with stark character.
- Occasional small street trees.
- On-street parking.

Open Space

- Housing immediately to the south of London Road and east of Collingwood Road, encloses a square area of School Playing Fields which have a generally open character.
- Further south (north of President Road) is a further area of small school playing fields

- Situated adjacent to Lexden King George Field, a large publicly accessible open space.

Biodiversity

- Low biodiversity value within front gardens, average wildlife habitats within back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area which is relatively quiet, set back from Straight Road.

Movement Patterns

- London Road (to the north) and Straight Road (to the east) carry most of the traffic around the periphery of the area.
- Collingwood Avenue and Dugard Avenue also have a busy character (with quieter roads leading off them).
- A public footpath runs to the north of Oaklands Avenue and connects the area to Lexden King George Field.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few views from the area to anything other than adjacent housing areas.
- Glimpse views across Lexden King George Field to the west.

Designations

- Gryme's Dyke Middle Scheduled Monument runs through this Character Area.
- Lexden King George Field, Lexden is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has evidence of Iron Age and Roman ditches, but stayed relatively open land until the mid 20th century the area was developed for residential expansion.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument, visible archaeology within the Character Area includes:

- Oakland Avenue, Iron Age/Roman ditches.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic congestion along Straight Road, London Road and Collingwood Road.
- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development which alters the line of the street and overall consistency in form along the streetscape.
- Deterioration of built fabric.
- On-street parking.
- Street clutter (lightning and signage).
- Lack of pedestrian connectivity and legibility both within areas and to surrounding areas.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Generally this Character Area has low visual sensitivity with few long-distance or short-distance views to surrounding Character Areas, as well as to Lexden King George Field to the west. Biodiversity value is low and historic integrity mixed, resulting in overall low sensitivity to change or new build development, despite intact and cohesive inter-war/post-war street pattern and layout.

F4. BOADICEA ROAD TO BUTT ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large inter-war suburb extends southeastwards from the town centre (historic core) and is contained by the line of Butt Road and the Garrison to the east. There is uniformity in character throughout the area as a result of consistency in materials (predominantly buff/yellow brick), streetscape and architectural form. The suburb is relatively high density with most houses or flats facing directly onto the road with small, narrow back gardens. There are generally a limited number of pockets of open space punctuating the built form, other than a triangular allotment area to the north of Drury Road and Football Ground to the north of Rainsborowe Road.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gently sloping downwards from southeast to northwest across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular and uniform close-knit street pattern which is set out along a number of short and straight parallel roads connecting Butt Road and Boadicea Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Front gardens, where present, are enclosed by stark, low brick walls, wooden fences and metal gates.
- On-road parking is combined with lay-bys and off-road car parks.

Massing & Enclosure

- High density housing area with few areas of public open space other than allotments to the north of Drury Road and the Football Ground to the west of Butt Road.
- Combination of semi-detached, terraced two-storey houses and three- to four-storey flats.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses and flats are predominantly yellow and brown brick with relatively simple and 'pre-fabricated' architectural style and white window frames (often metal).

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape in terms of parking, lighting and layout.
- General uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable localised sense of place.

Open Space

- Triangular allotments to the north of Drury Road.
- Enclosed semi-private rectangular football ground to the west of Butt Road.
- Allotments to the west of Irvine Road (at the western edge of the Character Area).

Biodiversity

- Generally weak/low, with some low hedges at front garden boundaries and occasional mature trees providing wildlife habitats.
- Allotments provide a key resource for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area with a bustling character.
- Rows of shops are also scattered sporadically within area, with flats/accommodation above.
- Allotment gardens.

Movement Patterns

- Butt Road and Boadicea Road are busy vehicular routes.
- Pedestrian access is fairly legible via pavements along a series of short parallel roads connecting Butt Road and Boadicea Road.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to the perimeter of the Garrison to the east (combination of wall and hoarding at perimeter).
- Views to large wedge of typically open playing fields within adjacent Character Areas (F15 to the south and J22 to the north).

Designations

- There is one Listed Building, 28 Lexdon Road, which is of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- Philip Morant School, Colchester is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There was little development in this area by the 19th century, with Drury Farm and several houses being present. By the middle of the 20th century the whole Character Area had been residentially developed.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building, there are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic congestion along Butt Road and Boadicea Road.
- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Deterioration/loss of front garden boundaries (where present).
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.
- Plot replacement with buildings of a different style/form to existing character and form.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity and weak historic integrity. Visual sensitivity is also low, with few views out of the area, other than to playing fields within adjacent areas and the perimeter of the Garrison to the east. As a result of this, overall sensitivity to change of new built development is low. Potential small-scale new development should, however, reflect the coherence of architectural form and street pattern/line.

F5. MONKWICK AVENUE AND WETHERSFIELD ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large, predominantly inter-war suburb is situated at the southern edge of the urban area and lines the eastern edge of Blackheath Road. Character within the area is dominated by the coherent and uniform nature of inter-war housing (predominantly yellow brick with white windows). This is arranged as short terraces or semi-detached homes along a series of short roads and closes which lead off Monkwick Avenue and Wethersfield Road. In the northern half of the area a large band of playing fields dominates the character and gives a localised, recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Combination of slightly curved streets (circular link roads and closes), leading to the east and west of Monkwick Avenue and Wethersfield Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Front gardens (where present) enclosed by stark, low brick walls, wooden fences and metal gates.
- On-road parking combined with a lay-by and off-road car parks.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high-density housing area, however, generally well-spaced areas of incidental amenity grassland are interspersed with the built fabric.

Architecture & Built Form

- Dominant material is yellow or brown brick with white window frames.
- Combination of two-storey houses (either terraced or semi-detached) and three- or four-storey flats.
- Consistency in materials and detailing.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape in terms of parking, lighting and layout.
- General uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable localised sense of place.

Open Space

- Pockets of mown amenity grassland dotted throughout the area.
- Large area of public and semi-private playing fields within the northern half of the area (between School Road and Queen Elizabeth Way) partly associated with the school.

- Allotment gardens to the north of school and sports centre complex.
- Adjacent to Colchester Cemetery to the north.

Biodiversity

- Important wildlife habitats within allotment gardens and some wildlife value in trees within and surrounding playing fields.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly, fairly quiet, residential area with a few rows of shops (with accommodation above).
- Allotment gardens.
- Playing fields.
- School Sports Centre Complex.

Movement Patterns

- Markwick Avenue and Wethersfield Road are busy traffic routes.
- Several interconnecting footpaths cross the area.

Viewing Experience

- Pylons crossing the area are a detracting landmark.
- Glimpse views to Middlewick Ranges from eastern edge of area.
- Views to the Garrison and perimeter boundary to the west.
- Views to Colchester Cemetery to the north.

Designations

- Monkwick County Junior School, Colchester is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area was predominately agricultural land until the 20th century, although Monkwick Farmhouse moat, is recorded in this area which would suggest medieval activity.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Monkwick Farmhouse moat.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and noise associated with Monwick Avenue and Wethersfield Road.
- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Deterioration/loss of front garden boundaries (where present).
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of low biodiversity value, weak historic integrity and high recreatability. Overall visual sensitivity is mixed with views to surrounding Character Areas in certain locations.

F6. DEFOE CRESCENT INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This small inter-war suburb is isolated from other areas of inter-war/post-war development, situated at the northern extent of Colchester urban area, immediately to the south of Severalls Hospital. Housing within this area is of a 'classic' inter-war style with houses (terraces and semi-detached houses) facing Defoe Crescent and very little space between buildings and pavement. There is consistency in both architectural style and detail and on-street parking is a key characteristic of the area. Buildings are arranged around Defoe Crescent, which is slightly curved and joins Mayland Road to the west.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Typically flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, simple pattern with all houses facing Defoe Crescent.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Unclear definition between public and private space with housing generally facing directly onto the pavement, or with very small patches of mown amenity grassland.

Massing & Enclosure

- Site is overlooked by relatively new northern approach road to the north and generally faces open edges of adjacent mixed age suburbs to the south and west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Stark architectural character.
- Uniformity in materials and details.
- Brick is dominant material.
- Colourful front doors.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape in terms of parking, lighting and layout.
- General uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable localised sense of place.
- On-street parking is typical of this area.

Open Space

- No open space within the area, however, housing is situated in close proximity to parkland associated with Severalls Hospital to the north.

Biodiversity

- Little biodiversity value with generally few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Quiet, secluded residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Defoe Crescent is a quiet access road, with generally little traffic.
- Situated in close proximity to new busy northern link road.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to parkland and mature trees associated with Severalls Hospital from back gardens along eastern side of Defoe Crescent.
- Generally few views to adjacent residential areas, with short-distance views channelled along Defoe Crescent.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is little of historic interest in this area and it remained in agricultural use until the 20th century when the area was developed during the inter-war period for residential use.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall biodiversity value within this area is low as a result of few front gardens and small back gardens. Re-creatability is mixed as a result of this 'key' exemplar of inter-war housing/architecture within the northern urban area. Visual sensitivity is, however, low and as a combination of these points, overall sensitivity to change or new built development is low.

F7. COWDRAY AVENUE INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of predominantly post-war housing lines the northern side of Cowdray Avenue and overlooks greenspace along the River Colne corridor. Architectural style and detail is typical of other such post-war developments with consistency in form and layout. Predominantly two-storey and semi-detached houses with little space between house and pavement and back, rather than front gardens. Housing is slightly set back from Cowdray Avenue and therefore, although this main road has a dominant visual and audible influence on character, there is still a sense of place associated with this relatively short avenue of housing.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Simple street pattern, with house plots following the line of Cowdray Avenue.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between space in front of houses and adjacent to the pavement or road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of space due to lack of enclosure along southern side of Cowdray Avenue.

Architecture & Built Form

- Semi-detached and red and brown brick houses with porches and white windows.
- Typical of other post-war housing areas within the Borough.

Streetscapes

- Visual interesting streetscape on account of avenue of mature trees lining Cowdray Avenue.

Open Space

- No open space within the Character Area.
- Area overlooks Riverside Walk urban greenspace to the south.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value within back gardens.
- Mature trees provide wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Quiet residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Cowdray Avenue is a busy main route which is often congested. There are poor pedestrian linkage between the area and river corridor/greenspace to the south of Cowdray Avenue, although there are a couple of public footpaths.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to greenspace on opposite side of Cowdray Avenue.
- Views along Cowdray Avenue and to adjacent commercial (Cowdray Centre) to the west.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

A very small Character Area that was until the 20th century agricultural in nature. The area has evolved to a housing area and now sits next to the railway and an industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity of New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. The avenue of trees lining Cowdray Avenue are an important visual landscape features, which contribute to townscape character and a recognisable sense of place. Visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to and from greenspace along the river corridor to the south. Biodiversity value is also average.

F8. IPSWICH ROAD TO HARWICH ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This residential area comprises predominantly inter-war semi detached and terraced houses and bungalows. Housing is fairly dense and laid out as crescents with dead ends leading off main roads. This Character Area is split into two parts, which are divided by a large recreation ground. Willowbrook Primary School is located within the residential area. There is clear definition between public and private space, provided by low brick walls, fences and gates, creating an overall stark and bland character.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat.
- Overlooks the railway line, which is in steep cutting, to the north.
- Also overlooks a large recreation ground, which is set within a valley, housing a tributary of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Housing is set out in one main crescent (Goring Road/Wilson Marriage Road) with a number of dead ends leading off the main Harwich and Ipswich Roads.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is a clear definition between public and private space.
- Front gardens are enclosed by stark low brick walls, wooden fences and metal gates.
- Parking is split between a combination of front-drives and on-road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Fairly high-density estate, however, the majority of plots have front and back gardens.
- Character Area feels self-contained, with all houses overlooking the linking roads.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly brick semi-detached houses and bungalows with front porches and tile roofs.
- Some houses have coloured plaster fascia and others have pebble-dash concrete upper storeys.
- Built form is generally very uniform.

Streetscapes

- Overall the streetscape is bland, stark and uniform.
- There are a few small street trees within small roadside mown grassland verges.
- Utilitarian bollards and street lighting.
- Generally little vegetation within front gardens, emphasising the uniform and stark built-form.
- Local sense of place is provided by the uniform architectural style.

- There are no views to the historic core or Colne River Valley.
- Front garden boundaries are generally in good condition.

Open Space

- General lack of public open space amongst housing, however, there are occasional small courtyard greenspaces, comprising mown amenity grassland and trees.
- Housing area is also served by large recreation ground to the east.

Biodiversity

- Weak, few hedges and occasional small street trees.
- Several mature trees within front gardens along Goring Road.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential.

Movement Patterns

- Away from the main Ipswich and Harwich roads, this residential area is quiet and not busy with traffic.

Viewing Experience

- Views of railway line, in cutting, to the north.
- Views to housing to the east on the opposite side of the valley (TCA H13).

Designations

- North of Harwich Road and St Andrew's Garden, Colchester are designated open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Although close to Colchester town centre there is no evidence of settlement in this Character Area until the mid 20th century when the area was developed into a residential estate.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Further additions of front garden boundaries in a potential range of different materials.
- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity, although housing is consistently from the inter-war period and could be said to show architectural continuity. Visual sensitivity is moderate, particularly in places along the southern edge with views to playing fields in the adjacent Character Area, which is set within a valley. Overall sensitivity to change or new development is therefore moderate.

F9. ROSEBERY AVENUE INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively small post-war suburb contains semi-detached houses which are set out within a 'D' pattern around Rosebery Avenue and Smithies Avenue. Architectural style and materials are consistent throughout the area, denoting a cohesive and recognisable character. Despite proximity to the town centre, East Hill (the main road and commercial area) and the railway corridor, this area has a secluded and private character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Situated on the slightly sloping/curving valley side of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Relatively curvilinear street pattern with housing set out along the D-shaped arrangement of Rosebery Avenue and Smithies Avenue.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between small patches of front garden and adjacent pavement/road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing area which is enclosed to the north by the backs of buildings along East Hill and by the corridor of the railway line to the south.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly post-war red brick housing with uniformity in architectural style and details.

Streetscapes

- Occasional trees along Rosebery Avenue provide visual interest.
- Otherwise a generally utilitarian streetscape.

Open Space

- Other than private back gardens there is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low value throughout the area, with some wildlife habitats within back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Quiet, secluded residential area, despite proximity to historic core (town centre) and railway line.

Movement Patterns

- Rosebery Avenue provides the main vehicular access to the area, which joins East Hill to the north.

Viewing Experience

- Occasional views to embankment of the railway corridor.
- Intervisibility along East Hill from northern end of East Hill with the historic core.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area lies close to the eastern Roman Walls and historic East Street, yet there had not been any settlement in this area until the first quarter of the 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise associated with railway corridor.
- On-street parking.
- Single plot replacement with new/modern buildings of a different style and massing and using architectural style/details which are not consistent with existing character.
- Congestion associated with nearby town centre.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate visual sensitivity, particularly along the northern edge, where views along East Hill (historic core) can be gained. Biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak, resulting in moderate sensitivity to change or new development overall.

F10. CANWICK GROVE AND D'ARCY ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of inter-war/post-war housing can be separated into two areas of similar architectural periods, but with different layouts and overall street pattern. Housing along Canwick Grove and Cavendish Avenue is high density, whilst housing lining D'Arcy Road is much lower density with distinctly larger and longer plots. Both sub-areas are accessed via Old Heath Road to the east and have coherent character as a result of materials and architectural details. Sense of place is recognised by views to the large light industrial/commercial development on the opposite side of Old Heath Road and views to Middlewick Firing Ranges to the west.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Sloping gradually upwards from east to west across the Character Area, on the western side of the Colne Valley.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern along Canwick Grove is regular and roughly grid-based with uniform plot-size and arrangement.
- Street pattern along D'Arcy Road to the south is much more spacious, with larger, longer plots leading off D'Arcy Road and the parallel streets to the south.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space.
- Few houses have front gardens, although houses along D'Arcy Road have small gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- Canwick Grove is high-density housing, whilst D'Arcy Road has a much lower density.
- The area is enclosed to the north, east and south by housing, however, Middlewick Ranges to the west provide a sense of openness.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly post-war housing along D'Arcy Road.
- Inter-war and post-war housing within Canwick Road.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with little variation in paving or materials and a lack of street trees.

Open Space

- No open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Canwick Road, Cavendish Avenue and D'Arcy Road provide main access routes from Old Heath Road to the east (none of which are particularly busy traffic routes).

Viewing Experience

- Views to large industrial and commercial area on opposite side of Old Heath Road.
- Glimpse views across Middlewick Firing Ranges to the west.
- No views to or from Colchester historic core.

Designations

- Heathfield is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Mainly an agricultural Character Area, apart from the small village of Old Heath, there are several farms recorded during the 19th and 20th centuries. The area was residentially developed during the inter-war and post-war period.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building there are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war and post-war periods and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with these architectural styles.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with industrial and commercial area on opposite side of Old Heath Road.
- On-street parking.
- Loss of consistency in architectural style and detail through deterioration of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Visual sensitivity throughout the area is moderate with views to and from Middlewick Ranges and the industrial/commercial area on the opposite side of Old Heath Road. Overall sensitivity to change or new development is, however, low on account of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

F11. HAWTHORN AVENUE INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively high-density area of inter-war housing consists of a combination of two-storey semi-detached and terraced houses with two and three-storey flats set out in a courtyard layout. Hazlemere Infant and Nursery School and Sir Charles Lucas Arts College are located within the residential area. There is overall uniformity in architectural style, which leads to a recognisable localised sense of place. Overall, however, the streetscape is bland and utilitarian with a limited number of public open spaces punctuating built-form.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Houses set out around a number of closes and dead-ends - leading from Hawthorn Avenue, which is the main connector to adjacent areas, and Hickory Avenue.
- Overall uniform street pattern.
- Combination of two-storey semi-detached and terraced houses, and two- and three-storey flats.
- Flats are often arranged in courtyards.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Average division between public and private space.
- Some houses have private front gardens, which are delineated by low trimmed hedges and concrete post and chainlink fencing.
- Combination of off and on-road parking.

Massing & Enclosure

- High-density large-scale housing area.
- Occasional small areas of incidental public open space, consisting of mown amenity grassland with mature trees.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses and flats predominantly yellow and brown brick with white window frames,
- Chimneys typical on houses within this area.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape,
- There is general uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable local sense of place.
- Few views out of the Character Area and no views to the historic core.

Open Space

- Playing fields associated with Hazlemere Infant and Nursery School and Sir Charles Lucas Arts College provide largest greenspaces within area,
- Overall lack of small pockets of public open space,
- Access to adjacent greenspace and woodland to west.

Biodiversity

- Weak biodiversity value with some low trimmed hedges as front garden boundaries and occasional mature trees providing wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential.
- Modern Greenstead Community Centre building at centre of area.
- Primary and secondary schools and playing fields.

Movement Patterns

- Hawthorn Avenue is a busy main road.

Viewing Experience

- Few views to outside area.

Designations

- Gardenia Walk, Greenstead and South of Harwich Road, Colchester are designated open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Situated across the Hythe from Colchester there was very limited activity in this area until the 19th century when several farms and houses are recorded. By the 20th century the area developed with inter-war housing with several pockets of open space.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development which alters the line of the street and overall consistency in form along the streetscape.
- Deterioration of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new build development. There are few views outside the area, however, playing fields at the eastern, southern and western edges of the area are visible from adjacent post-1960s and mixed-age suburbs. Biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak.

F12. ST. ANDREWS AVENUE INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This long, linear post-war suburb lines St Andrews Road and extends towards Greenstead and The Hythe in the southeast. Architectural style and detail is typical of other such post-war developments, with consistency in form and layout, predominantly two-storey and semi-detached houses, with little space to the front of houses, separating fascia from the adjacent pavement or road. The area is enclosed by mixed age housing, associated with The Hythe, to the south and post-1960s and inter-war housing to the east.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, overlooking the floodplain of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Simple street pattern with house plots following the line of St Andrews Avenue.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between space in front of houses and adjacent pavement or road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Generally enclosed by housing on all sides.

Architecture & Built Form

- Semi-detached red and brown brick houses with porches and white windows.
- Typical of other post-war housing areas within the Borough.

Streetscapes

- Generally coherent streetscape with some on-street parking.

Open Space

- No open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Average to low biodiversity value within back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Bustling residential area.

Movement Patterns

- St Andrews Avenue is a busy main route which is often congested.

Viewing Experience

- Few long distance views from area.
- Short-distance views to adjacent Character Areas.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

A strip of post-war housing facing the main road, the area was predominately agricultural land around the village of Greenstead until this small housing development was built in the first half of the 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the post-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development which alters the line of the street and overall consistency in form along the streetscape.
- Deterioration of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development. Overall visual sensitivity is low, with generally only views to adjacent Character Areas. Biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak. Potential new development should, however, respect the layout and coherence in form and detail of architecture throughout the Character Area.

F13. CHEVELING ROAD INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This suburb of inter-war housing is situated close to the southern edge of Colchester's urban area and is set back from Old Heath Road, which runs to the east of the area. Housing is set out in a slightly curvilinear pattern following Cheveling Road. There is consistency in architectural style, form and materials, which are typical of this period. Sense of place is recognised by views to the large industrial/commercial development on the opposite side of Old Heath Road and views to Middlewick Firing Ranges to the west.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Sloping gradually upwards from east to west across the Character Area on the western side of the Colne Valley.

Street & Block Pattern

- Slightly curvilinear street pattern with several relatively narrow and uniform plots set out along Cheveling Road and Speedwell Road.
- Houses are also set out along a short straight road (Cottage Drive) to the north of the main area of housing.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space.
- A limited number of houses have front gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- High density housing area.
- Area is enclosed to the north east by housing, however, a sense of openness exists along the southern and eastern edges where the Character Area borders Middlewick Ranges (to the west) and open countryside to the south.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly inter-war housing with consistency in architectural style and detail, as is typical of this period.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with little variation in paving or materials and a lack of street trees.

Open Space

- Square playing fields to the east of Cottage Drive.
- Rectangular block of open space separating housing along Cottage Drive from that lining Cheveling Road.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Cheveling Road and Speedwell Road are generally quiet access/feeder roads from Old Heath Road to the east.

Viewing Experience

- Views to large industrial and commercial area on opposite side of Old Heath Road.
- Glimpse views across Middlewick Firing Ranges to the west.
- No views to or from historic core.

Designations

- Old Heath Road, Colchester is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is little record of activity in this area before the 19th century. The village of Old Heath borders this Character Area, around this village can be found a few small buildings and arable land. The 20th century brought inter-war housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Anti-Tank Cubes, 370 Old Heath Road, World War II

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with industrial and commercial area on opposite side of Old Heath Road.
- On-street parking.
- Loss of consistency in architectural style and detail through deterioration of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Visual sensitivity throughout the area is moderate with views to and from Middlewick Ranges and the industrial/commercial area on the opposite side of Old Heath Road. Overall sensitivity to change or new development is, however, low on account of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

F14. THE COMMONS INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The character of this area is generally similar to that of F4 and F15 (both of which are in close proximity to this area). The Commons inter-war suburb is located within Shrub End, towards the southwestern edge of the urban area. Street pattern combines regularity with several curved roads or crescents. The suburb is high density and houses are predominantly two-storey terraces, whilst flat blocks are three- or four-storey often with associated car parking. There are several relatively large greenspaces within the area, including school playing fields and recreation grounds, which break up the urban, often stark character of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is predominately flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Streets are predominantly set out as a mixture of curvilinear and regular pattern with several roads leading off two main through-routes (Commons Road and King Harold Road).
- Block pattern is fairly irregular and generally flowing.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Definition between public and private space is varied.
- Most houses have small front gardens which separate houses from the road or pavement.
- Garden boundaries are usually delineated by low brick walls or fences of varying materials.
- In some cases, front gardens have been converted into drives and parking with hard surfaces.

Massing & Enclosure

- High-density housing area, interspersed with school playing fields (west of the Commons) and recreation ground (north of Baden Powell Drive), plus other smaller areas of incidental greenspace usually mown amenity grassland.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses and flats are predominantly yellow and brown brick with a relatively simple and 'pre-fabricated' architectural style and white window frames (often metal).

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape in terms of parking, lighting and layout.
- General uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable localised sense of place.

Open Space

- School playing fields to the west of the Commons.
- Recreation ground to the north of Baden Powell Drive.
- Other small pockets of amenity grassland/greenspace

Biodiversity

- Generally weak/low, with some low hedges at front garden boundaries and occasional mature trees providing wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area with a bustling character.
- Rows of shops also scattered sporadically within area with flats/accommodation above.
- Allotment gardens.

Movement Patterns

- The Commons and King Harold Road provide main (relatively busy) feeder roads to the area.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views predominantly from back gardens to Lexden Park in the north.
- Open views across Lexden Dyke to school playing fields with TCA J22 to the north.
- Views to allotments within TCA F4 from the eastern edge of the area.

Designations

- 83 King Harold Road is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Heath Farm Dyke Middle (rear of Alan Way) is a Scheduled Monument which runs through the area.
- Straight Road, Scythe Way and Regency Green are designated open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There have been defences in this area since the Iron Age with Lexden Dyke still remaining. This Character Area is also the supposed site for the Roman Military or Beacon. Little else is recorded until the 19th century when a few farms were noted in the 1881 Ordnance Survey map, although by the early 20th century the area was fully developed with housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Building, there are no recorded visible archaeological features within the Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with The Commons and King Harold Road.
- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Deterioration/loss of front garden boundaries (where present).
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.
- Plot replacement with buildings of a different style/form to existing character and form.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity with few views into or out of the area. Overall this area has low sensitivity to change or new development.

F15. BOADICEA WAY INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The character of this area is generally similar to that of F4 and F14 (both in close proximity to this area). Boadicea Way inter-war suburbs are located within Shrub End, in close proximity to the southwestern edge of the urban area. The area is enclosed by housing to the west and east and is separated from F14 to the west by a line of mixed-age suburban houses following Maldon Road (J21). Several large areas of open space punctuate the urban form and pattern, providing contrast with surrounding high density, cohesive character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Streets are slightly ‘wavy’ rather than completely straight and housing is set out along a series of inter-linking short roads and Hazell Avenue.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Definition between public and private space is varied.
- Most houses have small front gardens which separate houses from the road or pavement.
- Garden boundaries are usually delineated by low brick walls or fences (of varying materials).
- In some cases, front gardens have been converted into drives and parking (with hard-surfaces).

Massing & Enclosure

- High-density housing area interspersed with school playing fields and other smaller areas of greenspace.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses and flats are predominantly of yellow and brown brick with a relatively simple and ‘pre-fabricated’ architectural style and whit window frames (often metal).

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape in terms of parking, lighting and layout.
- General uniformity and harmony in architectural style and detail which promotes recognisable localised sense of place.

Open Space

- School playing fields to the east of Bishop Road west of Layer Road and east of Maldon Road.
- West End and Shrub End Sports Grounds are located to the northeast of Boadicea Way.

Biodiversity

- Generally weak/low biodiversity value with some low hedges at front garden boundaries and occasional mature trees providing wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area with a bustling character.
- Rows of shops are also scattered sporadically within the area with flats/accommodation above.
- Allotment gardens.

Movement Patterns

- Several main link roads run through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Short distance views to adjacent Character Areas including the perimeter of the Garrison to the east.

Designations

- Shrub End Road Sports Ground is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has very little recorded historical interest and remained in agricultural use until the 20th century. The first houses in this area were built between 1918 and 1935 and the area was further developed in the post-war period.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with Boadicea Way.
- On-street parking.
- Deterioration in built fabric through age and lack of maintenance.
- Harsh, utilitarian streetscape character.
- Deterioration or loss of front garden boundaries (where present).
- Replacement of front gardens with areas of hardstanding to provide extra car parking.
- Plot replacement with buildings of a different style/form to existing character and form.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity with few views into or out of the area. Overall this area has low sensitivity to change or new development.

G. GARRISON TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

This Townscape Character Type is unique to Colchester, in the sense that it does not recur within the other main settlements in the Borough – Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. The Garrison incorporates a large ‘wedge’ of land, which is owned by the Ministry of Defence within the southern half of Colchester’s urban structure, running from the historic core (in the north) to open countryside (landscape setting) to the south. Character within this type is currently in a state of rapid change and flux with Garrison land currently forming one of the Colchester’s Regeneration areas. Areas within this type generally have a busy and vibrant character associated with use of the area by military personnel. Character is dominated by a combination of large, relatively regular blocks of barrack buildings (with associated car parking), small housing estates and open sports ground/playing fields.

Key Characteristics

- A mixture of housing and open space, which is owned by the Ministry of Defence.
- The area also contains office and headquarter buildings.
- Housing is set out in a combination of barracks and housing estates, which range in age from Victorian to Post-1960s.
- Combination of open playing/training fields and military training ranges.
- Enclosed from surrounding Character Areas through a combination of security fences and barriers.
- Busy and vibrant character.

Townscape Character Areas

- G1. Cavalry, Le Cateau and Goojerat Barracks
- G2. Merlin Road
- G3. Roman Barracks
- G4. Abbey Field
- G5. Clive Road
- G6. Breachfield Road
- G7. Earslwood Way
- G8. Homefield Road

G1. CAVALRY, LE CATEAU AND GOOJERAT BARRACKS GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This generally flat Character Area encompasses a number of separate barrack blocks (Le Cateau, Cavalry and Goojerat) within Colchester Garrison. At the northern, eastern and western edges, the site is surrounded by a tall red brick wall which restricts public access to the site. Garrison buildings can be accessed via a relatively grand gated entrance. Several of the Garrison buildings are Victorian (red brick with yellow stone and white detailing) and provide considerable historic interest within the Character Area. Rows of, and single mature parkland trees, are dotted throughout the area; and barrack buildings are often surrounded by areas of hardstanding and mown grassland. Open views across Abbey Fields (to the south) can also be gained. Cohesive character within the area is currently affected by ongoing regeneration works (March 2006) and it is possible that buildings within the space and layout of the area may change (full access to the site was not possible).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat and slopes very gradually upwards in a southerly direction throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Comprises a number of separate barracks (Le Cateau, Cavalry and Goojerat), which are linked by Circular Road North, Circular Road West and Circular Road East.
- To the west of Goojerat Barracks, semi-detached housing is clustered around a number of short dead-end roads leading off Cambrai Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- All buildings and space within this area have restricted public access.
- Barracks, open space and Garrison housing are separated from surrounding residential areas by brick walls and a range of high fences, with gated, barrier entrances to the Garrison.

Massing & Enclosure

- Barracks consist of a series of accommodation blocks which are surrounded by areas of hardstanding and grassland.
- Although there is a general sense of enclosure within the Garrison as a whole (as a result of the perimeter walls and fences), generally there is also a sense of space, with barracks overlooking greenspace.

Architecture & Built Form

- Le Cateau Barracks is a two-storey red brick building with details in yellow stock brick and York stone (and white windows).
- Associated stable blocks and soldiers' quarters are built in a similar style from similar materials.
- A single-storey school, red brick riding school and water tower are also associated with the barracks.

- Le Cateau and Cavalry Barracks are surrounded by a tall, red brick wall and are accessed via a wrought-iron gated entrance.
- The former Garrison Theatre is late Victorian in date, and of red brick with white window frames and lintels.
- The gymnasium is also red brick and overlooks Abbey Field to the south.
- There are also post-1960s buildings adjacent to the barracks.¹⁹

Streetscapes

- There is generally little defined streetscape in the formal sense, other than along Cambrai Road (and adjoining roads) where lighting and design is utilitarian.

Open Space

- Le Cateau Barracks overlooks a large open greenspace (predominantly mown grass).
- Greenspace is also situated in front of the Officer's quarters.

Biodiversity

- Several mature trees adjacent to Goojerat Barracks and mature parkland trees on Sobraonsite.
- Mature trees line Flagstaff Road and Circular Road North (set out as an avenue) and provide important habitats and are also a key visual element.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area consists of several barracks which provide military accommodation, alongside other 'facility' buildings (i.e. theatre).
- The use of these buildings is changing, with the whole area forming part of the 'Colchester Garrison Regeneration Area'.²⁰

Movement Patterns

- Movement into and out of the Garrison is restricted, however, once inside the site, vehicular links are provided by a series of connecting roads (Circular Road North, Circular Road South, Circular Road East and Circular Road South).

Viewing Experience

- Open views south across Abbey Fields from Circular Road North and Circular Road South.
- Historic barrack buildings and the high perimeter red brick walls are visible within most views across the area.

Designations

- There are eight Barrack blocks listed as buildings of special interest (Grade ii) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Benedictine Abbey which is a Scheduled Monument is within this Character Area.
- Berechurch Road and St Botolph's Roundabout are designated open spaces.

¹⁹ Colchester Garrison Development Brief (CBC/ECC, November 2002)

²⁰ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk> & Colchester Garrison Urban Village Masterplan (CBC/EEC, November 2002)

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Historically this site has been in use since the Roman period, but it has only been recently that remains have been found in the form of a Roman circus. Between then and now arable land has been covering this area until the late 18th/early 19th century when the area was turned into a military ground.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed buildings within the Character Area the following are of visible archaeological interest:

- Ice House, East Hill House;
- Site of St Katherines Hospital;
- Site of the chapel of St Mary;
- Ice House in the grounds of East Hill House;
- St John's Abbey gatehouse;
- Brick Pillar, Colchester Garrison; 20th century;
- Reed Hill Avenue, boundary post; 19th century;
- Circular Road, West Colchester, boundary post.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Several of the red brick barrack buildings are Victorian c. 1863, and provide historic interest within the Character Area (reflected in their designation as Listed Buildings).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in condition of built form/materials on barrack buildings through lack of maintenance.
- Pressure on Garrison land to be made available for other uses due to close proximity to the Town Centre.
- Maturing and eventual loss of mature trees within the Character Area, leading to a loss of character.
- Ongoing works and transport/plant associated with redevelopment of the whole Garrison area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate visual sensitivity. Whilst Garrison buildings can be seen from adjacent Garrison Character Areas, views to the area from surrounding areas to the north and west (outside the Garrison) are restricted by the tall boundary wall. There is strong historic integrity on account of the architectural and historic interest and layout of barrack buildings. Mature trees within the site are also important ecological and landscape features. Overall sensitivity to change or new development is moderate. Whilst there is some capacity to accommodate new development, this should respect the existing landscape structure within the site and also the setting of barrack buildings.

G2. MENIN ROAD GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Menin Road Garrison Suburbs encompasses a small area of military housing (predominantly semi-detached, inter-war), to the west of Cambrai Road, which is within Colchester Garrison and is accessed via the Butt Road entrance. This area is situated within the Garrison Redevelopment Area, and overall character is therefore in a state of fluctuation.²¹

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is generally flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Cambrai Road provides the main access route to this housing (off Butt Road) from which several short, dead-end streets lead off.
- Block pattern is relatively regular and geometric.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Public access to this area is limited by the Garrison boundary wall/fence to the west of housing (along Layer Road).
- Access is gained via the main entrance at Butt Road (which is barrier controlled).

Massing & Enclosure

- Housing is predominantly two-storey and semi-detached.
- A sense of enclosure is provided by Goojerat Barrack buildings to the east and the boundary of the Garrison to the west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing within the area has relatively simple architectural style and is typical of other military personnel housing of this period (inter-war).
- Housing is predominantly two-storey.

Streetscapes

- Generally the streetscape is well maintained with some interest provided by planting within front gardens, however, there is little overall variety.

Open Space

- There is currently no open space within the Character Area, however, housing is situated in close proximity to Abbey Field (a large greenspace) to the east.

Biodiversity

- Occasional mature trees punctuate the area, within gardens and also lining the northern edges of Goojerat Barracks to the south (providing some wildlife interest).

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- The area is currently predominantly military personnel housing.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access is along Cambrai Road (accessed via the Garrison entrance on Butt Road).
- Movement is limited by a number of dead-end roads which do not connect to the remainder of the Garrison to the south and east.
- Public movement within the site is restricted.

Viewing Experience

- Views to adjacent barrack buildings to the east and occasional views across Abbey Fields to the south.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until this century this Character Area has been mainly agricultural with no recorded archaeological interest. There have been no buildings on this area until the early 20th century and it is now military housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Drury Meadow Estate, Layer Road, water board wash-out marker

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Houses within the area are predominantly brown brick with white windows (usually metal frames) and pitched tile roofs. There is consistency in both architectural style and detailing throughout the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature single trees within the Character Area.
- Loss of geometric, regular block pattern due to new infill development.
- Ageing and deterioration of built fabric.

²¹ www.colchester-regen.co.uk/garrison

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within this Character Area is moderate. Housing is visible from adjacent Character Areas (Abbey Fields and Goojerat Barracks), within the Garrison, however, views from housing areas outside the Garrison are restricted by the boundary walls. Although architectural style is typical of other inter-war areas within the Borough, there is consistency in style and detail. New development should respect this coherence and also the importance of mature single trees as landscape features.

G3. ROMAN BARRACKS GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area lies within the Colchester regeneration area²² and is situated towards the southern end of the Garrison ‘wedge’, to the east of Abbey Field. Previous Garrison buildings included the Roman barracks – a series of two- and three-storey terraces of accommodation for military personnel, which were centred around a large concrete car park. The area is currently being redeveloped as part of the proposed new ‘urban village’²³. Buildings were surrounded by mown amenity grassland. A mature tree belt along the western edge, separates the area from arable fields to the west and a small patch of woodland also separates the area from arable land to the north. Several single mature trees are dotted within the site with groups of trees along the northern and eastern boundaries, providing some biodiversity interest. Overhead pylons are visible to the east. The line of Berechurch Dyke also runs through this Character Area. Due to ongoing development works (2006), the character of the area is currently in a state of flux and access to the site was not possible.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern consists of a series of short terraced accommodation blocks, which are surrounded by large car parks and areas of open mown grassland.
- The area is accessed from Berechurch Road in the west.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- This area is not publicly accessible and access to the area is via a controlled entrance.
- Once inside the Garrison, there is little definition between public and private space, with buildings generally leading straight out into car parks or areas of mown grassland.

Massing & Enclosure

- Some sense of enclosure is provided within the centre of Roman Barracks by the courtyard arrangement of buildings.
- Several mature trees also punctuate open space providing a sense of enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings which formed part of Roman Barracks include a series of two- and three-storey accommodation blocks for military personnel.

Streetscapes

- Other than car parks adjacent to Garrison buildings, there is no ‘streetscape’ in the formal sense within the Character Area.

Open Space

- Barrack buildings are/were surrounded by areas of mown amenity grassland and the area is situated in close proximity to Abbey Field to the east.

Biodiversity

- Several single mature trees and treebelts provide wildlife interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- An area of accommodation barracks within the Garrison, which currently forms part of Colchester Regeneration Area.

Movement Patterns

- Main access to the site is from Berechurch Hall Road.

Viewing Experience

- Views across Abbey Field to the west and north.
- Views to adjacent residential areas outside the Garrison.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

During the Romano-British occupation this area was the site of a Roman Military Camp, however once the Romans left Britain there is no evidence of use of this site until the early 20th century when the area was developed for military use.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Site to south of Roman Way Camp.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- There are no listed buildings within the area, and architectural history relates to use of the site for military purposes.

²² <http://www.colchester-region.co.uk>

²³ Colchester Garrison Development Brief: Berechurch Hall Road (CBC and ECC, November 2002)

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in condition of built form/materials on Barrack buildings through lack of maintenance.
- Maturing and eventual loss of mature trees within the Character Area.
- Ongoing works and transport associated with redevelopment of the whole Garrison area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate visual sensitivity with views to and from Abbey Field (to the west) and countryside (to the south). Overall sensitivity to change or new built development, however, is low as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

G4. ABBEY FIELD GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

For the purposes of this study, the Abbey Field Character Area encompasses Abbey Field (a large expanse of predominantly open greenspace within the Garrison) and open grassland to the south. Cohesive character within the area is currently affected by ongoing regeneration works (March 2006)²⁴. Abbey Field has an open character and contains several mature trees (often lining roads), a running track, cricket field and sports pavilion. Open views across the area and also across greenspace to the south can be gained.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, gently sloping to the south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Not applicable.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Space is generally open to surrounding Character Areas, however, this division may be changing as a result of regeneration.

Massing & Enclosure

- Not applicable.

Architecture & Built Form

- Not applicable.

Streetscapes

- Not applicable.

Open Space

- This large open area of the greenspace, is easily accessible from surrounding Character Areas.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value within mature trees scattered within the site.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Currently/formerly used by the military for training/leisure etc.
- Space is proposed within 'Colchester Garrison Urban Village' Masterplan²⁵ to become central focal open space for new development within the area.

Movement Patterns

- Pedestrian movement across the site via a number of formal and informal footpaths.
- Public access is currently restricted, as it is for the rest of the Garrison.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open space to the south and landscape setting at the southern edge of the Garrison area.

Designations

- Berechurch Road is a designated open space

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Recent excavations have shown that this Character Area has been in use since the Roman period with the finding of the Roman Circus. From the Roman occupation until the 20th century there was little activity in the area. There are several monuments in this Character Area dating back to the Second World War. The area now comprises military land and a small number of military buildings.

Visible Archaeological Features

- WWII Anti-Aircraft Rocket Site, Abbey Field
- Pillbox, N of Roman Way Camp, Berechurch
- Six Military Air Raid Shelters, Colchester Garrison
- Two Military Air Raid Shelters, Napier Road
- One Military Air Raid Shelter, Napier Road

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Not applicable.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature trees as a result of old age and potential loss as a result of ongoing regeneration works.
- Traffic and car parking associated with the Garrison and regeneration of the site.

²⁴ Colchester Garrison Urban Village Masterplan (CBC/EEC, November 2002)

²⁵ Colchester Garrison Urban Village Masterplan (CBC/EEC, November 2002)

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has several intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities (mature trees) which have moderate biodiversity value and contribute to the character of the area. Visual sensitivity overall is moderate, however, the area can generally be easily viewed from all surrounding Character Areas. Although there are few visible historic features, the pattern or fact that the area has been retained as greenspace throughout its history, results in a sense of historic integrity. Overall this Character Area is moderately sensitive to change or new built development.

G5. CLIVE ROAD GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated within the Colchester regeneration area²⁶, and is situated at the eastern edge of the current Garrison, adjacent to Military Road. Due to the ongoing development works (2006), the character of the area is currently in a state of rapid change and full access to the site was not possible. The barracks consist of a number of detached accommodation blocks with relatively regular pattern and form. The character is currently enclosed to the north, south and east (by adjacent housing), but open views across the cricket ground can be gained to the east.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Several detached barrack accommodation blocks (from aerial photo analysis).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Unclear definition between public and private space within the barracks.

Massing & Enclosure

- Area is generally enclosed by housing to the north, east and south and is open to the cricket ground to the west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly groups of accommodation blocks.

Streetscapes

- No streetscape in the formal sense, other than car parking associated with buildings.

Open Space

- Areas of amenity grassland between barrack buildings.

Biodiversity

- Overall low biodiversity value with limited habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Military accommodation within the Garrison, but also currently undergoing redevelopment.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access via Mersea Road and Military Road, with several short avenues inside the barrack's layout.
- Public pedestrian access limited as per the rest of the Garrison.

Viewing Experience

- No streetscape in the formal sense, other than car parking associated with buildings.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been little change in this Character Area from its agricultural land until the late 19th century when the area became used for military purposes.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Architectural history relates to use of the area for military purposes.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature trees as a result of old age and potential loss as a result of ongoing regeneration of the area.
- Traffic and car parking associated with the Garrison and regeneration of the site.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has moderate visual sensitivity on account of the fact that it is visible from all surrounding Character Areas (housing to the north, west and south), and the cricket field to the east. Overall, the Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

²⁶ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk>

G6. BREACHFIELD ROAD GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This predominantly residential area is situated at the south western edge of the Garrison and contains housing for military personnel, which dates to the inter-war/post-war period. There are generally few views to open space, with much of the area surrounded by adjacent housing, both within and outside the Garrison, providing a sense of enclosure. The area is situated within the Colchester Regeneration Area²⁷ and character is therefore potentially subject to rapid change.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Flat to gently sloping topography.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern comprises a combination of curvilinear and grid layout with several interconnecting short roads (such as Salerno Crescent and Eight Acre Lane leading off Lordswood Road and Breachfield Road).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- In places, houses face directly onto the road, with little clear definition between private and public space.
- Housing within the area is not within the public realm and is accessed via security entrances, as per the rest of the Garrison.

Massing & Enclosure

- Generally enclosed by housing to the south, east and west.
- Relatively high density housing, with a combination of semi-detached and terraced buildings which are predominantly two-storey.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly housing which dates to the inter-war/post-war period and has simple form, with few ornate architectural details.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and utilitarian streetscape.

Open Space

- Few pockets of amenity grassland within the area, however, housing is in close proximity to playing fields to the east of Camulodunum Way.

Biodiversity

- Overall little biodiversity value, other than small pockets of wildlife interest within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Relatively quiet residential area within the Garrison.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access to the area is via Salerno Crescent and Lordswood Road, leading off Layer Road to the east.
- Pedestrian access is limited by perimeter boundaries to the Garrison.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few views out of the area, other than to school playing fields to the south of Lordswood Road.

Designations

- Montgomery County Junior School, Stanway is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is no evidence of any human activity in this area until the early 20th century when accommodation was built for the Garrison.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally relatively modern and there is, therefore, little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration and decay of built fabric due to lack of maintenance.
- Noise, traffic and movement associated with the surrounding Regeneration Area.
- Potential new buildings with greenspace to the east which may block open views to the north and south (landscape setting/countryside).

²⁷ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk>

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within the Character Area is low as a result of low visual sensitivity, low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

G7. EARSLWOOD WAY GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area contains housing for military personnel (which dates to the inter-war/post-war period) and has a relatively dense and regular street pattern. The area is typical of other such housing areas outside of the Garrison and although built fabric is in generally good condition, overall streetscape is bland and utilitarian with few street trees. Adjacent housing provides a sense of enclosure to the west, however, open views to adjacent grassland greenspace can be gained to the east. The area is situated within Colchester Regeneration Area²⁸ and character is therefore within a state of rapid change.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gently sloping upwards from north to south across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular pattern with buildings arranged in distinctive regular, small groups, loosely based on a grid system.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall unclear definition between front of house/garden boundaries and adjacent roads/pavements.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing area, however, there are several small areas of incidental greenspace associated with buildings.
- Housing is arranged in short terraces and is predominantly two-storey.

Architecture & Built Form

- Architectural style is relatively uniform with several houses built from pre-fabricated metal panels.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape.

Open Space

- Small pockets of greenspace/grassland scattered evenly throughout the area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly quiet residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access is via Camulodunum Way and Baronswood Way.
- Several smaller avenues and closes leading off these roads.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across sports grounds to the south east of Berechurch Road.
- Views across open space towards the north of the Garrison wedge.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been little activity in this area until the 20th century when the Character Area was developed into housing for the military. The area in agricultural use before this.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally relatively modern and there is therefore, little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration and decay of built fabric due to lack of maintenance.
- Noise, traffic and movement associated with the surrounding Regeneration Area.
- Potential new buildings with greenspace to the east which may block open views to the north and south (landscape setting/countryside).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

²⁸ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk>

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. Visual sensitivity is moderate, especially along the eastern edge (with views to adjacent sports grounds/open grassland) and also views to the area from greenspace within the Garrison wedge.

G8. HOMEFIELD ROAD GARRISON SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses detached houses with large back gardens for military personnel at the southern end of the Garrison. Street pattern is regular and based around a simple grid pattern. At the southern edge of the area glimpse views of open countryside evoke a sense of place. The area is situated within the Colchester Regeneration Area²⁹ and character is therefore in a state of flux.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, yet gently sloping from north to south across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, grid-like pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness to the north and west, with views across predominantly open space (amenity grassland and arable farmland).

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly modern (post-1960s housing).

Streetscapes

- Some variety and interest within front gardens.
- General consistency in materials and detailing.

Open Space

- Generally high ratio of open space to built development.
- Two large areas of school playing fields to the east of Camulodunum Way and south of Baronswood Way.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees within playing fields have wildlife interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly quiet residential area, containing two schools.

Movement Patterns

- Area is accessed via a road along southern edge of Garrison.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views of open countryside from the southern edge.

Designations

- Montgomery County Junior School, Stanway is a designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the early 20th century this land has remained in agricultural use, it was then developed for housing for the military. There has been no record of any settlement in this Character Area before this time.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded evidence of archaeological interest in this area

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally relatively modern and there is therefore, little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature trees as a result of old age and potential loss as a result of ongoing regeneration of the area.
- Traffic and car parking associated with the Garrison and regeneration of the site.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. Visual sensitivity is moderate, especially along the eastern edge (with views to adjacent sports grounds/open grassland) and also views to the area from greenspace within the Garrison wedge.

²⁹ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk>

H. POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Post-1960s suburbs account for a relatively large proportion of the current built environment within the main settlements in the Borough. These areas consist predominantly of housing, which is often arranged in an estate, with a curvilinear street pattern and a number of cul-de-sacs leading from a main road. Materials are often mass produced (brickwork and windows) and the character of streetscape has a tendency to be utilitarian, containing bland street lighting and details. The number of small greenspaces (playgrounds or areas of mown amenity grassland) punctuating built form within the area varies.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential areas, containing housing from 1960 to the present day.
- Housing is usually arranged in an estate, containing a number of cul-de-sacs leading from a main road.
- Houses often have private front and back gardens and are either semi-detached or detached, with occasional short terraces.

- Back gardens are often separated from the road using wooden fencing.
- Materials consist of mass produced brickwork (often red and beige).
- Streetscape is often utilitarian, containing bland street lighting and details.
- Estates usually contain a number of small mown amenity grassland greenspace areas, sometimes housing brightly coloured children's play equipment.

Townscape Character Areas

- H1. Queensbury Avenue: Copford
- H2. Lucy Lane
- H3. Wheatfield Road
- H4. Blackberry Road
- H5. Church Lane
- H6. Albany Gardens
- H7. Cunobelin Way
- H8. Braiswick
- H9. Fernlea
- H10. Peto Avenue
- H11. Guildford Road
- H12. High Woods/Myland
- H13. St John's Road
- H14. Roach Vale
- H15. Longridge
- H16. Normandy Avenue and Mountbatten Drive
- H17. Lethe Grove
- H18. Holt Drive
- H19. Avon Way
- H20. The Hythe
- H21. Adelaide
- H22. Balkerne Heights

H1. QUEENSBURY AVENUE: COPFORD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of post-1960s housing dates approximately to the late 1980s/early 1990s. The area has a relatively tranquil feel with semi-detached and detached houses set out along a number of quiet dead-end roads leading off Queensbury Avenue (set back from the main London Road). There is consistency in materials and detailing, with most houses having private front gardens and drives. The area overlooks playing fields to the west and a belt of woodland to the north.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Slopes gradually downhill in a northerly direction across the Character Area towards the valley of the Roman River to the north.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is predominantly curvilinear with several dead-end closes leading off Queensbury Avenue.
- Block pattern is relatively consistent with a combination of detached and semi-detached plots.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally clear definition between public and private space with the front gardens and drives of most houses separated from the road by low shrub hedges or fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- There is a sense of enclosure along Queensbury Avenue provided by housing lining the road.
- The area feels open to the west and overlooks a large area of playing fields.
- A patch of woodland to the north of the housing provides a sense of enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing consists predominantly of a combination of detached and semi-detached post-1960s (1980s/1990s) housing which is brick with little detailing.
- Most houses have front gardens and drives.

Streetscapes

- Variety is provided by patches of vegetation within front gardens, however, there are few street trees and paving and lighting are utilitarian.

Open Space

- Other than private front gardens (giving a sense of space), there is no public open space within the Character Area.
- The area is directly adjacent to large playing fields and children's playground to the west.

Biodiversity

- Woodland directly to the north of the area provides important wildlife habitats and front gardens also have varying levels of biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly residential and relatively tranquil, set back from the main London Road.

Movement Patterns

- Queensbury Avenue provides the main vehicular access route through the area, however, this road is a dead end with no through access to London Road.
- A public footpath connects the area to woodland to the north, however, access to open countryside is prevented by the barrier of the A12 and the railway line.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open playing fields to the west.
- Views to the A12 or railway line to the north blocked due to intervening belt of woodland.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Before the 19th century this Character Area comprised the small village of Copford. There were a limited number of houses and the main feature in this Character Area was that it was farmland. The land has evolved from then to the 20th century into a larger village, but it is still predominately agricultural in nature.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within this area is typical of other post-1960s (1980s/1990s) housing estates, with consistency in materials and architectural details. Houses are predominantly red brick with modern window frames (generally uPVC).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease the sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has weak historic integrity, with few visual links to former use of the area and no Listed Buildings. Biodiversity value is moderate with habitats both within front gardens and a belt of woodland to the north. The area therefore can be viewed from back gardens of housing within area J1, however, overall intervisibility with other areas is low. The area therefore has low sensitivity to change or new development and high recreatability.

H2. LUCY LANE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large area of post-1960s suburban housing is situated at the north western edge of urban Colchester, overlooking open countryside to the west and partly contained by the main railway line to the north. The area is split into northern and southern suburbs by the A12 (dual carriageway) which brings associated noise and disturbance. Housing is situated in close proximity to farmland plateau to the west (but is separated by a slip-road to the A12).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is curvilinear with a series of drives and closes leading off Lucy Lane north and south.
- Block pattern is regular and housing is divided into a northern and southern areas by the A12 (dual carriageway).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses generally have large back gardens and small front gardens, which divide them from the street.
- There is generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Within the housing areas there is a sense of enclosure, however, built form is punctuated by pockets of open space in places.
- Semi-detached and detached houses generally face the road and there is a sense of openness along the western edge of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are consistently brick (red and beige), with white or black windows and tile roofs.
- Some houses within the area have front porches.

Streetscapes

- Lighting and general paving materials along the streetscape are utilitarian, however, visual variety is provided by planting within front gardens.

Open Space

- Small pockets of mown amenity grassland open space to the west of Lucy Lane, north and west of Tollgate Drive.
- The area is also in close proximity to farmland plateau to the west (however, the A12 slip road is a physical and visual barrier).

Biodiversity

- Other than the patchwork of vegetation within front and back gardens (providing habitats for urban wildlife), there is little biodiversity value within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly residential and has a busy character, in close proximity to the A12 and Tollgate Business/Retail Park.

Movement Patterns

- The A12 road corridor divides the area into two sections.
- Housing to the north of A12 is not accessible from Lucy Lane north by car, however, there is a pedestrian underpass.
- Vehicular traffic must cross the A12 via Halstead Road (further to the east).
- A public footpath connects the western edge of housing with housing in Eight Ash Green to the north west.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across farmland plateau to the west.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of exceptional interest (Grade I), which is the Anglo-Saxon Holy Trinity Church and two buildings of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- Lucy Lane North, Stanway and Tollgate Drive, Stanway are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been activity in this Character Area since the early medieval ages with Holy Trinity Church and several Listed Buildings from the 14th to 19th centuries. This area fully developed in the early 20th century with the building of the A12 and the residential areas that surround it.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, visible archaeological features within the Character Area include:

- Halstead Road

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within this area are generally modern (ranging from 1970s to 1990s). There is little historic interest within architectural form throughout the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with the A12 which splits the Character Area (also associated lighting).
- Extensions to front or back of buildings which alter the line of the street.
- Lack of maintenance of areas of open space.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

The area has moderate visual sensitivity as a result of the fact that it can be viewed from the farmland plateau to the west. Neither biodiversity value nor historic integrity are strong and therefore the Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development.

H3. WHEATFIELD ROAD POST-1960S SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large suburb of post-1960s (1980s/1990s) housing is situated to the south of London Road and is surrounded by belts of open greenspace to the east and south. The area is also situated between two areas of inter-war/post-war housing (lining Maldon Road and Villa Road). Several areas of open space punctuate the built form, including Lexden King George Field and School Playing Fields. Wheatfield Road provides a through route between Winstree and New Farm Road and this contributes to a busy character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is curvilinear with several cul-de-sacs leading off Wheatfield Road.
- Massing comprises a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space, with front gardens separated from the road by a combination of low hedges and fences.
- Back gardens are separated from greenspace by a mixture of garden fences (varying materials).

Massing & Enclosure

- Mixed sense of enclosure along Wheatfield Road, with views across open space to the east in places.
- Houses generally face the road, determining some sense of enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are predominantly two-storey and brick built with tile roofs.
- There are also two post-1960s schools within the area (with flat roofs).

Streetscapes

- There is little variation in streetscape, with utilitarian paving and lighting.

Open Space

- There are several areas of open space within the Character Area, including Lexden King George Field School Playing Fields to the east of Winstree Road and incidental open space between areas of housing.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees within King George Field and other habitats for wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly residential but also contains school buildings and areas of public open space.

- The area has quite a busy feel and is a through route between Winstree Road and New Farm Road.

Movement Patterns

- Wheatfield Road, which runs through the area, connects New Farm Road and Winstree Road which is a busy vehicular route.
- A public footpath runs along the line of Gryme's Dyke (to the east of housing) and connects with open countryside to the south.

Viewing Experience

- Views across Lexden (Gryme's Dyke) and King George Field to the east.
- Views to school playing fields (within Character Area H4) to the south.

Designations

- Gryme's Dyke Middle is a Scheduled Monument within the Character Area.
- Chapel Road, Stanway, Wheatfield Road, Lexden and Lexden King George Field, Lexden are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Before the later 19th century there has been no evidence of any settlement in this area. The area has remained mainly agricultural until the development of the housing estates in the early 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no visible archaeological features in addition to the Scheduled Monument within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Built development within the Character Area is predominantly modern, dating to between 1970s and the 1990s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Lack of maintenance of areas of open space.
- Vandalism of features within open space.
- Extensions to fronts or backs of housing which alter the line of the street.
- On-street car parking as a result of increased car ownership.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Housing within the Character Area can be viewed from Lexden King George Playing Fields to the east and also from playing fields to the south, leading to moderate visual sensitivity within these areas. Historic integrity is mixed as a result of the presence of Gryme's Dyke. Overall, this character area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development.

H4. BLACKBERRY ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This suburb of post-1960s housing is situated at the south western edge of Colchester urban area, overlooking abandoned gravel pits to the west. A new housing development is currently under construction to the west, within the Stanway Pit area. A large belt of open playing fields separates the area from housing to the north. The area overlooks open countryside to the south and west. Generally, there is little diversity in streetscape, with utilitarian paving and lighting. Housing is predominantly two-storey and comprises a mixture of detached and semi-detached buildings. Cul-de-sacs and avenues have a quieter character than the main Blackberry Road.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with several avenues and closes leading off Blackberry Road and Church Lane (to the west of Warren Lane).
- Block pattern is regular with a combination of detached and semi-detached houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between front gardens and pavement/road, however, orientation within several of the closes/avenues is confusing.

Massing & Enclosure

- Housing is of medium density with predominantly two-storey buildings.
- Within school playing fields to the north of Juniper Road, there is a sense of openness and also to the south of the area overlooking farmland.

Architecture & Built Form

- Semi-detached and detached brick houses.
- Materials are predominantly red and yellow brick.

Streetscapes

- Vegetation within front gardens provides some variety within streetscape, however, tarmac surfacing and utilitarian lighting contributes to bland character overall.
- Block paving and gravel are common in front drives.

Open Space

- A large area of amenity grassland playing fields (associated with the school) to the east of Winstree Road, provides open space.
- Generally few pockets of incidental open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Few wildlife resources, other than pockets of vegetation within front gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Area is predominantly residential and contains a school along Winstree Road.
- Area is in close proximity to Peartree Road retail and commercial area.

Movement Patterns

- Blackberry Road, Winstree Road and Warren Lane are the busiest vehicular routes, with quieter avenues and cul-de-sacs leading off these roads.
- Pedestrian access is mainly via pavements, with few pedestrian alleys or shortcuts.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to countryside to the south.
- Views across playing fields to the north and disused sand and gravel pits to the west.
- Short views within cul-de-sacs.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Although there is no designated open space within the Character Area Stanway Pit/Warren Lane is proposed designated open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area was not developed until the early 20th century, until then the land was in agricultural use. There were a limited number of houses in the Character Area in the 18th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area generally dates to the late 1970s/early 1980s, with more modern (1990s/2000) housing development at Stanway Pit (to the west of Warren Lane).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism to playing fields within the public realm.
- Deterioration of physical fabric of the public realm.
- New development along the western edge which is visible from surrounding landscape setting.
- Potential extensions to houses or garages which may alter the line of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low sensitivity to change or new development overall. It does not have strong historic integrity or high biodiversity value, however, visual sensitivity is moderate along the southern and western edges, with views to and from the surrounding relatively open landscape setting.

H5. CHURCH LANE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Church Lane post-1960s residential suburbs are situated to the south of London Road and west of Lexden Park and have a relatively quiet character. A mixture of 1970s to 1990s architectural styles are visible, arranged in a curvilinear street pattern around a series of avenues and cul-de-sacs leading off Chaucer Way and Shakespeare Road. In places, there is diversity along the streetscape, provided by the presence of several mature trees and shrubs within front gardens.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Predominantly curvilinear street pattern with a series of avenues and cul-de-sacs leading off Chaucer Way (which connects with Straight Road) and Shakespeare Road (connecting with Church Lane).
- Plots comprise a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space with school playing fields and allotment gardens separated from adjacent housing by fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density urban area where housing is punctuated by allotment gardens (north of Chaucer Way) and school playing fields (south of Shelley Road).
- Generally two-storey buildings.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing is predominantly brick and there is diversity in architectural style throughout the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Several mature trees and shrubs within front gardens contribute to a relatively diverse and interesting streetscape, particularly along Shakespeare Road.

Open Space

- Houses generally have relatively large private gardens and smaller front garden areas, however, there are few small pockets of incidental greenspace amongst the built fabric.
- Allotment gardens and school playing fields provide semi-private areas of open space.
- Housing along the eastern edge is in close proximity to Lexden Park.

Biodiversity

- Adjacent to Lexden Park in the west (part of which is designated as a SINC).
- Varying wildlife habitats within allotment gardens and front gardens, however, residential development offers overall poor wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Generally quiet residential suburb which is set back from the main London Road.

Movement Patterns

- Chaucer Way and Shakespeare Road provide link roads between Straight Road and Church Lane.
- No designated public rights of way within the area, with average pedestrian orientation via pavements lining roads.

Viewing Experience

- Views to Lexden Park in the west.
- Short distance views to residential areas to the north, east and south.

Designations

- Little Hayne is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- A Roman Barrow known as Lexden Mount is a Scheduled Monument within this Character Area.
- Chaucer Way, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been activity in this area since the Iron Age when the Triple Dyke System was constructed. This Character Area is bordered with Lexdon Park and the area was mainly forest or agricultural land until the late 19th century, with a limited number of houses. This then developing into a larger residential area by the early 20th century

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no additional visible archaeological features, other than the Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- A mixture of post-1960s architecture throughout the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism to areas of public open space and semi-private allotments.
- Loss of mature vegetation within front and back gardens.
- Any potential new development along the eastern edge which may impact upon the setting of Lexden Park.
- Potential conversion of front gardens to driveways to provide more car parking spaces.
- Extensions to the front and back of houses which may alter the current line of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate along the eastern edge with views to and from Lexden Park, however, overall visual prominence and sensitivity are low. Historic integrity is mixed with the presence of Lexden Mount (Scheduled Ancient Monument). Potential new development should respect the setting of this monument.

H6. ALBANY GARDENS POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Albany Gardens post-1960s suburb, is situated in East Colchester and was recently redeveloped as a selection of apartments and houses on the site of the Old Laundry Works. Buildings are predominantly yellow brick with grey tile roofs and are arranged around two main courtyards. There is also a pocket park associated with the development, and several areas of mown amenity grassland. Despite proximity to the Hythe, this area has a relatively peaceful and secluded character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat to gently sloping from west to east, towards the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern consists of a series of courtyards (containing blocks of apartments and houses), which are split into two areas 'Waterside' and 'Woodside'.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- In close proximity to the residential development, there is little separation between public and private space (several properties do not have front gardens).
- Open space associated with the development is, however, separated from adjacent areas by a combination of wrought iron fences and brick walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Buildings are a combination of two-, three- and four- storeys in places.
- The arrangement of buildings around courtyards provides some sense of enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses and apartments are predominantly yellow brick with red brick column details, white windows and grey tile roofs.

Streetscapes

- Development is surrounded by areas of mown amenity grassland, car parking and a pocket park.
- Paving detail is generally coherent with colours of surrounding buildings.

Open Space

- Development is surrounded by pockets of amenity grassland and also a pocket park.
- Bourne and Distillery Ponds urban greenspace is situated directly to the west of the area.

Biodiversity

- Occasional street trees associated with the development provide wildlife habitats.
- Woodland directly to the west (within Bourne Ponds site) provides important wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This relatively quiet residential area also contains a few shops and a restaurant and is in close proximity to the Hythe industrial area.

Movement Patterns

- The area is accessed from new feeder roads, off Distillery Lane created during redevelopment of the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to woodland to the west.
- Glimpse views to warehouses associated with the Hythe and also tall pylons which cross the River Colne.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This is the site of the former Hull House and Mill, along with associated gardens and agricultural land. Hull Mill was recorded by that name in 1438, but it was probably St. Botolph's priory's new mill recorded in 1227, which seems to have replaced an earlier mill on the Colne at the Hythe. Hull Mill was known as the new or new priory mill between 1311 and 1386 and as the mill in the wood between 1387 and 1435. Hull Mill worked as a corn mill throughout the Middle Ages, and was still one in 1519. In 1405 it also contained a fulling mill. At the Dissolution the mill passed to Sir Thomas Audley, reverting to the Crown on his death. It was still in the Crown's possession in 1555, when it was a corn mill with two pairs of stones, but was sold to speculators in 1562. In 1690 it comprised one water mill, one fulling mill, and one oil mill. By 1733, when John Rootsey devised it to his son Samuel, it was an oil mill, and it remained so until 1811 when it was sold to Samuel Bawtree and George Savill who demolished it and built a distillery and water corn mill on the site. The distillery went out of business c.1841, and in 1843 the buildings, including the water mill with four pairs of stones, one pair of rollers, and an auxiliary steam engine, were sold. The mill worked as a corn mill from 1845 until its demolition in 1896. The Old Laundry Works are recorded on this map on 20th century maps, in the location of the old mill and Hull House, all of which have been demolished or converted into modern housing in the early years of the 21st century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Development within this area is modern (c.1990s) and earlier architectural history is not visible within the character area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism of pocket park.
- Traffic (heavy goods vehicles) and noise associated with industrial and commercial areas (the Hythe).
- Loss of corridor of greenspace and woodland to the west, which would result in a sense of exposure at the western edge of the site.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity, however, the new housing development has been designed sensitively within its surroundings. Several of the three-storey apartments are visible from surrounding Character Areas and combined with views to woodland/ greenspace to the west and the Hythe to the south and east, visual sensitivity is moderate. Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development.

H7. CUNOBELIN WAY 1960'S SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively secluded modern (1990s/2000) residential area is set out along several dead-end streets which have 'Roman' – themed names and connect to Cunobelin Way to the south. The housing area is situated at the southern edge of the urban area and overlooks the large open expanse of Cheshunt Field to the south. Housing is predominantly two-storey and either detached or semi-detached with front and back gardens (which provide habitats for urban wildlife).



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is predominantly curvilinear with several dead-end streets leading off Cunobelin Way.
- Block pattern is regular.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space with front gardens separated from public streetscape by a combination of low walls and hedges.

Massing & Enclosure

- Predominantly two-storey detached and semi-detached houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- Red and yellow brick houses with modern style windows (typical of most 1990s housing estates throughout the United Kingdom).

Streetscapes

- Generally well kept and quiet streetscape with variety provided by vegetation in front gardens.
- Occasional on-road parking.

Open Space

- Small patches of publicly accessible amenity grassland (playgrounds) off Centurion Way and Gladiator Way.
- Area is also in close proximity to Cheshunt Field and Gosbecks Archaeological Park to the south.

Biodiversity

- Generally only habitats for wildlife are located within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Relatively quiet and well presented suburban housing area.

Movement Patterns

- Area is generally only accessible by vehicle via Cunobelin Way.
- The arrangement of dead-end streets are confusing and do not connect to Gosbecks Road to the north east to provide a 'through-route'.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across Cheshunt Field/Gosbecks archaeological park to the south.
- Glimpse views to light industrial/commercial units along Gosbecks Road to the east.

Designations

- Gosbecks Iron Age and Romano British Site is a Scheduled Monument within this Character Area.
- Cunobelin Way, Centurion Way, and Gladiator Way, are designated open spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the late 20th century this Character Area has stayed relatively agricultural in form.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Scheduled Monument there is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the area date to the late 1990s (approximately) and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Conversion of front gardens to hardstanding to provide additional space for car parking.
- Extensions to front or backs of houses (possible porches and garages), which may alter the line of the existing streetscape.
- Noise and traffic associated with adjacent light industrial and commercial area.
- Loss of open space to the south which would change the open nature of the views from the southern edge of the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Overall, biodiversity value is low other than within private front and back gardens. Historic integrity is mixed with housing situated in close proximity to Gosbecks Iron Age and Romano-British site (which is a Scheduled Monument). Although architecture does not particularly relate to past historic use, an attempt to link the area with the Roman period has been made through naming of streets Gladiator Way, Centurion Way etc. Visual sensitivity is moderate, especially along the southern edge, with views to and from Cheshunt Field.

H8. BRAISWICK POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This modern (1990s?) residential suburb is situated at the western edge of Colchester's urban area and lines Braiswick Road which connects Colchester to West Bergholt. Housing is secluded and predominantly detached with large front and back gardens. This relatively low density area overlooks the valley of St Botolph's Brook to the west and open countryside to the north, south and west and is enclosed by Weir Wood to the west providing a distinct sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat and overlooking the valley of St Botolph's Brook to the west.

Street & Block Pattern

- Relatively straight street pattern lining Braiswick Road, with regular plot sizes.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear definition between public and private space, with houses set back from the road by front gardens, some of which are demarcated by large entrance gates.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively low density housing development consisting of predominantly detached houses.
- Area feels generally exposed (other than fences delineating rear boundaries of rear gardens) to open countryside (farmland plateau to the north, south and west).

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are predominantly two-storey and modern brick built in form (1980s/1990s).
- Houses have distinctive character as a result of the fact that they are set within relatively large plots.

Streetscapes

- Private and secluded streetscape along smaller roads leading off Braiswick Road.
- Semi-mature trees and vegetation within front gardens contributes favourably to the streetscape.

Open Space

- Other than large private front/back gardens and close proximity to the countryside, there is also a small patch of amenity grassland at Keepers Green.

Biodiversity

- Diverse vegetation within gardens provides habitats for wildlife.
- Weir House Wood (directly adjacent to the east) also provides a valuable wildlife habitat.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Secluded and spacious, quiet residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Braiswick Road (the main busy vehicular link between the centre of Colchester to the south east and West Bergholt to the west), provides the main access route through the area.
- Keepers Green, Fairways and Burywoods are quieter and more secluded roads leading off the main road.
- A public footpath connects the northern edge of the area to countryside to the north.

Viewing Experience

- Views to countryside from back gardens along northern edge of area.
- Open views west along Braiswick Road to open countryside and into the valley of St Botolph's Brook.

Designations

- Keepers Green, Braiswick is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the late 20th century there has been no settlement in this area. The land has been predominately open fields until the 1960's when the area was developed into housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential 'backland' or back garden development which would lead to a loss of the spacious character of this area.
- Extensions to fronts or backs of houses (possible porches and garages) which may alter the existing form and line of the streetscape.
- Planting of ornamental trees and shrubs which do not respect local native vegetation.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of garden fences and hedges (boundaries).
- Potential development to the west which may block views into the valley of St Botolph's Brook.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development as a result of a combination of moderate biodiversity value and visual sensitivity. The area is visible from surrounding countryside to the north and south and from the valley of St Botolph's Brook to the west. New development would therefore potentially be visible and may also affect the spacious character of the area.

H9. FERNLEA POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This residential suburb of modern (1970s/1980s) detached and semi-detached housing is situated on the sloping northerly valley side of the River Colne. The area is of medium-density with a few small pockets of greenspace, interrupting built-form. A strong sense of place is provided by views south across the Colne Valley and glimpse views west to open countryside.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively steeply sloping from north to south across the Character Area, towards the floor of the Colne River Valley.

Street & Block Pattern

- Relatively dense, linear street pattern with blocks of housing set out along Fernlea and Stonecrop cul-de-sacs (set back from the main Braiswick Road).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition throughout the area, with some houses facing directly onto the road and confusion between public and private space along the streetscape.

Massing & Enclosure

- Predominantly two-storey and a combination of semi-detached and detached (at the western end of Fernlea).

Architecture & Built Form

- Modern architectural style, with variation between housing at the eastern and western ends of the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Confused streetscape in places which has a generally utilitarian and bland character.
- There is greater diversity of the western end of Fernlea Road, provided by vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- A large area of publicly accessible open space to the north of Fernlea Road.

Biodiversity

- Overall few wildlife habitats within the Character Area, other than vegetation within front and back gardens (which are larger at the western end of Fernlea Road).

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A predominantly residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access is from a feeder road which connects Fernlea and Stonedrop (both dead ends) to the main Braiswick Road to the north.
- Pedestrian access is also via pavements lining this road.

Viewing Experience

- Open views southwards across the valley of the River Colne.
- Views to adjacent industrial area to the south.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been a limited number of houses in this area until the late 20th century with the development of the residential estates.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development to the south which may block views across/into the Colne Valley.
- Deterioration in quality and coherence of built-fabric.
- Extensions to fronts or backs of houses which may alter the existing line of the street.
- Potential conversion of front gardens into private drives to create more space for car parking and leading to a loss of biodiversity/wildlife habitats.
- Planting of ornamental trees and shrubs which do not respect local native vegetation.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has high visual sensitivity along the southern edge (which is visible from the Colne Valley to the south). The area has generally high visual prominence (situated on the northern sloping Colne Valley side) and is generally visible from certain locations within the valley floor. To a certain extent, however, intervisibility with the river corridor and valley floor is interrupted by industrial development adjacent to the southern edge of the area. The area has moderate biodiversity value (habitats within back gardens), but generally weak historic integrity. Overall, therefore, the Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development.

H10. PETO AVENUE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This predominantly residential area (1980s/1990s) is situated on the northern Colne Valley side and overlooks Turner Rise Retail Park to the south and High Woods Country Park to the east. Housing is set out as a number of drives and closes leading from Turner Avenue, and comprises a combination of two-storey semi-detached and terraced houses and three-storey flats. Although relatively homogenous in terms of architectural style (red and buff brick predominates), colourful variation in detail is provided by a combination of white plaster wash and pink patterned plaster at the upper storeys of several houses (within the southern half of the area). Streetscape is generally bland, particularly within the southern half of the area. Sense of place is enhanced by views to the skyline of the historic core (from the southern edge) and views to High Woods Country Park (from the eastern edge).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Situated on embankment/northern Colne Valley side, overlooking lower housing and Retail Park which is within the floodplain and High Woods Country Park to the east.

Street & Block Pattern

- Pattern consists of a number of drives and closes off main Turner Avenue.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Some definition between public and private streetscape through a combination of very low hedges and flower pots at borders and small areas of private front gravel or paving.
- Overall private and public streetscape blends into one through use of common paving and tarmac.
- Towards northern end of area, houses have larger front drives and gardens, containing hedges, shrubs and small trees.
- Public and private space is more clearly separated within the northern part of the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- At centre of housing area there is a sense of enclosure, with few views out to adjacent areas.
- Blocks of housing within the south of the area have been designed with gaps underneath interconnecting buildings to allow access to car parking areas and to frame views to the historic core and adjacent Turner Rise Retail Park.
- Combination of semi-detached, detached and terraced houses (two-storey) with occasional three-storey flats.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly red and buff brick houses and flats with white window frames and guttering and red tile roofs.
- A number of houses have distinctive small wooden turret/chimneys.
- Some terraces have front porches.
- Some houses have white or magnolia plaster-wash on upper storeys, others have pink patterned plaster at upper storeys.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with uniform brick paving and utilitarian lamp posts.
- Streetscape feels stark within the southern half of the area, with little street vegetation to soften buildings.
- Vegetation within front gardens softens streetscape within northern half of area.

Open Space

- Little public open space overall within this area.
- Area of mown amenity grassland surrounded with semi-mature trees within northern half of area.
- Some houses have small front and back gardens and also have private garages.
- Children's small playground on Wordsell Way with brightly coloured play equipment.
- Area is within close proximity to High Woods Country Park, which provides a local recreation space and wildlife resource and also links to open countryside.

Biodiversity

- Weak biodiversity value at the southern end with little streetscape planting, occasional low, trimmed hedges and planting in pots at front of housing.
- Average biodiversity at the northern end with more vegetation in front gardens and semi-mature trees and hedges.
- Adjacent to woodland within High Woods Country Park, which is an important local wildlife resource.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area, which is relatively contained, quiet and secluded in comparison to surrounding Character Areas.

Movement Patterns

- Housing is set back from Turner Road, which contains the majority of the traffic moving through the area.
- Sense of seclusion in places, however, there is general background noise disturbance from overall proximity to railway line and Turner Rise Retail Park at the southern end.

Viewing Experience

- Views to town centre skyline (Town Hall Clock Tower and 'Jumbo' Water Tower) from southern edges of Character Area.
- Views to railway corridor from southern edge of area.
- Views to High Woods Country Park from eastern edges of area.
- Eastern edge of housing is visible from High Woods Country Park.

Designations

- Highwoods Country Park, Peto Avenue, Turner Rise, Colchester and Gresley Close, Turner Rise, Colchester are Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Predominately arable land until the late 20th century when the land was developed into post-1960s housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within this area was developed in the later 1980's/early 1990's. Buildings styles are therefore relatively consistent with any such housing development from this period (both within Colchester and the United Kingdom). Interesting colour and detail is, however, provided by white/magnolia plaster wash and pink patterned plaster on the upper storeys of several houses. Built form is generally in good condition.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism to amenity grassland/playground areas.
- Planting of a mixture of ornamental trees which do not contribute to a unified street scene.
- Deterioration of garden boundaries.
- New development at the eastern edges, which would encroach on High Woods Country Park and would be visually sensitive in terms of views to the Character Area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area is low sensitivity to change or new development overall. Housing and areas of open space within the public realm are in generally good condition, however there is generally low historic integrity and biodiversity value. Housing within the area is visually sensitive along the eastern edge, and is visible within views from High Woods Country Park. The area has moderate overall visual sensitivity on account of its visibility within views to and from the historic core and High Woods Country Park.

H11. GUILDFORD ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Guildford Road post-1960s suburb is situated in close proximity to the town centre and is directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the historic core. Housing is predominantly two-storey (buff/yellow brick with white or brown facing at either upper or lower storeys) and was built c.1970s. The curvilinear arrangement of closes and avenues all link to Guildford Road which provides the main (busy) vehicular access route from East Mill to the south. Housing is enclosed by the river corridor and associated riverside walk to the north and east. Lower Castle Park and cricket ground are also just to east of the area. There is, therefore, a sense of openness and relative tranquillity along the northern edge, whilst the southern end is busier, in close proximity to the town centre.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, situated on the valley floor (within the floodplain of the River Colne).

Street & Block Pattern

- Predominantly curvilinear street pattern with several closes and dead-end cul-de-sacs, leading east and west off Guildford Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space.
- Although houses generally have front gardens and drives, these are generally open to the pavement/road, with few dividing hedges or fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- High density housing area with few pockets of open space amongst the built form.
- Generally two-storey semi-detached housing, with occasional detached properties.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly 1970s (?) housing with characteristic buff brick, white or brown panelled facing and white window frames.
- Houses generally have pitched tile roofs and some have garages attached at the front.

Streetscapes

- Although streetscape is generally bland tarmac, occasional street trees and vegetation within front and back gardens adds an element of visual interest.

Open Space

- Large playing fields (including pavilion) within the south eastern corner of the area, which contains several mature trees.
- Area is directly adjacent to Riverside Walk urban greenspace to the north, and Castle Park to the west.

Biodiversity

- Varying wildlife habitats within front and back gardens.
- In close proximity to River Colne (which is an important wildlife corridor).
- Wildlife value in mature trees associated with playing fields and Castle Park/cricket ground.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A residential area which is more secluded at the northern end (in close proximity to the river corridor), than at the southern end (nearer to the town centre).

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular access from East Hill to the south is via Guildford Road which is a busy feeder road to quieter roads such as Carlisle Close.
- Frequently used pedestrian route along the River Colne (Riverside Walk) to the north of the area, which is easily accessible from the area for pedestrians.
- Busy pedestrian links to East Mill and the High Street (further to the west).
- Public footpath also connects area to playing fields and river corridor to the south east.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse and open views to the River Colne and along the river corridor.
- Views to the historic core (directly adjacent to the west).
- Glimpse views to the railway corridor on the opposite site of the river.
- Open and glimpse views to Castle Park and cricket ground (to the west).

Designations

- The Scheduled Monument of Town Ditch runs through this Character Area.
- Colchester Castle Park is a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden
- Castle Park is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

During the Roman occupation this area held the ramparts to part of the town centre. These are still visible today. Between the Romans and the 19th century there was little activity and the area stayed relatively open. The 19th century brought slight development. The 20th century brought further housing developments.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument, visible archaeological features include:

- East Hill Brewery. 19th century;
- Course of Roman Rampart;
- Colchester Roman town – first E-W street from the north;
- Roman town of Colchester – second E-W street from the N;
- Site of Land Lane Brickworks, 19/20th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Although buildings within this area are predominantly c.1970s/early 1980s, the area is situated in close proximity to sections of the historic core which contain an abundance of architectural interest (see character profiles A7 and A10).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Pedestrian and vehicular activity (and potential noise) associated with the town centre and High Street.
- Pedestrian activity along the river corridor.
- On-street car parking as a convenience to the nearby town centre.
- Potential new development along or on opposite sides of the river which may block views along the corridor.
- Potential new high-rise development at the eastern edge of the historic core, which may interrupt views to the existing skyline.
- Potential vandalism to playing fields and playground equipment.
- Planting of a mixture of ornamental trees which do not contribute to a unified street scene.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has high visual sensitivity as a result of the fact that most is overlooked (due to its position on the flat valley floor), by buildings with the historic core to the west and south. The area can also be viewed from the river corridor and vice versa. There is moderate biodiversity value within habitats associated with private gardens and playing fields and the river corridor provides an important wildlife corridor (even though not actually within the Character Area). Historic integrity is strong with sections of the ramparts still visible. Overall, therefore, the area is highly sensitive to change or new development.

H12. HIGH WOODS/MYLAND POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of residential development lies adjacent to High Woods Country Park and is laid out in a series of crescents and cul-de-sacs. The housing generally dates to the late 1970s/early 1980s, with modern development currently expanding the northern boundaries of the area along Mill Road. Housing comprises a mixture of semi-detached and detached brick houses, with occasional terraces. Overall there is a high proportion of incidental greenspace and small areas of public open space (playing fields and children's play areas).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Housing along the western edge overlooks High Woods Country Park, with slopes downwards towards a tributary of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street layout with several cul-de-sacs and crescents.
- Street pattern is relatively uniform.
- Main housing areas are served by High Woods approach, Eastwood Drive, Highclere Road, Mill Road and Severalls Lane.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall good division between public and private space.
- Most houses have small front gardens which are delineated by low hedges or walls.
- Several small greenspace play areas are set within blocks of housing, providing access to public greenspace.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively low density housing development.
- Several small areas of public open space evenly distributed throughout the area.
- Open space areas are generally open but overlooked by housing (e.g. Mabbitt Way greenspace).
- Distinctive area of large detached houses with grander front entrances and larger gardens at The Jays adjacent to High Woods Country Park.

Architecture & Built Form

- Combination of predominantly two-storey semi-detached and detached houses but also three-storey flats and terraces.
- Materials generally consist of modern bricks and colour plaster.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape comprising roads and cycle paths with utilitarian lamp posts, street signs and narrow grass verges.
- Within the centre of the area there is little recognisable sense of place.
- At northern edge, views to surrounding open fields (rough grassland) with intact tree field boundaries provide some sense of place.

Open Space

- High proportion of small public greenspaces (often containing colourful play equipment within housing areas).
- High proportion of incidental greenspace containing mown amenity grass and street trees.
- School playing fields (i.e. Gillard Secondary School and Binkley Grove Primary) contribute to open space.
- Mill Road/Colchester Rugby Club sports fields provide a large semi-private open space to the north of the area.
- High Woods Country Park provides a key open space which is adjacent to housing, however, signs to indicate the presence of access to the park are sometimes incoherent.

Biodiversity

- High Woods Country Park which provides a wildlife haven.
- Areas of woodland, provide habitats for birds and wildlife.
- Previous field boundary hedgerow trees have been retained within the housing areas, providing an important wildlife habitat.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a bustling residential area, centred around Tesco Hypermarket (TCA I8).

Movement Patterns

- Roads are fairly busy and layout determines free-flowing traffic in most areas.
- Interconnecting cycle routes are laid out throughout the area.
- Car parks are situated at the edge of High Woods Country Park (e.g. Chantrelle) and footpaths also link the area to the park.

Viewing Experience

- There is a landmark water tower/historic tower along Mill Road.
- From the centre of the residential area there are no views to High Woods Country Park.
- Housing at the western edges of the area has a closer visual relationship with the park.
- Views across open fields to the north of Mill Pond.

Designations

- Mayland Hall is a 15th century Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- Chinock, Berkley Close, Cleveland Close, East Wood: Highwood Drive, East Wood, Highwood and Highwoods Country Park are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has been undeveloped until the late 20th century apart from a limited number of houses, one of which dates from the 15th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building there are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Apart from one Listed Building, Mayland Hall, housing within this area dates c.late 1970s/early 1980s and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism to small greenspaces/children's play equipment.
- Lack of maintenance of private front garden boundaries.
- Planting of ornamental species (small shrubs and trees) that are not in keeping with native vegetation.
- Conversion of front gardens/driveways/hardstanding to provide more car parking spaces (leading to a loss of wildlife habitats and detracting from the character of the area).
- Gradual deterioration in the condition of built fabric through piecemeal lack of maintenance (affecting the overall coherence and consistency of the area).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development as a result of moderate biodiversity value, within private gardens and also vegetation associated with incidental greenspaces and at the edge of High Woods Country Park, and moderate visual sensitivity. Visual sensitivity is, however, high at the western edge of the area with views to and from High Woods Country Park and also views to landmarks (such as 'Jumbo' and the Town Hall Clock Tower) within the historic core.

H13. ST. JOHN'S ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

An area of post-1960s detached and semi-detached housing which is based around two main roads and a number of closes and cul-de-sacs. Housing along Templewood and Churnwood Roads (to the south of the railway line) has a very similar character and is therefore included within this area, even though the railway line physically separates the two residential blocks. Housing is relatively low density, and most houses have private gardens and drives. Overall, this area lacks sense of place, but is quiet and feels safe.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Housing is set off two main roads (St John's Road and St Cynis Road) into a number of closes and cul-de-sacs.
- Curvilinear street pattern, which is relatively uniform throughout the area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses have private front gardens and drives, which are separated from the road by brick walls, fences and hedges (which are often quite tall).

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively low density housing area.
- Mixture of semi-detached and detached houses (quite a large proportion detached).
- Bungalows along St John's and St Christopher's Road.

Architecture & Built Form

- Post-1960s brick houses (red and grey).
- Typically two-storeys with occasional bungalows.

Streetscapes

- Typical of post-1960s housing estate anywhere else in Britain.
- Some sense of place provided by views to Bullock Wood from eastern edge.
- Generally feels safe, secluded (relatively tranquil) and calm.

Open Space

- Small pockets of public open space amongst housing, however, generally not a high proportion.
- Houses nearly always have front gardens.
- Friar's Grove School playing fields.
- Magdalen Wood, which is roughly at the centre of the area.

Biodiversity

- Trees and shrubs within front gardens provide some habitats for wildlife.
- Magdalen Wood is an important wildlife resource.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential suburb.
- Parade of shops on St Christopher's Road with flats above and The Friar Public House opposite.
- Friar's Grove Infant and Primary School.

Movement Patterns

- Busy main roads leading through residential area.
- At distance from main feeder roads, within closes and cul-de-sacs, character is generally quiet and calm.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open fields (to the east) from Green Lane and St John's Close.

Designations

- St John's Church is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- St Cyrus Road, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has seen little development until the 19th century. Until then the area had been agricultural land and forest. The late 20th century brought about extensive development of housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Building there is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Occasional on-street parking as a result of increased car ownership.
- Potential new development along the eastern edge which may block views to open countryside/landscape setting.
- Maturing and eventual loss of trees within Magdalen Wood (without maintenance).
- Gradual deterioration in the condition of built fabric through lack of maintenance (affecting the overall coherence and consistency of the area).
- Extensions to fronts or backs of housing (to provide garages or porches) which may alter the existing line and rhythm of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development as a result of a combination of moderate biodiversity value, within private gardens and Magdalen Wood, and moderate visual sensitivity. Visual sensitivity is higher along the eastern edge of the area, where views to and from the landscape setting can be gained.

H14. ROACH VALE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This residential suburb is located at the north eastern edge of the urban area and is separated into two halves by a large swathe of greenspace (comprising school playing fields, sports ground and Welsh Wood). The curvilinear street pattern and architectural style is typical of other such modern (c.1980s/1990s) housing developments both within the Borough and throughout the United Kingdom. At the eastern edge, housing overlooks Welsh Wood and the valley of Salary Brook.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively flat at western end and gradually sloping downhill from west to east, towards the valley of Salary Brook.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with several avenues, closes and cul-de-sacs leading from Parson Heath Road and Crockleford Hill Road.
- Block pattern is split into a northern and southern area by a large area of playing fields (associated with the school) and adjacent sports ground.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Division between public and private space is mixed and incoherent in places, particularly within the southern half of the area, where front drives and gardens merge with streetscape.
- Few fences, gates or walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high-density development with predominantly semi-detached, two-storey houses (also containing primary school).

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly modern (c.1980s/1990s) housing, with red brick as the dominant material (and buff/yellow brick detailing with white windows).
- Occasional timber-cladding on upper storeys.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape has a generally bland character with utilitarian paving and lighting and occasional on-street parking.

Open Space

- A large swathe or belt of interconnected greenspace/open space separates the northern and southern halves of this area.

- Greenspace consists of semi-private primary school playing fields, a sports grounds (mown amenity grassland with mature vegetation at boundaries) and Welsh Wood which contains mature trees and is designated as ancient woodland.

Biodiversity

- Generally poor biodiversity within front and back gardens.
- Trees at the edges of sports ground provide wildlife interest.
- Welsh Wood provides an important nature conservation feature/wildlife habitat.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a quiet residential suburb overlooking a swathe of greenspace at the centre of the area.

Movement Patterns

- The busiest roads for traffic are Parons Heath and Crockleford Hill Roads (at the western and southern perimeters).
- Closes and avenues are quieter, however, Roach Vale is particularly busy/congested at the beginning and end of the school day.

Viewing Experience

- Views to mature woodland (Welsh Wood) from eastern edges of the area.
- Views to open countryside (into the valley of Salary Brook) from south-eastern edge.
- Welsh Wood inhibits longer-distance views into the valley from most of the north eastern edge.

Designations

- Welsh Wood is a registered Ancient Woodland.
- Welsh Wood is a Designated Open Space and there is a proposed open space at land adjoining Roach Vale Primary School.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has seen little historically before the late 20th century when the area was developed into a post-1960s housing estate.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and eventual loss of mature woodland within Welsh Wood (without maintenance/replacement).
- Gradual deterioration in the condition of built fabric through lack of maintenance.
- Extensions to backs of housing which may alter the existing line and rhythm of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has high biodiversity value (on account of the importance of Welsh Wood as a nature conservation resource). Historic integrity is mixed. Although housing is predominantly modern, Welsh Wood has been retained within the layout of the area and a swathe of greenspace provides a link to landscape setting (Salary Brook Valley) to the east. Visual sensitivity overall is moderate, however, the eastern edge is visible from countryside to the east (located on the valley side) and Welsh Wood is a visible landmark from several surrounding areas. Overall, therefore, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new built development.

H15. LONGRIDGE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This residential suburb is situated at the eastern edge of the urban area and overlooks Salary Brook Valley to the east. Housing ranges from large, predominantly detached, red brick houses with large gardens and clear definition between public and private space in the northern part of the area, to bungalows and terraces within the southern part. All properties characteristically obtain views across the valley, providing distinctive setting and sense of place. Street pattern is curvilinear, with several avenues and closes leading off Longridge Road (the main vehicular access road).



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Pronounced yet gentle slope downhill from west to east across the Character Area along the slope of Salary Brook Valley side.

Street & Block Pattern

- Predominantly curvilinear street pattern with several closes leading off Longridge Road.
- Block pattern is divided by a green 'wedge' which separates different areas of housing.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between gardens at northern end of Longridge Road, with tall brick walls and conifer/laurel hedges defining private spaces.
- Less coherent definition within the southern half of the area, where bungalows face directly onto surrounding amenity grassland, no division of private/public space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness throughout the area, as all housing overlooks the valley to the east, giving a sense of height and expansiveness.
- Large detached two-storey houses at the northern end of Longridge Road.
- Generally low density housing area.
- Terraces and bungalows to the south of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Larger detached houses (northern road) are c. late 1990s and are predominantly red/brown brick with colourful fascias and brick walls separating housing from grass verges, footpaths and the roadway.
- Older (c. late 1970s/early 1980s) bungalows to the south of the area are yellow/grey brick with brown window frames.

Streetscapes

- Streetscapes are coherently distinctive in the fact that they overlook/have open views across Salary Brook Valley to the east.

- Diverse streetscape to the north with semi-mature trees and shrubs within private gardens.
- More bland and utilitarian streetscape within southern part of area.

Open Space

- Blocks of housing are separated by a wedge of mown amenity grassland greenspace in the north.
- Area overlooks large school playing fields to the west (within Character Area F11).

Biodiversity

- Moderate biodiversity value within front and back gardens to the north (vegetation provides habitats for urban wildlife).
- In close proximity to Salary Brook river corridor which also provides a wildlife corridor.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Quiet residential suburb overlooking the valley.

Movement Patterns

- Longridge Road provides main vehicular access, connecting to Crockleford Hill (north) and Avon Way (south).
- Pedestrian permeability is average using pavements and through areas of incidental greenspace.

Viewing Experience

- Open and glimpse views across Salary Brook Valley to the east and towards open countryside on the opposite valley top.
- Glimpse views across playing fields to the west.

Designations

- There are no designated sties within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Up until the 20th century there were a limited number of houses in this area. The 1960's brought more settlement and more housing in this Character Area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has high visual sensitivity as a result of its position on the western slope of Salary Brook Valley. Open views across and into the valley can be gained from the area and housing within the area can also be viewed from adjacent landscape setting areas (the valley) to the east. There is generally moderate biodiversity value within gardens at the northern end of the Character Area and low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity overall. The Character Area is therefore moderately sensitive to change or new built development.

H16. NORMANDY AVENUE AND MOUNTBATTEN DRIVE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively secluded post-1960s suburb is situated at the southern urban edge and is adjacent to greenspace at the northern (Bourne Road and greenspace corridor), southern (Middlewick Ranges) and western edges (Colchester Cemetery). Views can be gained into these adjacent greenspaces from within the residential area and it is also possible to gain views of housing from the greenspaces. Housing is set out around a curvilinear pattern, with modern (c.1980s) semi-detached and terraced housing. Streetscape is bland in places and there is confusion between public and private space.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat at the western end, gradually sloping downwards across the area to the east.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with several dead-ends leading off two main circular roads – Roosevelt/Churchill Way and Mountbatten Drive.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space, with no boundaries to front gardens along some roads.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing along Barn Hall Avenue and Mountbatten Drive, with a large pocket of greenspace to the north of Churchill Way.

Architecture & Built Form

- Modern (c.1980s) housing which is predominantly two-storey and red brick.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with utilitarian paving and lighting which is common to most post-1960s suburbs within the Borough.

Open Space

- A large patch of mown amenity grassland to the north of Churchill Way/south of Roosevelt Way.
- Smaller patches of open space to the east of Mountbatten Drive and north of Normandy Avenue.

Biodiversity

- Overall few habitats for urban wildlife, however, the Bourne Mill greenspace corridor is situated directly to the north, which provides a key nature conservation resource.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a quiet residential suburb.

Movement Patterns

- Barn Hall Avenue provides a relatively busy vehicular access route from Old Heath Road to the east and Normandy Avenue connects to Mersea Road in the west.
- Several short public footpaths connect the area to Bourne Mill greenspace to the north, Colchester cemetery to the west and Middlewick Ranges to the south.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across Middlewick Rifle Ranges which are predominantly rough grassland to the south.
- Glimpse views from back gardens to Bourne Pond and greenspace corridor to the north.
- Views to the boundaries of Colchester Cemetery to the west.

Designations

- Mountbatten Drive, Dorchester End, Churchill Way/Roosevelt Way are Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has evidence of Iron Age settlement with the visible remains of a rampart and ditch. There has been little development since then with only a few houses being present until the early 20th century, when the area drastically grew alongside the industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Iron Age Rampart and ditch

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within the area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate sensitivity to new development on account of its mixed historic integrity (visible remains of rampart and ditch) and moderate intervisibility and visual sensitivity (several views to and from adjacent greenspaces).

H17. LETHE GROVE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively modern (c.1970s) residential suburb is located at the southern extent of Colchester urban area off Berechurch Hall Road. Streetscape is coherent, yet also has a bland character, with flat-roofed high density housing (white/grey fascias). Housing within the area has glimpse views to adjacent landscape setting (open countryside to the west) and blocks of woodland to the south (on the northern slopes of the Roman River Valley). Street pattern is curvilinear and based around Lethe Grove Road which is set out as a dead-end, determining a quiet, rather than bustling character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Slightly curvilinear street pattern as a result of curves and meanders in Lethe Grove.
- One small estate of housing.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Several houses have small front gardens, however, there are few boundaries between edges of gardens and adjacent roads.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing development containing a number of two-storey terraced blocks of housing.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are predominantly white or grey faced and have flat roofs and are generally cubic/rectilinear in form.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is bland, with little variety or detail other than small pockets of vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- Character Area backs onto countryside to the south, which contains patches of woodland such as Lethe Grove.
- There is also open space to the west (which is crossed by pylons) and is associated with Berechurch Hall Camp and the Garrison.

Biodiversity

- Low diversity value within front gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A quiet residential suburb at the south western edge of the urban area.

Movement Patterns

- Lethe Road is the main feeder road for this area, which is a dead-end rather than circular route, and is therefore a relatively quiet road.
- Lethe Road links to Berechurch Hall Road to the north, which is a busy arterial road.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to open space and landscape setting to the west.
- Patches of woodland, such as Lethe Grove, limit views of countryside and landscape setting to the south, to a certain extent.

Designations

- Lethe Grove is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area is on the edge of Colchester and there was little development in this area until the late 20th century, when the demand for housing grew.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within the area is generally modern and there is, therefore, little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease the sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.
- Potential new development along the western edge which may block views to landscape setting.
- Maturing and eventual loss of patches of woodland (without maintenance/management).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate visual sensitivity as a result of its position in close proximity to countryside along the southern and western edge (views to and from the area). Overall sensitivity to change or new development is low on account of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity within the area.

H18. HOLT DRIVE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Housing along Holt Drive forms a small, discrete suburb at the southern edge of the urban area. A sense of place and enclosure is provided by patches of woodland to the south. Houses are predominantly semi-detached and red brick with pitched grey tile roofs. Overall streetscape is bland with little definition between public and private space.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Sloping downwards from north to south across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with a couple of short dead-end roads leading off Holt Drive.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally lack of definition between public and private space within the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Back gardens of housing within the area overlook patches of woodland within countryside (landscape setting to the south and west).
- These patches of woodland provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion.
- A mixture of semi-detached and detached houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- Architecture dates to c.1980s and comprises predominantly red brick semi-detached houses with pitched tile roofs. These are a combination of one- and two-storey and generally have small front gardens (with boundary wooden fencing).

Streetscapes

- Overall streetscape is bland and utilitarian with little variety or paving detail.

Open Space

- Housing is situated around a large, rectangular grassland area with several single mature trees at the edges of the space.
- The area is also in close proximity to countryside to the south and west.

Biodiversity

- Little biodiversity value within gardens.
- Mature trees lining central greenspace provide habitats for urban wildlife.
- Strong biodiversity interest within woodland to the south.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A quiet and secluded residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Holt Drive provides the only vehicular access from the main (busy) Blackheath Road to the east.
- A public footpath running along Cherry Tree Lane and connecting with the Roman River (to the south) and the Hythe (to the east) runs along the northern edge of the area.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to patches of woodland to the south.
- Views across open space (East Donyland Sports Ground) and arable farmland (to the east).

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area saw little activity with the exception of a several farms until the late 20th century when the residential influence in the area grew dramatically.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within the area is generally modern and there little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Maturing and eventual loss of woodland to the south (without maintenance/management), leading to loss of enclosure along the southern edge.
- Potential new built development to the east or west which may block views to surrounding landscape setting.
- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Although this area can be viewed from adjacent landscape setting areas, overall visual prominence and thus sensitivity is low, with enclosure provided by patches of woodland to the south. Overall sensitivity to change or new development is low as a result of low overall biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

H19. AVON WAY POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large residential suburb occupies the northern slope of Salary Brook Valley and lines the south eastern urban edge of Colchester. Housing comprises a combination of semi-detached houses, terraces and low-rise blocks of flats with varying architectural styles and details, ranging from c.late 1970s to c.1990s. Occasional street trees are visible within the combined curvilinear and grid street pattern. However, overall streetscape character is bland and stark. Open views across the Colne Valley and Salary Brook Valley can be gained from within the Character Area, contributing to a recognisable sense of place. Avon Way, a busy traffic route, disturbs overall sense of tranquillity within the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Pronounced slope across the Character Area from north to south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Combination of curvilinear and grid-like street pattern leading off Avon Way and connecting to adjacent housing to the north via Magnolia Avenue and Hawthorn Avenue.
- There is a dense block pattern, with few visible areas of incidental greenspace, other than amenity grassland directly adjacent to buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall mixed division between public and private space. Several flats and houses do not have front gardens (with shrubs against buildings), adjacent to amenity grassland.
- Some properties have low hedges and fences surrounding them and associated gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- High density housing area with a mixture of one-, two- and three-storey buildings.
- Sense of openness in some places, where houses overlook Salary Brook River Valley.

Architecture & Built Form

- Semi-detached houses with beige and brown brick and pitched roofs.
- Three-storey blocks of flats (student accommodation) close to Ashdown Way.
- White, timber-faced semi-detached houses in some places (e.g. Berberis Walk).
- Blocks of flat roofed garages.
- Some houses also have flat roofs.
- St Andrew's Church with its brick built tower is a landmark.
- Variation in colours of plaster at upper floors (beige, green and brown).
- Generally stark architectural form.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland streetscape with utilitarian paving and lighting.
- Parking is often in off-road bays.
- Occasional small street trees.

Open Space

- Churchyard adjacent to St Andrew's Church.
- Corridor of amenity grassland to the east of Woodrow Way, links housing to adjacent large playing fields to the north.

Biodiversity

- Lack of wildlife habitats with only occasional interest in front and back gardens.
- In close proximity to Salary Brook (to the south) which has biodiversity value.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a busy residential area with a hectic character, as a result of busy roads running through it.

Movement Patterns

- Avon Way is a busy road which connects to Longridge Road and eventually Crockleford Hill Road to the north and to St Andrew's Avenue and the Hythe to the north and east respectively.
- Several interconnecting footpaths lead through the area and connect housing with other housing areas to the north and Salary Brook Valley to the south.
- Salary Brook Trail is within the area.

Viewing Experience

- Long distance views into and across the Colne Valley from Ashdown Way.
- Open, long distance views across Salary Brook River Valley from Avon Road and Forest Road.
- Views to open fields on the opposite valley side and also to high-rise tower blocks on the University of Essex campus.
- St Andrew's Church is a landmark within views to the area.

Designations

- St Andrew's County Junior School is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been little activity in this area throughout history and the area has remained agricultural until the 20th century when the development of housing grew substantially.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within the area is generally modern and there is little architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development within Salary Brook Valley which may block views into and across the valley.
- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall visual sensitivity is moderate throughout the Character Area. Views across to the Colne Valley and Salary Brook Valley can be gained from within the Character Area and housing is also highly visible from the opposite side of Salary Brook Valley. Overall, biodiversity value is low, with little wildlife interest within gardens and historic integrity is weak. Overall sensitivity to change or to new development is therefore low.

H20. THE HYTHE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This recently redeveloped mixed use area contains private and University accommodation alongside a large commercial superstore (B&Q). Housing is arranged as large blocks of accommodation (between three and six storeys) which overlook the river corridor and are situated on the eastern bank of the River Colne. Large areas of car parking associated with residential development and the superstore are a dominant character of this area. This area is within the Hythe and character is sometimes disturbed with noise from the adjacent railway corridor, Hythe industrial/commercial area and river. Traffic congestion also detracts from an otherwise coherent character. Open views along the river and to other areas of the Hythe add identity to the character of this area and help to determine an overall distinct sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area, within the floodplain/valley bottom of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern consists of several large blocks of flats and a large warehouse adjacent to the river.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Private open space is generally large scale, car parking and courtyards associated with apartments and houses, and is often divided from public space by a combination of brick walls and cast-iron railings.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density area (with two- to six-storey buildings) overlooking the open Colne River corridor to the east.

Architecture & Built Form

- Large commercial warehouse/store (B&Q) with adjacent large, paved car park and landmark circular watch tower at the north-western end of the building.
- University Quays (2006) six-storey accommodation blocks with white plastic pre-fabricated facing.
- Block of University accommodation (three- to five-storeys) adjacent to University quays with distinctive suspended wooden/metal overhanging roofs, red lower floors wood-panel faced upper floors and large block glass windows overlooking the river.
- Colne Reach housing/apartment development: three-storey red brick buildings with yellow/buff brick pillars, grey tiled-pitched roofs and white windows.
- Housing in Colne Reach is set around a central courtyard, containing car parking, and overlooking the river corridor.

Streetscapes

- Currently quite bare streetscape adjacent to University Quays, however, redevelopment is not yet complete (2006) and in some areas young street trees have been planted and paving laid.

- Streetscape within Colne Reach is traditional, with detail in paving and old-fashioned, Victorian style street lights.

Open Space

- Children's play area and central square (hard urban space) within Colne Reach development.
- Character Area overlooks the River Colne corridor.

Biodiversity

- Currently few visible wildlife habitats within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Combination of University and private accommodation including a row of retail units and restaurant.
- Commercial superstore is also within the area.
- Generally busy feel adjacent to the superstore, with greater sense of seclusion amongst new built development, especially overlooking the river corridor.

Movement Patterns

- Areas accessed via Hawkins Road, main feeder road connecting to the Hythe and A137.
- New pedestrian links are in the process of being created, with a footbridge crossing the adjacent railway line to give access to University of Essex campus.

Viewing Experience

- Open views along the River Colne to the south, including views to boats on the river.
- Views to the Hythe and also along the river corridor to the north.
- Very tall pylons (which cross the river) are a visible landmark from this area.
- B&Q is a landmark building when approaching the area by road.
- Open views to industrial and commercial development on the opposite bank of the river.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of special interest (Grade II within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- There is no designated open space within the Character Area, however, The Moors is a proposed open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has been important historically even if the evidence is not visible anymore. During the Roman period this was a major port for reaching Colchester by boat and the military would have been based close to this area. During the Napoleonic Wars Colchester's first fleet of ships were docked in the Hythe. The area around the Hythe has grown with the importance of the area, industrial works have formed alongside the Hythe and so have large areas of post-1960s housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Building, visible archaeological features include:

- Limekiln, Hawkins Road. 19th century;
- Moler works;
- Pillbox, Hythe Station.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has a mixed architectural history, some of which is reflected in the current character of the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with industrial and commercial development on the opposite bank of the river.
- Car parking associated with University accommodation and railway station.
- Noise from nearby railway lines.
- Traffic and congestion as a result of use of this area as a mixed commercial/residential site.
- Tall pylons which are a visual detractor.
- Further tall buildings which may block views along the river corridor.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Buildings within this area are in good condition and attention to detail within the public realm is clear. Visual sensitivity of the area is high, with views to and from the river corridor and also from adjacent Character Areas. Other than the river corridor, biodiversity value is weak and historic integrity mixed with occasional historic buildings visible. Overall sensitivity to change or to new development is therefore considered to be moderate.

H21. ADELAIDE DRIVE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively high density residential area is set back from Blackheath Road at the southern edge of the urban area. Housing is relatively modern (c.1960s/1970s) and typical of other estates of such period throughout the Borough and the United Kingdom. Predominantly terraced houses have geometric architectural form with wide panelled windows and white wood-panelled facing punctuated by brick columns. Back gardens of housing within the area overlook open countryside to the east. There is generally little sense of place within the Character Area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gradually sloping downhill from west to east across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with houses set out along a number of drives and crescents leading off Adelaide Drive.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition overall, with some front gardens divided from the adjacent road/pavement by low brick walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing development with few areas of incidental amenity grassland amongst the built form.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are geometric (cube form) and predominantly terraced.
- Materials include brick and white-timber facing and most houses have square front porches and front garages attached.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland, utilitarian streetscape.

Open Space

- No large areas of open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Few habitats for urban wildlife, other than patches within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A relatively quiet and secluded residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Housing is set back from the main (busy) Blackheath Road, with feeder roads having a quieter and calmer character.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to open countryside from the eastern edge of the area.

Designations

- The Rising Sun Public House is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The land in this Character Area has been predominately arable and open fields and not until the late 20th century did this residential area develop.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded visible archaeological features in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories) which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Vandalism within playing fields to the west of the area.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Loss of woodland to the north which would decrease sense of enclosure.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development overall, as a result of low biodiversity value, weak historic integrity and generally low visual sensitivity (although the eastern edge of housing can be viewed from landscape setting to the east).

H22. BALKERNE HEIGHTS POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses an area of modern (c.1990s/2000) development, which is in close proximity to the town centre and overlooks the Colne Valley to the north. Housing is predominantly three- and four-storey and red/buff brick built.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Topography slopes upwards from the north to south across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is based around a number of feeder roads, which link the new development to surrounding areas.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally clear definition between public and private space, with housing separated from Balkerne Hill Road to the east by its position on an embankment.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density development in close proximity to the town centre.
- Blocks of apartments.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly three- and four-storey blocks of apartments, which are red and beige/buff brick with white fascias in some, cases and pitched front roofs.

Streetscapes

- Generally coherent streetscape, which lacks mature vegetation.

Open Space

- Other than car parking, few pockets of open space

Biodiversity

- Few urban wildlife habitats within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Lively residential area, which is adjacent to the town centre.

Movement Patterns

- Housing is accessible to pedestrians via a footbridge, which crosses Balkerne Hill dual carriageway.

Viewing Experience

- Housing within the area is highly visible on approach to Colchester to town centre from the south (along Balkerne Hill).
- Housing is also visible from Character Areas at further distance.
- Views to and from the historic core.
- Views across the Colne Valley to the north.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Prior to the erection of modern housing within this Character Area, the area had a varied history. Recent excavations (2004) highlighted the importance of this area during the Romano-British period. The site was of special value as it occupied three hectares of land between the city gate and Sheepen, a large Romano-British industrial and religious centre situated less than a kilometre from the town. Excavations located the main road link between the town and Sheepen, as well as suburban side streets, houses and graves. Roman law forbade cemeteries within city limits. Over 70 late Roman graves were found on the site, including this unusual twin burial in which two adolescent girls shared the same grave.

The area later became the site of St Mary's Hospital and the Union Workhouse. In 1725, the SPCK's "An Account of Several Work-houses..." reported that in the Workhouse there are about 40 or 50 children kept at work, their work being carding and spinning wool for the Baymakers. It is also reported that in the Workhouse there was a large area assigned for an Infirmary. A parliamentary report of 1776 lists Colchester as having a workhouse with accommodation for 50 inmates.

The new Colchester Union workhouse was built in 1836-37 to designs by John Brown. Brown was responsible for a number of workhouses in Norfolk. Colchester had a double-cruciform layout with an administration block at the centre, flanked by cruciform male ranges to the east and for women to the west.

The hospital eventually took over the entirety of the building in 1958 and remained a hospital until it was demolished in the late 1990's.

The land to the some of the workhouse and hospital is shown to be Lordsland Nursery in the Ordnance Survey of 1881 but by 1891 housing had been residentially developed up to the boundary of the hospital.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded points of archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Housing within this area is generally modern and there is therefore little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- New built development which may block views to the historic core.
- Noise and traffic associated with the nearby town centre.
- Car parking for shoppers using the town centre.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this character area has low sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to the area from Balcerne Hill and also from the western edge of the historic core. Overall biodiversity value, is however low and historic integrity weak.

I. 20th CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



- Often lack of sense of place, with materials including mass produced metal panels, often in white or brown or grey.

Townscape Character Areas

- I1. Copford Place
- I2. London Road: Copford
- I3. Tollgate
- I4. Peartree
- I5. Shrub End Road
- I6. Sheepen Road
- I7. The Cowdray Centre and Turner Rise
- I8. High Woods
- I9. Severalls Lane/Colchester Business Park
- I10. The Hythe
- I11. Brook Street
- I12. Gosbecks Road
- I13. Moorside

Generic Description

Character Areas within this type contain a combination of retail, commercial or industrial land uses. Street and block pattern is usually large-scale and dominated by a series of medium-sized or large warehouse units. Whilst several of the areas are situated at the periphery of Colchester's urban area, commercial and retail areas are also located at the centre of the urban fabric. Colourful and often garish signage is associated with retail and commercial units, and whilst adding diversity to the character of the area, it is also a visual detractor, which in most cases is highly visible from surrounding Character Areas. There is often a lack of recognisable sense of place within Character Areas of this type, as a result of the mass-produced nature of some of the materials (e.g. corrugated metal and plastic panels).

Key Characteristics

- Combination of retail, commercial and light industrial land uses.
- Large warehouse units are often arranged in retail estates and business parks.
- Large-scale street pattern, often punctuated by numerous large car parks.
- Colourful mix of signage which is often dominant in views to each area.

II. COPFORD PLACE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively small commercial and retail area lines the former main road to London (London Road), which connects Copford and Stanway (in the west) to Colchester (in the east). The area contains a few small shops and services for the village, which are accessed from London Road. Some buildings face the road, whilst others are slightly set back.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area slopes gradually downwards in an easterly direction, towards a small tributary river valley.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is generally irregular, with a series of relatively small, detached buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Buildings are generally surrounded by gravel or paving and are slightly set back from the road and pavement.

Massing & Enclosure

- There is little sense of enclosure within the Character Area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings comprise a mixture of materials.
- Some buildings have black timber facing.

Streetscapes

- Not applicable.

Open Space

- There is no open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- There is little biodiversity interest within this Character Area, however some mature trees are located within the northern half of the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Land use within the area is predominantly retail (small shops and businesses).
- The area has a lively feel, in close proximity to London Road.

Movement Patterns

- Pedestrians are able to move into the area directly from the adjacent pavements.
- Parking for vehicles limited.

Viewing Experience

- Views along London Road from the southern end of the Character Area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Historically there has been little development in this area until the 19th century when the village of Stanway became established. It was not until the late 20th century the Character Area developed into a retail and commercial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within this Character Area are comprised of a mixture of materials and styles.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in built fabric.
- Inappropriate new development, which is not consistent with existing building styles and plot arrangements.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area is considered to have low sensitivity to change or potential new development. The area is visible from London Road, but is not prominent in views from surrounding Character Areas or countryside. Appropriate new development, should however reflect the existing pattern, materials and layout of buildings within the area.

I2. LONDON ROAD: COPFORD 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area contains a large garden centre (Wyevale) and associated car park. A public house is also located in the southwestern corner of the site. Vegetation lines the southern edge of the area and separates the garden centre and car park from London Road (adjacent to the south).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area slopes gradually upwards in an easterly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern consists of main garden centre buildings (roughly rectangular in shape) with associated relatively large car park to the east and a smaller public house to the south of the garden centre.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- The car park is publicly accessible directly from London Road (to the south) and is surrounded at the southern edges by fencing and relatively mature vegetation/hedge.
- The car park serves both the public house and the garden centre.
- Once within the area, the garden centre faces directly onto the car park (to the east), whilst the public house has a small associated garden, which is predominantly hard surfacing, rather than grass.

Massing & Enclosure

- Once inside the entrance to the car park the area has a generally open feel overall.

Architecture & Built Form

- The public is predominantly brick built, with partial timber-cladding
- The garden centre is also a brick structure, with large glass-panelled entrance doors and black timber-cladding.
- There are several outbuildings to the back of the main garden centre.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is dominated by the large expanse of tarmac car parking with occasional low plating beds, which break the expansiveness of the space.

Open Space

- Other than the car park and small pockets of open space associated with the public house, there is no open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Planting beds along with trees and shrubs along the southern edge of the area provide habitats for wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is dominated by the garden centre and car park, with the public house occupying the southwestern edge of the Character Area.

Movement Patterns

- Public and vehicular access to the site is from London Road to the south.

Viewing Experience

- There are limited views to surrounding Character Areas, or along the London Road corridor.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area forms a part of the village of Stanway. It saw little development before the 19th century when the village started to evolve and before the current development was established was agricultural land.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

The garden centre and public house are the main points of architectural interest within this Character Area. Both buildings are relatively modern in comparison with others within the Borough (in particular the historic core).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in planting along the southern edge of the Character Area, leading to increased visibility of the large car park from London Road.
- Deterioration in the quality of the existing built fabric (garden centre and public house).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area is considered to have low sensitivity to change or new build development. The area has low visual sensitivity and there are few features of historic or ecological interest. The existing large car park is relatively visually intrusive.

I3. TOLLGATE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses several large retail units (including electrical and furniture warehouses) and a large superstore (Sainsbury's). The area is split into two sites, Tollgate East and Tollgate West, which are separated by Tollgate Road. Buildings are generally large pre-fabricated warehouse units, built from a combination of brick and corrugated iron/metal. Buildings are surrounded by large tarmac car parks, containing utilitarian lighting and street furniture and small pockets of planting (shrubs and bushes). There is generally little visual interest, however a range of different signs associated with different retail units provides colour and some variation in character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is fairly regular, with several large warehouse units (relatively similar in scale, massing and height within Tollgate West, and generally slightly smaller within Tollgate East) surrounded by large car parks.
- The area is accessed from Tollgate East and Tollgate West roads, which join with London Road to the north.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Buildings and space within this area are generally publicly accessible other than service areas which are generally located to the rear of buildings.
- Buildings/retail units generally face directly onto car parks.

Massing & Enclosure

- Retail units are generally quite tall, however the expansiveness of intervening car parks denotes that there is a general sense of openness, rather than enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Retail units are generally pre-fabricated and either metal or corrugated iron (Tollgate West) or brick built (Tollgate East).
- Signage upon the buildings is generally colourful and garish.

Streetscapes

- Car parking associated with the retail units is bland, with utilitarian lighting and furniture and only small patches of shrub planting to soften the overall hard nature of the area.
- A landmark 'Stonehenge-esque' sculpture marks the eastern entrance to the business/retail park.

Open Space

- Other than car parking, there is no open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- There is little biodiversity interest within this Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area is predominantly retail, consisting of a variety of different businesses in an 'out of town' location.
- The area has a busy and lively feel with constant traffic passing through the area for much of the day.

Movement Patterns

- Easy access from London Road and the A12 (via A1124), means that this area is particularly busy for vehicles
- Pedestrian links to the area are limited, even from residential Character Areas in close proximity to the retail units.
- Pedestrian routes within the area are generally poorly demarcated, and access links between Tollgate East and West, not clearly signposted.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open countryside from the northern, southern and western edges of the Character Area.
- Views to the large retail units from surrounding residential Character Areas and also from open countryside.

Designations

- There are three Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area is situated between two villages, Stanway and Beacon End. Historically the area has been mainly farmland, and evidence of this survives through several listed farmhouse buildings dating from the 15th – 17th century. By the late 20th century the area had evolved into an industrial area and housing had developed around it.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings are generally post-1960s (late 1980s/early 1990s) and are consistently pre-fabricated (either brick or corrugated iron) with colourful signage.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Dominance of brightly coloured and garish signage which is highly visible within the surrounding landscape.
- Expansion of retail/commercial area into surrounding landscape.
- Fly tipping within the area.
- Increase in traffic and car parking associated with the area.
- Lack of planting/soft landscaping to soften harsh edge of warehouse retail buildings.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area is considered to have low sensitivity to new development or change. There is little biodiversity value within the Character Area, and although occasional Listed Buildings do occur, buildings are generally pre-fabricated (1980s/1990s) with little architectural variation. There is a need to soften the overall character of the area (particularly the visual dominance of retail warehouses, the supermarket and associated car parks). Development within this area would however, be visible from several surrounding areas of predominantly open landscape.

I4. PEARTREE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The character of this area is dominated by commercial and light industrial units, which line Peartree road to the north and south. These include engineering units, home furnishing units (blinds and kitchens) and Colchester Mobility Centre. A relatively large supermarket (Fiveways Co-op), with associated separate furniture store and petrol station is situated to the north of Peartree Road. There is generally little architectural variety within the area, with a predominance of buildings consisting of brick or pre-fabricated metal panels. The area has a generally busy feel on account of busy traffic flow within and throughout the area. Visual interest is provided by colourful signage mounted on the warehouse units, yet is also incoherent. Glimpsed views to the area can be gained from adjacent Character Areas and vice versa.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is flat to the north of Peartree Road and slopes gradually downhill in a southerly direction to the south of Peartree Road.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is geometric and regular with several rectangular warehouse units dominating the space.
- Units are accessed from small feeder roads leading north and south off Peartree Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally poor definition between public and private space, with warehouse units facing either the road or associated car parking.
- Space between separate units generally merges, due to consistency in paving and layout.

Massing & Enclosure

- Moderately sized industrial and commercial units create a sense of enclosure within the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings generally comprise a mixture of brick or pre-fabricated metal panels.
- Buildings are generally bland, with only signage creating colour and visual interest along Peartree Road.

Streetscapes

- Peartree Road is generally bland, with utilitarian street lighting and little roadside vegetation or planting.

Open Space

- Other than car parking which separates buildings, there is no open space within the Character Area.
- The area is, however, adjacent to a large area of playing fields to the north.

Biodiversity

- There is little biodiversity interest or planting within the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area functions primarily as a commercial and light industrial area, with superstore (Co-Op) adding a retail element to the character of the area.
- The area is generally busy and has a bustling character.

Movement Patterns

- Pedestrian access to the area is generally good from surrounding residential Character Areas and also from open countryside to the south, although the area is not in close proximity to the centre of Colchester.
- The area is easily accessible via Peartree Road which links with Straight Road and London Road to the east.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to open playing fields to the north of the area through gaps in hedgerows surrounding the northern edge of the superstore car park.
- Glimpse views to adjacent residential areas to the south and east and also to open countryside to the west.

Designations

- Gryme's Dyke Middle Scheduled Monument runs through this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Evidence of the first use of this site can be seen in the Iron Age dykes that run through it however, this Character Area was predominately agricultural in use until the late 20th century when the area was developed for commercial/light industrial uses.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is are no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings are generally post-1960s and are consistently either brick or pre-fabricated metal panels, with minimal detailing.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Expansion of warehouse/retail units into adjacent open space (playing fields) to the north.
- Increase in traffic and car parking associated with the area.
- Dominance of brightly coloured and garish signage, which is highly visible within the surrounding landscape.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within the Character Area is considered to be low. There is weak historic integrity within the Character Area, with no visible links to the former use of the area before development as a commercial/retail/light industrial area and overall low biodiversity value.

I5. SHRUB END ROAD 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a relatively small area of commercial/light industrial units, which are surrounded to the north by a large area of car parking. Occasional single mature trees line Maldon Road (in front of buildings) and the area backs onto open countryside (rough grassland) to the north. This predominantly commercial and light industrial area is situated at the southwestern edge of the town and is one of the first parts of the built-up area to be seen when arriving via Maldon Road. Buildings are generally brick or pre-fabricated metal panels (post-1960s development) with little variety in architectural style or detail, other than Brickwall Farm (Listed Building at the western end of the area).

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is generally flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Pattern consists of a number of medium-sized to large warehouses, which line the northwestern side of Maldon Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Buildings are set back from the road slightly, with a combination of mature trees, grassland and car parking between the road and the buildings.

Massing & Enclosure

- Lack of enclosure to the back (western side) of buildings, with views across adjacent open fields.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings consist of large warehouse units with slightly pitched roofs.
- There is little variety in details or materials (a combination of brick and pre-fabricated metal panels).
- Brickwall Farmhouse (at the western end of the area) provides some visual architectural and historic interest amongst buildings.

Streetscapes

- Maldon Road is lined by occasional single mature trees (along the western edge) and patches of shrub vegetation within residential front gardens (along the eastern edge).

Open Space

- There is no open space within this Character Area, however buildings are situated in close proximity to open countryside to the south and west.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees and patches of vegetation within front gardens provide habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area predominantly contains commercial and light industrial warehouse units with associated car parks.
- The area is busy during working hours.

Movement Patterns

- There are no pedestrian links to the area from residential Colchester to the north.
- A footpath which crosses Cheshunt Field and connects with countryside to the south, terminates in close proximity to the western edge of the area.
- Vehicular access is via Maldon Road.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across countryside to the west and south.
- Views to residential area on the opposite side of Maldon Road.

Designations

- Brickwall Farmhouse is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- Land adjoining Gosbecks is proposed open space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the 20th century this area was predominately agricultural, there is however a Listed Building dating from the 18th century in this area. By the late 20th century the area had developed into commercial and light industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Buildings there is no recorded visible archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Brickwall Farmhouse (at the western end of the Character Area) provides historic and architectural interest. The main building is timber-framed, plastered white with a red tile roof and chimney.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Increase in traffic and car parking associated with the area.
- Dominance of brightly coloured and garish signage, which is highly visible within the surrounding landscape to the south and west.
- Expansion of commercial/light industrial units into surrounding landscape to the south and west.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area is considered to be moderately sensitivity to change or new development. The area has moderate visual sensitivity on account of the fact that buildings are visible from adjacent open countryside to the south and west and from residential properties to the east. Apart from Brickwall Farm (Listed Building) historic integrity within the area is weak. Whilst there is potential to accommodate new development, without appropriate vegetation or screening, this would be highly visible from landscape setting to the south and west.

I6. SHEEPEN ROAD 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The Westway, a main road which connects the town centre with the A12 to the west, divides this Character Area. To the west of the Westway, a group of large retail unit, predominantly brick, with colourful signage and associated car parking, dominate the character of the area. Further to the west, car parking and playing fields surround Colchester Institute (a mixture of 1960s and post-1960s college buildings, which are within Character Area J4). Middleborough (to the east of the Westway) also contains a mixture of retail units and car parking, which back onto the corridor of the River Colne to the northwest.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is predominantly flat (within the floodplain of the River Colne).

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is dominated by a combination of large warehouses, retail units and car parking.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- To the east of Westway and within the retail park to the west of the Westway, there is generally poor definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- The retail area to the west of Westway is relatively enclosed by the tall nature of surrounding buildings.
- Middleborough (to the east of Westway) feels relatively enclosed to the east by the corridor of the River Colne, and to the west by the Westway.

Architecture & Built Form

- Large brick warehouse/retail units within the retail park off the Westway.
- Mixture of old and newer, predominantly brick, buildings along Middleborough.

Streetscapes

- The Westway which runs through the centre of the Character Area, is a busy dual carriageway with utilitarian layout and limited planting lining the road.
- The streetscape along Middleborough is dominated by car parking, however variation is provided by occasional older Listed Buildings.

Open Space

- The area is situated in close proximity to the corridor of the River Colne to the northwest and open countryside to the south of Colchester Institute.

Biodiversity

- The site is in close proximity to the river corridor which forms an important nature conservation corridor running through the centre of Colchester.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- There is mixture of land uses within this Character Area, consisting of retail, commercial with associated car parking and educational.
- The area is generally busy due to its close proximity to the town centre and the Westway, which runs through the area.

Movement Patterns

- The area is not served by any designated footpaths, however pavements lining the Westway connect the area to the town centre to the north.
- Vehicular access can easily be obtained from eastern and western carriageways of the Westway and also from North Station Road to the east.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to the River Colne from the east of Middleborough.
- Occasional views to taller landmarks within the historic core from parts of the Character Area.

Designations

- There are three Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Although there is no Designated Open Space there is proposed open space at the land to rear of Oaks Drive.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has had some form of activity and settlement in it since the Roman period. The settlement had been no more than a few houses, until the 19th century when there was an increase in development of the area. The area was still relatively agricultural until the 20th century and there are several Listed Buildings dating from the 17th to the 19th century. Since the late 20th century the area has become more industrial with retail parks and car parks.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, visible archaeological features include:

- Balkerne Hill Pumping Station; 19th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the area are generally 1960s or post-1960s built from brick or pre-fabricated metal. Architectural interest within the area is provided by 20 Bridge House/21 The Moorings (17th century, Grade II listed) which is two-storey and brick (painted white) with Georgian white and black sash windows.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Increase in traffic and car parking associated with the area.
- Dominance of brightly coloured and garish signage, which is highly visible within the surrounding landscape to the south and west.
- New tall buildings within the area, which may be visible from the historic core or block views to the historic core.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low overall sensitivity to change or new development. At the southern and western edges of the Character Area, visual sensitivity is moderate, with occasional views to and from the historic core. New development within these parts of the Character Area may be visible from the historic core and also from surrounding landscape setting.

17. THE COWDRAY CENTRE AND TURNER RISE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses two relatively large areas of predominantly retail buildings which are split by the railway line. Turner Rise Retail Park (to the north) comprises a number of large retail units (with beige brick columns and white metal/plastic panelling and brightly coloured signage. An area of post-1960s housing overlooks the northern edge of



Turner Rise. Colchester North Train Station is also situated within this area, opposite Turner Rise and the maze of associated roundabouts. The Cowdray Centre (to the south of the railway line) contains a mixture of retail and commercial units, which are predominantly red brick. There is consistency in architectural style and detailing within both halves of the Character Area. There is a distinctive sense of place at the southern edge of Turner Rise Retail Park, with views across the railway corridor to the Town Hall Clock Tower, 'Jumbo' Water Tower and the skyline of town centre. The overall streetscape character, however, of both areas is bland, with utilitarian detailing and large garish signage.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat within the floodplain of the River Colne.
- Overlooked by post-1960s housing area to the north.

Street & Block Pattern

- Part of the area is accessible from Cowdray Avenue, which is connected to Petrolea Close by a series of roundabouts.
- Block pattern within both parts of the Character Area is geometric and relatively uniform.
- The railway line divides the Character Area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Turner Rise Retail Park is divided from back gardens of adjacent housing to the north by relatively tall wooden fences.
- Housing is set on embankment.
- Units along Cowdray Avenue are set back from road, which is lined with an avenue of trees.

Massing & Enclosure

- Large retail units within both halves of the Character Area provide a sense of enclosure.
- There is a sense of openness within both areas which are overlooked by housing and the railway line.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings within the Cowdray Centre are predominantly red brick.
- Predominantly large retail warehouses built with beige brick columns and white metal/plastic panelling within Turner Rise Retail Park.
- Trolley parks in supermarket (ASDA) car park are metal and steel with curved roofs.

Streetscapes

- Distinctive sense of place at southern edge of Turner Rise Retail Park, with views across the railway corridor to the Town Hall Clock Tower, 'Jumbo' Water Tower and skyline of town centre.
- Overall streetscape character of both retail areas is bland and streetscape design is utilitarian.

Open Space

- There is no public open space within the Character Area, however the Cowdray Centre is on the opposite side of the road to playing fields that connect with Lower Castle Park and the Riverside Walk urban greenspace.

Biodiversity

- Low shrub planting and mown amenity grassland verges within Turner Rise Retail Park car parks.
- Coniferous planting on roundabout adjacent to the Big Yellow Storage Company.
- Poorly maintained, gappy planting lining railway corridor.
- Weak biodiversity although some value in vegetation lining railway.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Large scale retail units including ASDA, petrol station, Pizza Hut, Courts, Carpet Right and Focus DIY within Turner Rise Retail Park.
- A combination of retail units (home furnishings) and commercial buildings within the Cowdray Centre.
- Large areas of car parking associated with both areas of development.
- Colchester North Train Station.
- Area has a busy and bustling feel, with many of the roads leading to and through the Character Area being busy, particularly at peak times.

Movement Patterns

- Busy retail areas physically separated by busy and noisy main railway line.
- Cowdray Avenue is a main arterial road.

Viewing Experience

- Long distance views to historic town core (Town Hall Clock Tower and 'Jumbo' Water Tower) from the southern end of Turner Rise.
- Views to historic core skyline.
- Garish signs associated with retail buildings.
- Landmark metal sculpture on one of approach roundabouts to Turner Rise Retail Park.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area is alongside one of the former Roman roads into Colchester. It has seen limited development until the 19th century when it is clear that more buildings were beginning to be built along the main road and several farms existed in the area. By the end of the 20th century the area had developed into a large industrial/retail park.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Brick Kiln, Brick Kiln Road; 19th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- There are few buildings of historic or architectural interest within the Character Area. Buildings are predominantly post-1960s in age and style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Increased traffic flow and parking associated with the area.
- Garish and colourful signage which is visible from surrounding Character Areas and also from the historic core.
- New tall development which may block views to the historic core and may be visible from the historic core.
- Noise associated with the railway corridor and many busy roads within and surrounding the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new built development. Buildings within the area are visible from the historic core (in particular the supermarket) and buildings within the historic core (Town Hall Clock Tower and 'Jumbo' Water Tower) are visible from the Character Area. As a result of this, the southern parts of Turner Rise Retail Park are highly visually sensitive. Overall, however, throughout the Character Area, visual sensitivity is moderate and biodiversity and historic value are low.

18. HIGH WOODS 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area contains a large Hypermarket (Tesco) and associated car park and is located at the centre of Character Area H12 (High Woods/Myland Post-1960s suburbs). A few smaller shops and services (including an architects and newsagents) are associated with the development. Character within the area is generally homogenous and bland, with little architectural variation.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- One large retail warehouse, with associate large car park, petrol station and a few small shop units.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Car park is separated from surrounding housing areas by large wooden fences and mature deciduous trees.
- Hypermarket feels like a self-contained unit.

Massing & Enclosure

- Site feels relatively enclosed by fences and mature single trees, however, the scale of the site is large.

Architecture & Built Form

- Large white pre-fabricated metal warehouse with colourful blue and red signage.
- Red brick modern entrance to hypermarket.

Streetscapes

- Very little sense of place within the car park.
- Character Area is amongst residential development and therefore there are no views to surrounding open space.
- Car park is bland and uninteresting with few trees dividing the space, although there are several mature woodland trees at the eastern and southern boundaries.

Open Space

- There is no public open space within the Character Area.
- Hypermarket car park is a semi-private hard open space.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value provided by mature trees at boundaries of area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Large hypermarket, café, car park and petrol station plus newsagents, architects and smaller services.
- Modern development, which lacks vitality.

Movement Patterns

- Very busy hub for shopping.
- Accessible by car and bus.
- Frenetic pedestrian activity within the car park.

Viewing Experience

- Few views beyond boundaries of area.
- Glimpse views of adjacent housing.

Designations

- Part of this area is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has been relatively undeveloped until the late 20th century when the area was turned from agricultural land to a retail area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within this area are modern (post-1960s).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Garish and colourful signage which is visible from surrounding Character Areas.
- Visual clutter of car park and associated trolleys.
- Busy traffic associated with the hypermarket and potential increases in traffic flow within surrounding areas.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to new development. Current development within the area is modern (1990s) and bland, with little sense of place or views to anything other than adjacent residential development. The area is not visually sensitive and has little historic integrity and only moderate biodiversity value. There is capacity to accommodate new development which is in keeping with the character of surrounding Character Areas and also to improve the existing character and sense of place within the area.

19. SEVERALLS LANE/COLCHESTER BUSINESS PARK 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area of light industrial units and warehouses is located at the northern extent of Colchester urban area, bounded to the north by the A12. A number of car showrooms located along the northern end of Ipswich Road are also within this Character Area. A combination of large buildings constructed from varying materials, with large colourful signs, creates a somewhat chaotic character.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Character Area is situated upon predominantly flat land, which is enclosed by the A12 to the north.

Street & Block Pattern

- Business Park is situated around a crossroads, with Newcomen Way and Wyncolls Road providing the two main feeder roads.
- Plots of varying size and orientation.
- Commercial/industrial units have their own parking areas, with on-road parking restricted to Newcomen Way.
- Gateway roundabout has been created at the entrance to the crescent (private road) - signified by two three-storey brick buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Strong boundaries between public and private space.
- Industrial and commercial units are set back from the road by wide grass verges and each unit delineates their private space using a combination of low hedges, brick walls and fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- Large-scale commercial and light industrial park.
- Enclosed by proximity to A12 along the northern boundary.
- Separated from adjacent housing area by Severalls Lane.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of large and smaller modern light industrial and commercial units built from varying materials (brick, metal and glass).
- Most units have front car parks and buildings are predominantly two-storeys in height.
- Mixture of colours and bright signage.

Streetscapes

- Utilitarian design along the main roads, comprising wide grass verges, bollards, lampposts and small street trees.
- Very little sense of place within the centre of the area.
- Overall sense of disturbance from traffic on the main roads and generally the character of the area is bland.
- The Crescent (private road) is wider with taller more mature hedges shielding units from the road.

Open Space

- Absence of public open space.
- Greenspace provided by wide grass verges aligning main roads.

Biodiversity

- Few areas of open land.
- Some small street trees and wide mown grassland verges.
- Little wildlife interest.
- Coniferous hedges along The Crescent provide some diversity.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Post-1960s industrial and commercial area with little vitality.
- Buildings and streetscape are generally in good condition, with a 'neat' appearance.

Movement Patterns

- Busy main roads within and surrounding the area.
- Pedestrian footpaths occasionally used by employees of commercial/industrial units.
- Sense that area was designed for access by car.

Viewing Experience

- Views to vegetation aligning A12 from north of area.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area was predominately agricultural land until the 19th century with a few buildings dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. This Character Area served as an airfield during World War II and has since been developed into a business park.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no additional visible archaeological features other than Listed Buildings within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the area are predominantly modern (1980s/1990s in origin) and have few historical qualities.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Mix of building materials with little overall coherence.
- Bright dominant signage which is out of character with the surrounding area and also highly visible.
- Noise and traffic associated with this busy retail area.
- Lighting associated with the supermarket.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Visual sensitivity throughout the Character Area is low, with no views of the historic core and few views to adjacent Character Areas from the business park. Vegetation lining the A12 corridor to the north can be gained from the northern end of Newcomen Way, however, generally the area is well screened from the road corridor. Buildings and streetscape are in generally good condition, however throughout the site, there is relatively low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity and therefore recreatability is considered to be high. Overall sensitivity to new development is low, with capacity to accommodate new built development, which is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

I10. THE HYTHE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area lines the western banks of the River Colne and contains a large number of industrial and commercial buildings, some of which are associated with the current and former use of the River Corridor. The character of the area is dominated by the riverscape and associated industrial land use. The area generally has a mixed character with a mixture of ‘fringe-type’ elements such as caravans, lorries and industrial material associated with fishing boats on the river. On-street parking is also a feature of this area. Views along the river corridor and to other taller industrial buildings evoke a sense of place within the area. Character is dominated by a mixture of ‘hard’ elements, such as tall metal fencing lining industrial areas to the east and tarmac road surfacing. Pylons, which cross the river and also the Character Area are dominant landmarks within views from surrounding Character Areas. Corrugated metal grain silos overlooking the river are also landmark features contributing to the character of the area. Views to new four-, five- and six-storey buildings on the opposite side of the river and also views to tower blocks on the campus of the University of Essex can be gained from the area. The Character Area is situated within The Hythe East Colchester Regeneration Area³⁰ and overall townscape is therefore in a state of flux.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The area is flat to the east (adjacent to the river corridor) and rises quite steeply upwards to the west across the Character Area across the western bank of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern is regular, with a combination of small, medium and large warehouse and industrial buildings surrounded by areas of open hardstanding (service areas and car parking).
- Three main roads (Haven Road, Hythe Quay and Hawkins Road) serve the area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Definition between public and private space is mixed throughout the area.
- In some cases industrial and commercial buildings face directly onto the road, whilst in others, they are surrounded by small patches of grassland, car parking or areas of hardstanding.

Massing & Enclosure

- At the heart of this industrial and commercial area there is a sense of enclosure which is created by warehouse buildings.

- At the eastern edge of the area there are open views to the south along the corridor of the River Colne.

Architecture & Built Form

- Buildings within the Character Area consist of a combination of large industrial warehouse units, retail and commercial units and also factories.
- Built form is generally large-scale in nature.

Streetscapes

- King Edward Quay is cluttered with a combination of on-street car and lorry parking, caravans and equipment associated with boats on the river.
- Hythe Quay and Haven Road have a more organised layout, however, streetscape is still utilitarian and lacks interest in planting or detailing.

Open Space

- Other than the river corridor, which lines the eastern edge of this area, there is no public open space within the area.

Biodiversity

- The adjacent River Colne corridor provides an important nature conservation corridor which links to the estuary to the south and is an important habitat for birds.
- There is generally a lack of planting within the Character Area, with an overall lack of planted or natural habitats for urban wildlife overall.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- This area contains one of the largest remaining groups of industrial buildings within Colchester.
- The area is busy and even though several of the buildings are disused, there is still an element of vibrancy on account of the proximity to major roads and the River, which no longer plays such an important industrial role within the town as it once did.

Movement Patterns

- King Edward Quay is now a cul-de-sacs, however Hythe Quay and Haven Road connect to allow vehicular traffic to move through the area.
- Pedestrian links to the area are relatively comprehensive, with footpaths connecting to the river corridor and to northeastern parts of the town, in some cases, however, these are uninviting for pedestrians.

Viewing Experience

- Views along the river corridor and to other tall landmark industrial buildings within the area.
- Views both within the area and to the area from surrounding Townscape Character Areas are dominated by very tall pylons, which cross the River Colne.
- Views to new four, five and six storey University accommodation buildings on the opposite side of the River Colne.
- Views to University accommodation tower blocks on the campus of the University of Essex.
- Views to intricate mudflats within and along the river corridor.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- The River Colne is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

³⁰ <http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk/eastcolchester.asp>

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Situated next to the Hythe this area was predominately in agricultural use until the 19th century. There were several industrial buildings in the area before the 19th century including the Gas and Standards works and during this period the industrial nature of the area grew, by the end of the 20th century it developed to a retail, commercial and industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, the following are of visible archaeological interest:

- Glen Cottage, Distillery Lane; 19th century
- The Glen (Hull House), Distillery Lane; 19th century
- The Hythe Maltings; 19th century
- Limekiln, Haven Road; 19th century
- Haven Road Sewage Works; 20th century
- The Standard Iron Works; 19th century

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Architectural history is based around the industrial character of the area (brick works, iron works etc.) with several buildings of architectural interest and quality.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential loss of distinctive industrial buildings associated with the river.
- Lack of attention paid to heritage of the area in potential new development.
- Potential loss of connection to the town centre through intervening new development.
- Noise and traffic associated with the area.
- New development which may block views along the river corridor.
- Loss of connectivity with the river corridor.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	<i>Weak</i>
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has high visual sensitivity. Buildings within the area are visible from several surrounding areas and also form the river corridor. Views to landmarks within several other areas can also be gained. Biodiversity value is generally low, other than the river corridor, which provides an important wildlife resource. Historic integrity is mixed, with historic (industrial) buildings scattered throughout the Character Area. Overall, the area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Potential development should reflect the industrial heritage of the area and should seek to maintain views out of the area, especially along the river corridor.

I11. BROOK STREET 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This mixed commercial and retail area is located to the south of the railway line and not far from the southern edge of Colchester's historic core. Buildings consist of a series of small to medium-sized retail and commercial units which vary in construction materials but all have relatively simple and regular architectural form. A row of smaller shops also line Brook Street. A sense of enclosure is provided to the south by views to the regularity of adjacent residential areas. Sense of place is apparent to the north with views into and across the railway corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gently sloping from south to north towards the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern comprises a series of medium-sized warehouse and retail units which are regular in shape and form.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally poor definition between public and private realm.
- In some cases, buildings and car parking are separated from the road by low brick walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density area, with space, usually in the form of car parking, between buildings.

Architecture & Built Form

- Predominantly medium to large-scale retail and commercial units with a colourful mix of materials (including pre-fabricated metal and corrugated panels) and brick.

Streetscapes

- Interesting streetscape along southern side of Barrack Street, provided by views along regular and relatively narrow Victorian terraced streets, often with vegetation in front gardens.
- Along Magdalen and Brook Streets, streetscape is less diverse and harsher with a more varied and mixed character.

Open Space

- Other than car parking, there is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value throughout the area, with few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A busy and vibrant commercial and retail area within relatively close proximity to the town centre.

Movement Patterns

- Main vehicular routes include Brook Street, Barrack Street and Magdalen Street.
- Public footpaths lead into the area from the north (River Colne corridor) and south (industrial/commercial area).

Viewing Experience

- Open views to greenspace lining the river corridor.
- Short-distance views to adjacent residential areas.
- Views along the railway corridor.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has been in use since the Roman period when it was used as the military barracks. There has been a small amount of settlement in the area since then, but it was only in the late 19th century that the area that development increased and by the 20th century the area had evolved into retail, commercial and industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, visible archaeological features include:

- Paxman Social Club; 19th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally modern (post-1960s) and therefore there is little visible earlier architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with the area.
- Noise from adjacent railway corridor.
- Colourful/garish signage.
- Conflicting land uses (residential, commercial and retail).
- Car parking associated with warehouse units.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development. There is low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. Although the area can be viewed from adjacent areas and built fabric is generally in good condition, there is some scope for improvements to the streetscape and overall character of the area.

I12. GOSBECKS ROAD RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a relatively small area of light industrial and commercial units at the southern edge of the urban area (lining Gosbecks Road). Buildings, including an accident repair centre, Citroen garage and wine warehouse, overlooking open fields of rough grassland to the south of Gosbecks Road. This brings a sense of space to the area, which has a low-density rather than compact character. Views across the landscape setting to the south also contribute to a recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern comprises several large square or rectangular commercial units.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally commercial units are separated from the road by hedges or brick walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Units are generally two-storey.
- Sense of openness along the southern edge of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Regular, modern buildings with some bright signage.
- Construction materials consist of brick and pre-fabricated metal panels.

Streetscapes

- Open streetscape with hedges and car parking along northern side of Gosbecks Road.
- On-street parking is a feature of the area.

Open Space

- Other than car parking there is no open space within the area.
- Area overlooks open grassland to the south.

Biodiversity

- Some biodiversity value within hedges and trees associated with buildings.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A relatively busy area, situated off a main road.

Movement Patterns

- Gosbecks Road (running along the southern edge of the area) is a main through-route which circumnavigates the southern edge of the urban area.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open grassland to the south and Gosbecks Archaeological Park to the southwest.

Designations

- Gosbeck Farmhouse is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Gosbecks Iron Age and Romano-British Site is a Scheduled Monument within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has evidence from the Iron Age with the standing remains of Shrub End Dyke. There has been little activity in the area between then and the 19th century; the area was mainly agricultural and open land at the outskirts of Bottle End village. By the late 20th century the area had developed substantially and is now a commercial and industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Building, the following are of visible archaeological interest:

- Shrub End Dyke.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally modern (post-1960s) and therefore there is little visible earlier architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with the area.
- Colourful/garish signage.
- On-street car parking associated with retail commercial units.
- Potential new development to the south of Gosbecks Road which may block views to adjacent landscape setting and across Gosbecks archaeological park to the south-west.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity, however it is situated in close proximity to Gosbecks Archaeological Park to the south. Visual sensitivity is moderate. Buildings can be viewed from Colchester's landscape setting and it is also possible to gain views across open fields to the south. Overall, the Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new build development. Without mitigation, however, new development could be highly visible from the landscape setting to the south.

I13. MOORSIDE RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area has a relatively chaotic character, resulting from a combination of retail and commercial units, on-street parking amongst the buildings and close proximity to both the railway lines and historic core. There is contrast in architectural style between buildings along East Hill, adjacent residential areas and the units within this Character Area. Sense of place and orientation is provided by views into and across the railway corridor and to adjacent residential areas. The railway line provides a visual and physical barrier between the area and greenspace/commercial/retail areas to the south.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat, within the floodplain of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern consists of large rectangular (regular) buildings lining the north and south of Moorside Road.
- Block pattern is regular.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Some definition between public and private space with bollards and low walls separating car parks from Moorside Road.

Massing & Enclosure

- General feeling of enclosure provided by residential properties to the east and west and the backs of properties along East Street to the north.

Architecture & Built Form

- Large units consisting of a combination of brick, and pre-fabricated metal panels, often with colourful/garish signage.
- Architecture is in contrast to buildings along East Street to the north.

Streetscapes

- Bland and utilitarian streetscape (lighting, paving and bollards) with occasional mature street trees dotted amongst buildings.

Open Space

- No open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value, however, some wildlife interest in mature trees.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Combination of retail (e.g. car sales), leisure (e.g. bowling) and commercial units with a generally busy feel.

Movement Patterns

- Moorside Road provides main vehicular link road from East Hill to the north.

Viewing Experience

- Views into the adjacent railway corridor and into allotment gardens along the western edge of the area.
- Views to backs of houses along East Hill (within the historic core).
- Views to The Hythe urban greenspace from the southern edge of the area.

Designations

- The River Colne corridor is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area has been predominately agricultural until the late 19th century when the railway line cuts through it. There are several houses, but the main development of buildings was not until the late 20th century when the area is turned from arable land into a commercial and industrial area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no visible archaeological features recorded in this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally modern (post-1960s) and therefore there is little visible earlier architectural history.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with the area.
- Colourful/garish signage.
- On-street car parking associated with retail commercial units.
- Visual and physical barrier of railway line.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Views to surrounding Character Areas can be gained from within this area, however, generally the area is not visually prominent and therefore visual sensitivity varies throughout the area. Biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak, resulting in low sensitivity to change or new development overall.

J. MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Townscape Character Areas within this type contain a mixture of building styles and details from a range of development periods, from medieval through to post-1960s. Character is generally mixed and although predominantly housing, may also contain small groups of shops or other commercial properties. In several cases, housing has developed along a main road corridor, with all properties facing the road. Clear development on a plot-by-plot basis can often be seen, as historic buildings have given way to modern alternatives.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly housing areas that contain a mixture of ages and styles from various examples of the types described above.
- Housing has often developed along a main road corridor.
- Housing usually faces the main road, with a combination of front and back gardens.
- Housing is a mixture of semi-detached, terraced and detached areas.
- Diverse and mixed character with a wide range of architectural periods, materials and details.

Townscape Character Areas

- J1. London Road: Copford
- J2. Heath Road to Shrub End
- J3. London Road: Lexden
- J4. Sheepen Road
- J5. North Station Road
- J6. Mile End Road
- J7. Turner Road
- J8. Ipswich Road
- J9. Greenstead Road
- J10. Old Heath Road
- J11. Harwich Road and St John's Road
- J12. Welshwood Road
- J13. Colchester General Hospital
- J14. Brook Street
- J15. Magdalen Street
- J16. Military Road
- J17. Recreation Road
- J18. Bourne Road
- J19. Mersea Road
- J20. Straight Road
- J21. Shrub End Road
- J22. Lexden Road
- J23. Bergholt Road
- J24. Bosted Road
- J25. Manor Road
- J26. Hythe Hill
- J27. Halstead Road
- J28. Lexden Park
- J29. James Carter Road and Stanway Green

J1. LONDON ROAD: COPFORD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area encompasses buildings that have developed from several different architectural ages along the line of the main London Road, running through the villages of Stanway and Copford, to the west of Colchester and east of Marks Tey. Copford has a relatively mixed character with a jumble of businesses lining London Road, adjacent to post-1960s bungalows and other residential properties. Stanway has a traditional ‘village’ character with a village green, which is overlooked by shops and a post office.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Topography varies along the route of London Road and is at a higher elevation within Copford and Stanway, dipping into a small tributary valley between the two settlements.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, following the line of London Road.
- Block pattern varies, with regular plots facing the main road within Copford (other than the hotel) and more irregular plot sizes and shapes within Stanway.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally properties face London Road and definition between public and private space varies on a plot-by-plot basis.

Massing & Enclosure

- Linear corridor of development, which is generally open to countryside to the north and south.

Architecture & Built Form

- Varying styles of architecture, ranging from 16th century Wisemans, a Grade II Listed Building, to post-1960s development.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is varied.
- The central section of Stanway Village has a traditional ‘village green’ feel with shops and a post office overlooking grassland and a seating area.
- Streetscape within Copford is more varied with a mixture of signage associated with businesses along the main road.

Open Space

- There is a small village green in Stanway.
- School playing fields in Stanway.
- Open space associated with a nursery at eastern end of area.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value overall.
- Several mature trees along corridor, especially on the village green.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixed uses ranging from housing, retail including car sales and petrol station to village stores and open space.

Movement Patterns

- London Road is the main (busy) vehicular route through this area.
- Short and longer link roads lead north and south from London Road.

Viewing Experience

- Short and long distance views along the London Road corridor.
- Glimpse and open views to countryside.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area, Wisemans and Foakes (see **Appendix C**)

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area did not evolve from its agricultural origins until the late 19th century when the villages of Copford and the village of Stanway developed. By the early 20th century it grew to more than double its original size, but still kept its agricultural origins. By the end of the 20th century piecemeal development saw the area become of mixed character.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded visible archaeological features in addition to the two Listed Buildings.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Mixed architectural history visible dating from the 16th century to post-1960s (often infill) development.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and congestion along London Road.
- Colourful signage associated with businesses (Copford).
- New infill development that may lead to loss of older/more historic buildings along the corridor.
- Potential new development at the edges of the corridor, which may block views open countryside to south and north.
- Incoherent streetscape.
- Extensions to buildings for new porches etc.
- Replacement of old windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Conversion of front gardens to hardstanding to provide new car parking.
- Conflicting mix of land-uses.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to new development or change. It is unlikely that the area could be recreated with such a diverse mixed character. Visual sensitivity varies along the corridor, depending on views between buildings to and from its landscape setting. There is moderate biodiversity value and mixed historic integrity (including two Listed Buildings).

J2. HEATH ROAD TO SHRUB END ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The mixed character of Heath Road to Shrub End Suburbs includes areas of post-war semi-detached houses, with small front gardens (along Heath Road) and detached later houses to the south of Heath Road. As with other mixed age suburbs, character exhibits a range of architectural styles, which show how the area has developed. No one particular style is dominant within the area. This suburb connects with Straight Road (mixed age suburbs TCA J20) to the west.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular street pattern to the north and south of Heath Road.
- More curvilinear arrangement along Church Lane.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally good definition between edges of front gardens along Heath Road, consisting of a combination of low brick walls, metal and wooden fences and hedges.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density suburb.
- Enclosed on all sides by adjacent housing areas.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of architectural styles.
- Typical post-war suburban housing along Old Heath Road.

Streetscapes

- Generally interesting streetscape with several street trees.

Open Space

- Other than front and back gardens, there is only one small area of amenity grassland set back from Straight Road.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value overall with habitats for urban wildlife within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly relaxed residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Heath Road, Church Lane, The Commons and King Harold Road all act as feeder roads for this area.

Viewing Experience

- Few views, other than short-distance views to adjacent Character Areas.

Designations

- Yeomans Cottage is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has remained largely agricultural, with only Heath Farm and several cottages recorded before the early 20th century, when the area started to develop and has continued to do so creating a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Buildings there is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Mixed architectural history, dating from post-war to post-1960s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic congestion along Straight Road.
- New infill development that may lead to loss of older historic buildings along the corridor.
- Incoherent streetscape.
- Extensions to buildings for new porches etc.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Conversion of front gardens to hardstanding to provide new car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has a low sensitivity to change or new development overall as a result of moderate biodiversity value (generally within gardens), combined with low visual sensitivity (few views into and out of the area) and weak historic integrity.

J3. LONDON ROAD: LEXDEN MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This area contains a further stretch of the main London Road corridor within Lexden, Colchester. Mixed character stems from a combination of land-uses (retail, residential and commercial) and architectural styles. Buildings generally face the road corridor and range from the 15th century (such as 160-164 Lexden Road) through to Victorian terraces and post-war and post-1960s infill. Views are generally restricted to the road corridor at the western end thus lacking in a recognisable sense of place. Views to Lexden Park (at the eastern end), however, re-determine a recognisable sense of place.

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular street pattern with relatively equal plot sizes and layout along the northern side of London Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Some confusion between public and private space.
- Some businesses have small front car parks with little clear division between the road and building.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively even massing.
- Sense of enclosure varies along the corridor with views to Lexden Springs Park and Lexden Park from some locations.

Architecture & Built Form

- Strong historic built form with 15 Listed Buildings, ranging from the 15th to the 18th centuries.
- Victorian architecture also visible alongside post-war and post-1960s infill.

Streetscapes

- Busy streetscape, which is often congested.
- Occasional street trees.
- Lots of clutter (street signs etc.).

Open Space

- Generally no open space within the Character Area.
- In close proximity to Lexden Springs Park to the north and Lexden Park to the south.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value along the corridor with few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A mixture of uses including shops and houses, two churches and a war memorial
- Busy pedestrian area.

Movement Patterns

- Several roads lead off London Road to the north and south, however, London Road is the main vehicular route.
- A public footpath runs along the northern edge of the site and provides pedestrian access.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to Lexden Springs Park to the north.
- Short distance views along the road corridor.
- Views to Lexden Park to the south.

Designations

- Fifteen Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II), of which the majority of are of 18th or 19th century date are within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Gryme's Dyke Middle and Lexden Dyke at Spring Meadow are Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area.
- New Farm Road, Stanway is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The first recorded evidence for settlement in this area was in the Iron Age with the building of Sheepen Dyke. Post-Iron Age there has been continuing settlement in the area from the 15th century, with many Listed Buildings dating from the 15th to 19th centuries. The early 20th century saw the start of development in the area, which continued throughout the century creating a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Building the following are of visible archaeological interest:

- Sheepen Dyke;
- Lexden, St Leonards Church; 13th century;
- Milestone on A1124; 18th century;
- Spigot Mortar Emplacement, 38 Lexden Road.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- A mixture of architectural styles within the Character Area, with buildings from the 15th century to post-1960s. Strong visual presence of historic buildings within this area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Colourful signage associated with businesses and shops.
- Potential new development, which may block views to Lexden and Lexden Springs Park
- Traffic and congestion along London Road.
- New infill development that may lead to loss of older/more historic buildings along the corridor.
- Potential new development at the edges of the corridor, which may block views to open countryside to south and north.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Conversion of front gardens to hardstanding to provide new car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has strong historic integrity, with a large number of Listed Buildings ranging from the 15th century to the 19th century. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views along the London Road corridor and also to Lexden Park and Lexden Springs Park from locations within the Character Area. The area has moderate biodiversity value. As a result of the above factors, the Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new build development.

J4. SHEEPEN ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the buildings and grounds of Colchester Institute and is situated to the south of the Avenue of Remembrance, adjacent to Hilly Fields greenspace. Car parking and playing fields surround the Institute (a mixture of 1960s and post-1960s college buildings). Overall the pattern is regular, with variations in building shapes and sizes. Several mature trees punctuate the surrounding greenspace. Open views can be gained across Hilly Fields to the west and towards commercial/retail buildings within Townscape Character Area I6 in close proximity to the eastern edge of the site.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- The site is predominantly flat and overlooked by Hilly Fields greenspace to the west.
- The area is within the floodplain of the River Colne.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern consists of several different sizes and shapes of buildings associated within Colchester Institute.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Buildings, car parking and playing fields within the site of Colchester Institute are divided from the road and pavement to the south by iron railings.

Massing & Enclosure

- The site of Colchester Institute is open to the north and south, overlooking countryside to the north and Hilly Fields greenspace to the west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Combination of 1960s, six-storey building with panels of white metal windows, and post-1960s modern college buildings varying between two- and three-storeys).

Streetscapes

- Vegetation within the grounds of Colchester Institute partly lines Sheepen Road, which runs to the south.

Open Space

- Playing fields and amenity grassland areas associated with Colchester Institute form the main areas of open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees and formal planting beds on the site of the Colchester Institute provide biodiversity interest and habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Institutional/college buildings, associated car park and playing fields/greenspace.

Movement Patterns

- Site is accessed via Sheepen Road, which connects Balkerne Hill (to the east) with the Avenue of Remembrance (to the north).

Viewing Experience

- Views to open countryside to the south and east from Colchester Institute.

Designations

- There are eight Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- The Scheduled Monument of the Site of pre-Roman Settlement is within the Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Evidence has been found of Roman and pre-Roman occupation in this area (which is protected as a Scheduled Monument). Due to its proximity to the main road the River Colne this area has always attracted piecemeal settlement, which can be seen today in the range of historic buildings, predominately from the 17th century onwards.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings, recorded visible archaeological features include:

- Sheepen, Roman Well.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within this area are generally modern. Although there are eight Listed Buildings in the area, these are generally obscured by more modern development.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential expansion of area in surrounding landscape to the west of Colchester Institute and into the corridor of the River Colne to the east of Middleborough.
- Traffic and car parking associated with the Institute.
- Visibility of larger Institute buildings from surrounding greenspace and landscape setting areas.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development is moderate within this Character Area. Potential new development should respect the existing landscape structure within the grounds of Colchester Institute (which also has biodiversity value), and also the Listed Buildings.

J5. NORTH STATION ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area contains residential development to the east and west of North Station Road, which has a mixed street pattern and is situated just to the south of North Station and close to the historic town centre. North Station Road is a busy, relatively wide road, which contains a variety of small businesses and shops. Housing dates to several different periods, from Victorian to post-1960s, and is a combination of semi-detached, terraced and apartment blocks (Claremont Heights). The area has a relatively busy and hectic character as a result of its proximity to the town centre and also two main roundabouts, which connect the station area and town centre to Turner Rise Retail Park to the east. Views across open spaces to the east (along the river corridor, which is lined with mature trees; and grassland) and west (Hilly Fields and farmland to the north) of the area create a sense of space and recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- A mixed street pattern, with straight parallel roads to the south of Cowdray Avenue and a more curvilinear pattern at Claremont Heights.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Unclear definition between public and private space in places. In many cases, houses face directly onto the road, with few fences or hedges to the front of properties.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness at edges of area with views across open space and also to Turner Rise Retail Park to the northeast.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of terraced and semi-detached properties, which have a regular layout and are also built from a variety of materials.
- Overall lack of consistency of materials.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and utilitarian streetscape, which has little visual interest.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within the area,
- Open spaces in close proximity to the west and southeastern edges of the area.

Biodiversity

- Other than within back gardens, there is little biodiversity value, with few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Bustling residential area.
- Combination of small businesses and shops along North Station Road.
- School to the east of North Station Road.

Movement Patterns

- North Station Road (a busy route) passes through the centre of the area and connects to the town centre to the south.

Viewing Experience

- Open views along the river corridor to the east.
- Views to open space and farmland from the western edge of the area.
- Views to and from the historic core.

Designations

- There are no designations within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Although predominately agricultural throughout history, due to its proximity to the historic core and the route from the core northwards, settlement has always been attracted to this routeway. By the end of the 19th century the area was lined with development, which may have been transitional in nature, much like the area today.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Colourful signage associated with businesses and shops.
- Potential new development, which may block views into and out of the historic core.
- Traffic and congestion along North Station Road.
- Potential new development at the edges of the corridor, which may block views to open countryside to the west and along the river corridor to the east.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has moderate visual sensitivity as a result of open views along the river corridor to the east and views to landscape setting (countryside) to the west. Overall biodiversity value is low, with few street trees or other habitats, and historic integrity is weak. This Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new build development. Any potential new development should seek to respect views along the river corridor and intervisibility with the historic core.

J6. BERGHOLT ROAD AND MILE END ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large area of mixed age suburbs line Mile End Road, which is at the northwestern edge of Colchester's urban area and stretches from the edge of the town centre to Mile End in the north. Properties within this area have developed along the line of Mile End Road and generally face the road. The streetscape is wide and varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within small front gardens. The area has a bustling and busy character on account of noise and movement associated with Mile End Road.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively varied topography within the area, which slopes overall from north to south across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, with small blocks of houses set back from the road in certain places.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Houses usually have small front gardens with a mixture of low walls, hedges and fences at boundaries.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness at the edges of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of ages, including Victorian, post-war and 1960s, and styles of housing within the area.
- Post-war houses are predominantly red brick with white windows.
- Predominantly terraced or semi-detached, with occasional detached plots.

Streetscapes

- Varied streetscape on account of variation provided by vegetation within front gardens and the fact that houses are generally slightly set back from the edge of the road, with an adjacent verge along the corridor.

Open Space

- Allotment gardens in the northern half of the area, to the east of Mile End Road.
- School playing fields to the east of Raven Way.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens provide biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area with occasional shops along the road corridor, which has a bustling and busy character.

Movement Patterns

- Mile End Road provides main busy traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to the grounds of Colchester General Hospital to the west.
- Open views across farmland to the west from the backs of properties along the western side of Mile End Road.

Designations

- Church Farmhouse is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There had been no settlement in this area until the construction of Mile End village in the 19th century. The area also contains St Michaels Church, which is a relatively new church as the remains of the former one can be seen in Character Area J13, and is surrounded by arable land. In addition, Chapmans Farm, Mile End Villa and Mile End Lodge are recorded on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. The village has grown throughout the 20th century creating a mix of houses in a largely developed area in comparison to the 1881 Ordnance Survey map.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Listed Buildings there is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Mixed architectural history, with buildings dating from post-war to post-1960s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development/expansion of area at western edge, which may block views to adjacent countryside.
- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Mile End Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to new development, as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J7. TURNER ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area contains a mixture of different areas of housing of different architectural styles and dating from different periods of urban development. A combination of post-war and modern (post-1960s housing) line Turner Road, with small post-1960s curvilinear housing estates set back from the main road corridor. Kingswood Road has a distinctive streetscape character, with post-war bungalows, which have neat and regular front gardens (with well-maintained front boundaries) lining the relatively narrow road. A mixture of older buildings (predominantly three-storey) associated with Colchester General Hospital also lines the western side of Turner Road. The character of the area overall is fragmented and somewhat discordant, with each area of development possessing characteristics which are distinctively different from each other.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Situated on higher plateau land, which overlooks the Colne Valley floodplain to the south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Post-war housing lines Turner Road, Mill Road and Kingswood Road, with all housing facing the road.
- A number of post-1960s closes have been developed, set back from and between main roads, with a combination of linear and curvilinear street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Turner Road/Mill Road has small front gardens and private drives.
- Hollymead Close has a poor division of public/private space as flats and terraced houses face onto amenity grassland.
- Kingswood Road bungalows have front gardens with low walls.

Massing & Enclosure

- Combination of semi-detached two-storey post-war houses, post-war bungalows (along Kingswood Road) and semi-detached and terraced post-1960s two-storey houses.
- Small areas/closes of post-1960s housing feel generally enclosed, whilst post-war housing along Turner Road overlooks Colchester General Hospital and grounds.

Architecture & Built Form

- Bland, stark red brick two-storey semi-detached houses, terraces and three-storey flats.
- Semi-detached yellow brick houses with gardens.

Streetscapes

- Hollymead Close is very bland and utilitarian, consisting of mown amenity grassland and harsh concrete streetscape with wooden fences and parking on-road and in larger car parks.
- Turner Road is of mixed character with occasional grass verges, with hospital grounds along western side of road.

- Overall a mixture of different materials with a lack of harmony.

Open Space

- Overall lack of public open space within Character Area.
- Housing is situated directly adjacent to publicly accessible High Woods Country Park and woodland, with several public footpaths connecting the two areas.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential.

Movement Patterns

- Turner Road is busy and can get congested with on-road car parking associated with adjacent hospital and is thus slowing movement.
- Pedestrian footpath links to hospital grounds and adjacent High Woods Country Park.

Viewing Experience

- Views to adjacent High Woods Country Park and woodland to the east.
- Views to historic core skyline when moving southwards along Turner Road (to the south of Hollymead Close).

Designations

- Severalls Hospital, Colchester is a Registered Historic Park and Garden.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The only settlement in this area by the end of the 19th century was Holly Farm, several cottages and a windmill, otherwise the area was predominately agricultural until the 20th century when the area started to evolve and more houses were developed creating a mixed aged settlement.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history, dating from Victorian to post-1960s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Turner Road and Mill Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate, on account of views to the historic core from Turner Road and also open views across High Woods Country Park to the west. Biodiversity value is low overall and the area has mixed historic integrity, with buildings from several different architectural periods visible.

J8. IPSWICH ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area includes housing, which has developed along the line of Ipswich Road, and is located within the northwestern part of Colchester's urban area. Houses have various architectural styles and cover several periods from medieval to post-1960s (modern) infill. Characteristically houses are set back from the road by front gardens, with all houses facing the road. A mixture of semi-detached and detached houses with bungalows also being typical of the area. Views into the Colne Valley from the southern end of Ipswich Road contribute to providing a recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Main Ipswich Road is flat and slopes downwards to the Colne floodplain towards the southern end, approaching the railway line.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with all houses facing the main road.
- Plot size varies, depending on semi-detached or detached nature of houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear separation between private and public realm.
- Front gardens are delineated by low walls or hedges, dividing them from the adjacent footpath and road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Character feels enclosed to the east and west by post-1960s development.
- Sense of space limited to views north and south along the Ipswich Road corridor.

Architecture & Built Form

- Range of details and styles.
- Bay windows are a common feature of several semi-detached houses along the road.
- Church at the corner of St John's Road has interesting architectural brickwork detail.

Streetscapes

- Ipswich Road, including the residential fascia, is relatively wide.
- Varying architectural details and styles provide interest.
- Some sense of place is provided when travelling southwards along the area, by views across the Colne Valley floodplain.

Open Space

- Very little public open space although there is occasional short, wide verges.
- A high proportion of houses have private front gardens.

Biodiversity

- Occasional semi-mature street trees provide some diversity.
- Biodiversity value within private front gardens is average.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, served by one local shop (St John's).
- Mixture of ages.
- Buildings generally in good condition.

Movement Patterns

- Very busy main road connecting Colchester to peripheral A12.
- Constantly active - mainly caused by moving traffic.

Viewing Experience

- Tower of church at corner of St John's Close is landmark within the local skyline.
- Colourful area.
- Little intervisibility with adjacent housing areas.
- Views into the Colne Valley from the southern end of Ipswich Road, looking southwards.

Designations

- Rovers Tye Farmhouse is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There was little settlement in this Character Area until the late 19th century, by the 20th century the area was being developed and has become a mixed area suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from medieval to post-1960 visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Ipswich Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.
- Potential new built development that may block views into the corridor of the River Colne.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has low overall sensitivity to change or new development. There is average biodiversity value (within gardens and also several mature trees), but generally weak historic integrity, with buildings from a mixture of architectural periods and styles. Although it is possible to gain views into the river corridor (looking southwards from the southern end of Ipswich Road), views to and from surrounding housing areas are limited.

J9. GREENSTEAD ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Greenstead Roads suburbs are situated in close proximity to the Hythe and contain predominantly housing which has developed along the line Greenstead Road. There is generally a mixed and unsettled character within the area, with views to industrial units along the western side of Greenstead Road. A mixture of architectural styles is visible, including Victorian and post-war housing, which is predominantly terraced.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area (within the floodplain of the River Colne).

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, linear street pattern with most houses/buildings facing the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space within the area.
- Properties generally face the road, with few front gardens visible.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure provided by the facades of buildings along Greenstead Road.

Architecture & Built Form

- Red brick is predominant material within the Character Area.
- Mix of architectural details and styles.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and harsh streetscape containing utilitarian lighting and detailing.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- General lack of habitats for urban wildlife (other than within back gardens) throughout the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a bustling residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Greenstead Road provides the main (busy) vehicular route through the site and connects the area to the Hythe and river (to the south).

Viewing Experience

- Few views into or out of this Character Area.

Designations

- 128 Greenstead Road is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There were only a few cottages in this Character Area before the 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from Victorian to post-war.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and congestion along Greenstead Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. There are few views into or out of the area and overall, the area has low sensitivity to change or new development.

J10. OLD HEATH ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses housing (and occasional shops) along both sides of Old Heath Road, which is situated to the east of Middlewick ranges and west of the Hythe, at the western edge of the urban area. Views across open farmland, Hythe Marshes and the floodplain of the River Colne can be gained from the backs of houses along the eastern side of Old Heath Road. Views to the tower blocks of the University of Essex campus can also be gained from this Character Area, contributing to a recognisable sense of place. Housing facades are more or less continuous along Old Heath Road, with mixed architectural styles, dating from Victorian to post-war, with occasional post-1960s infill.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gently sloping throughout the area (from west to east).

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, linear street pattern, with houses generally facing the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor, provided by continuous façade of buildings along Old Heath Road.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of architectural styles and details, with red brick as the dominant material.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and utilitarian streetscape.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for urban wildlife within the area, other than some value within back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, with a busy and somewhat hectic character as a result of traffic on Old Heath Road.

Movement Patterns

- Old Heath Road provides the main vehicular access route through this area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to tower blocks at the University of Essex (to the east) from the area.
- Views to Hythe marshes and into the River valley from the backs of houses along the eastern side of Old Heath Road.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area was agricultural and heath land until the early 20th century when residential development within the area began.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from Victorian to post-war periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and congestion along Greenstead Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Although this area has moderate visual sensitivity, with views across the river corridor to the east, overall biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak, leading to low sensitivity to change or new development overall.

J11. HARWICH ROAD AND ST JOHN'S ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively small Character Area encompasses housing which lines the main Harwich Road and southern end of St John's Road. Houses within the area range from Victorian to post-1960s period, with a predominance of post-war housing and modern development towards the northern end. A mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses are typical of this area. Occasional small shops also line Harwich Road. The southern end of St John's Road comprises semi-detached and detached houses and bungalows.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Road slopes upwards from a southerly to northerly direction.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with all houses and occasional shops facing main road.
- Plot sizes vary and the character within this area feels generally fragmented.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear definition between public and private space, delineated by low brick walls and front gates.
- Houses generally have small front gardens with car parking/drives.

Massing & Enclosure

- Overlooked in places by adjacent housing to the east and west.
- Area feels generally enclosed, along main road corridor, by adjacent housing.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of periods and styles.
- Post-war houses tend to have bay windows and different colours of bricks and plaster washes.

Streetscapes

- Character within the area is quite characteristic, with a mixture of materials, front garden boundaries and planting.
- Occasional mature trees line road.
- Grass verges in places, cobble verges in others.
- Overall lack of harmony.

Open Space

- No open space within Townscape Character Area.

- In close proximity to open space.

Biodiversity

- Occasional street trees and patches of woodland trees.
- Average.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential and some small retail.
- Generally streetscape is in average condition with some untidy verges.

Movement Patterns

- Old Heath Road provides one of the main access routes to this area.

Viewing Experience

- No landmarks and few views into or out of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has had no residential development within it until the late 19th century when there was settlement there in the form of Flying Far Inn and Downhill Farm. Much of the area was within Welshwood Park. The 20th century saw mixed dated housing develop along Harwich Road and St Johns Road.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Milestone on A137; 18/19th century

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from Victorian to post-1960s periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Mature street trees and small patches of woodland contribute to moderate biodiversity value, historic integrity is, however, weak. Views to playing fields within Townscape Character Areas to the north and south can be gained from locations along the road corridor, however visual sensitivity is generally low.

J12. WELSHWOOD ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA.

Overall Character Description

This relatively small and compact Character Area is located adjacent to Welshwood Park. It contains a unique and diverse mixture of detached houses, which are set back from the wide Welshwood Road and have large front and back gardens. Houses are set within a woodland glade, which creates a diverse and tranquil character. Architectural age and style varies on a plot-by-plot basis (some with thatched roofs, others with timber-facing). Harmony is brought to the area by the presence of mature woodland trees, which create enclosure, and strong localised sense of place.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Housing is set back from one meandering spine road (Welshwood Park Road), which is a cul-de-sac.
- Block pattern is varied.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear definition between public and private space.
- Front gardens delineated by wrought iron fences, low brick walls and well-maintained hedges.
- No public open space within area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Very low density-housing area.
- Houses are set back from a wide road, which is lined with grass verges and mature woodland trees.
- Plots have large front and back gardens.

Architecture & Built Form

- Varying architectural styles and ages.
- Detached houses vary on a plot-by-plot basis.
- Each house appears to be unique with a range of different details, ranging from thatched roofs and timber-facing to brick and tile fascias.

Streetscapes

- This Character Area has a very distinctive and unique localised sense of place.
- Houses have been designed within a woodland glade so that the woodland literally remains within the housing area.

- This provides a tranquil, interesting and varied character, which feels safe and secluded.
- Well delineated, diverse streetscape.

Open Space

- All houses have large private front and back gardens.
- No public open space within area.

Biodiversity

- Strong biodiversity value.
- Woodland trees have been retained within housing area.
- Area lies adjacent to Welsh Wood.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential, in good condition.

Movement Patterns

- Quiet road which is really only used for access.

Viewing Experience

- Views to woodland and east across Welshwood Park.

Designations

- Welsh Wood is Ancient Woodland.
- Welsh Wood is a Local Nature Reserve.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the middle of the 20th century this Character Area was part of Welshwood Park.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

This area has mixed architectural history, with buildings from several architectural periods visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories).
- Deterioration of built fabric.
- Loss of mature woodland trees, which contribute to distinctive sense of place and identity within the Character Area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has high biodiversity value (on account of the large number of mature woodland trees which are spread throughout the Character Area) and contains many distinctive houses. The area can be viewed from Welshwood Park to the east and also from countryside to the north. As a result of a combination of the above factors and also the generally distinctive and unusual character within this area, overall sensitivity to change or new development within the area is high.

J13. COLCHESTER GENERAL HOSPITAL MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses the buildings, associated car parks and grounds of Colchester General Hospital, which is situated to the east of Turner Road, towards the western edge of the urban area. Several mature trees and a pond are scattered within the grounds of the hospital, providing a relatively distinctive and tranquil setting for hospital buildings. The main hospital building is a colourful landmark within the centre of the area (green and white striped corrugated metal), which is visible from several surrounding Character Areas. Several large car parks and associated three-storey modern (post-1960s) associated accommodation blocks insert a humanised and ordered character over the area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat to the east of the area, gently sloping downhill to the west, into a small tributary valley.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern consists of a series of large, regular shaped buildings (main hospital) and smaller accommodation buildings, set within a large area of open space.
- Large-scale pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Much of the site is publicly accessible.
- Fencing or brick walls usually delineate private space.
- Low hedges line the edges of several of the car parks.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure amongst buildings
- Sense of openness within hospital grounds.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of materials within the area.
- Main hospital building is green and white corrugated metal panels.
- Modern (c. 1980s/1990s) accommodation blocks are predominantly red brick.

Streetscapes

- Car parks are utilitarian with low hedges at boundaries.

Open Space

- Large area of publicly accessible open space (associated with the hospital) provides an area for patients and visitors to relax.

Biodiversity

- Mature trees and other habitats within the area provide habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Hospital buildings.
- Accommodation blocks associated with the hospital.
- Car parking.
- Informal open space and lake.

Movement Patterns

- Main entrance to hospital and car parks is from Turner Road to the east.
- Relatively new northern approach road runs in close proximity to the western edge of the site.
- Hospital grounds are easily accessible and permeable to pedestrians and visitors.

Viewing Experience

- Views across hospital grounds from hospital buildings.
- Open views to surrounding Townscape Character Areas.

Designations

- Tubbleswick is an 18th century Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- Mill Road, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

By the end of the 19th century the only settlement this area had seen was the remains of St Michaels Church and several cottages. The 20th century however brought the development of Colchester General Hospital and a mixed area of housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature trees (important landscape features) from hospital grounds, due to old age.
- Traffic associated with the hospital.
- Congestion along Turner Road.
- Deterioration in built fabric of buildings within the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development overall as a result of moderate biodiversity value and moderate visual sensitivity. Open views across hospital grounds can be gained. Hospital grounds can also be viewed from several adjacent Character Areas.

J14. BROOK STREET MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This small Character Area is located in close proximity to the historic core and contains a mixture of architectural styles. The area is contained to the south by the corridor of the railway line and views to industrial and commercial units on the opposite side provide a sense of place. Despite noise and movement associated with the railway corridor, this area has a generally secluded character. Housing generally faces the road along Brook Street and Brooklands, with mixed definition between public and private space.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Generally regular, linear pattern with houses overlooking small road corridors.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the Character Area.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure, with few views into or out of the Character Area.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of architectural styles within the area, including post-war and post-1960s.

Streetscapes

- Overall bland and utilitarian streetscape throughout the area.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for urban wildlife within the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential throughout the area.

Movement Patterns

- Brooklands and Brook Street provide the main vehicular access routes to the area.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few views into or out of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has no recorded evidence of settlement until the 19th century when buildings began to develop around the railway line. By the end of the 20th century the area had been heavily developed with housing of mixed ages.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new built development, with low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J15. MAGDALEN STREET MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**Overall Character Description**

Magdalen Street suburbs are situated in close proximity to the southern edge of the historic core. A mixture of land-uses within the area, including commercial and residential, influence character. Several isolated areas of recent redevelopment have taken place within this area. Character is mixed and fairly fragmented, with modern buildings visible adjacent to historic, often Listed Buildings. Street pattern is linear, with most buildings overlooking Magdalen Street and historic integrity is fairly strong.

Distinctive Characteristics*Topographical Features*

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, linear street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- In some cases, buildings face directly onto the street.

Massing & Enclosure

- Adjacent Townscape Character Areas generally enclose area, however, there are also several small patches of open space between buildings.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of modern commercial/residential development and older buildings.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is generally bland and utilitarian, with little visual interest.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Overall, this Character Area has few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of commercial and residential.

Movement Patterns

- Magdalen Street is main busy traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to and from the southern edge of the historic core.

Designations

- There are seven Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- St Botolph's Augustine Priory Scheduled Monument is within the Character Area.
- There is a Special Protection Areas.

Historic and Architectural Interest*Historic Evolution*

There has been settlement in this area since the Roman period as it is along one of the main routes in and out of Colchester town centre. There is visible evidence of early medieval settlement with St John's Abbey and St Botolph's Priory; the most important monastic site in Colchester. Magdalen Street has been in use since the medieval period and has gradually developed throughout the late 19th and early 20th century into a hugely developed area with the railway station and mixed age housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings, visible archaeological features include:

- St John's Abbey, Saxon.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- There are several buildings of architectural interest within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**). In some locations, modern development can be seen directly adjacent to historic buildings.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Bright signage associated with commercial buildings.
- On-street parking.
- Traffic and congestion along Magdalen Street.
- Deterioration of built fabric (particularly on facades of historic buildings).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development on account of its strong historic integrity and moderate visual sensitivity, views to and from the southern edge of the historic core.

J16. MILITARY ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses buildings, which have developed along the line of Military Road, which runs from the centre of Colchester's urban area to Old Heath in the south. Properties generally face the road corridor and sometimes have small front gardens. Overall street pattern is regular and linear. Views to woodland and open space within Bourne Mill urban greenspace can be gained from the centre of the area, however views are generally channelled along the road corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, linear street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- In some cases, buildings face directly onto the street.

Massing & Enclosure

- The area is generally enclosed by surrounding Townscape Character Areas.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of housing styles, including Victorian and post-war.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is generally bland and utilitarian, with little visual interest.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Overall, this Character Area has few habitats for urban wildlife, other than habitats within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, with occasional shops along the road corridor.

Movement Patterns

- Military Road is a busy road, which runs through the centre of this area.

Viewing Experience

- Viewing experience is limited, with few views into or out of the area.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) and one Listed Building of more than special interest (Grade II*) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- The River Colne is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been little settlement in this area until the 20th century, apart from a few 19th century houses and the 19th century Winsley's Almshouses.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new built development, with low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J17. RECREATION ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively small residential suburb is situated to the north of Bourne Ponds urban greenspace, towards the western edge of Colchester's urban area. The area has a mixed character, with a range of architectural styles and materials. Street pattern along Scarletts Road is regular, with Victorian housing facing the road corridor. Further to the east, there is less of a sense of enclosure, with school buildings set within surrounding playing fields. Views to the Hythe can be gained from the eastern edge of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Mixed street patter.
- Regular, linear layout along Scarletts Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of styles and ages throughout the area.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and utilitarian streetscape, with some variety to the north, mature trees lining the southern edge of playing fields along Recreation Road.

Open Space

- School playing fields within the eastern part of the area.

Biodiversity

- Habitats for urban wildlife within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of residential and school buildings.

Movement Patterns

- Generally secluded area, set back from the main Recreation Road.

Viewing Experience

- Views to the Hythe from the eastern end of the area.
- Views across large playing fields to the north of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the 20th century this area was open land and woodland with very few houses in the area. Development has continued throughout the century and thus today the area is mixed age in character.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new built development, with low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J18. BOURNE ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**Overall Character Description**

This Character Area contains housing, which overlooks Bourne Mill, pond and associated mature trees. The character is mixed, and although surrounding housing areas overlook the area, there is a general sense of seclusion along streets within the area. Occasional street trees, vegetation within the front gardens of properties along Bourne Road and vegetation along the boundaries of school playing fields, all contribute to visual interest within the streetscape.

Distinctive Characteristics**Topographical Features**

- Area slopes downwards from north to south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Mixed and spacious street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally very clear definition between public and private space along the streetscape.

Massing & Enclosure

- Low density housing area.
- Sense of openness at the southern edge, where space overlooks Bourne Mill and Pond.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixed architectural style throughout the area.

Streetscapes

- Visually interesting and well maintained streetscape.

Open Space

- School playing fields, which are surrounded in places by mature vegetation.

Biodiversity

- Urban wildlife habitats within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of residential and school buildings.

Movement Patterns

- Bourne Road provides main traffic route throughout area and, this is generally a busy road.

Viewing Experience

- Views to Bourne Mill and pond from the southern edge of the area.

Designations

- Bourne Mill Scheduled Monument is within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest**Historic Evolution**

With the exception of Bourne Mill, 14th century, there is no evidence for any settlement in this area until the late 19th century when the 1881 Ordnance Survey map shows Bourne Pond Corn Mill and Bourne Pond. The 20th century brought about residential development of the area, and by the end of the century mixed age settlement.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Loss of vegetation within front gardens.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change. There is moderate biodiversity value within gardens and views can be gained to adjacent greenspace corridor to the south, however, historic integrity is weak.

J19. MERSEA ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area includes housing, which has developed along the line of Mersea Road, and is located within the southern part of Colchester's urban area. Houses have various architectural styles and cover several periods from post-war to post-1960s (modern) infill. Characteristically houses are set back from the road by small front gardens, with all houses facing the road. A mixture of semi-detached and detached housing is typical of the area. Views to Middlewick Ranges from the northeastern edge of the area and open farmland to the south of the area contribute to providing a recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with all houses facing the main road.
- Plot size varies, depending on semi-detached or detached nature of houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear separation between private and public realm.
- Front gardens are delineated by low walls or hedges, dividing them from the adjacent footpath and road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Character feels enclosed to the east and west by inter-war/post-war development and to the east by post-1960s development.

Architecture & Built Form

- Range of details and styles;
- Bay windows are a common feature of several semi-detached properties along the road.

Streetscapes

- Mersea Road is relatively wide.
- Varying architectural details and styles provide interest.

Open Space

- Very little public open space with occasional short, wide verges.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value within private front gardens is average.
- Occasional semi-mature street trees provide some diversity.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, with occasional shops and takeaways along the road corridor.
- Mixture of ages.
- Buildings generally in good condition.

Movement Patterns

- Very busy main road
- Constantly active, mainly caused by moving traffic.

Viewing Experience

- Intervisibility with adjacent housing areas.
- Views to Middlewick Ranges from the northeastern edge of the area.
- Views to open farmland to the south of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There was little settlement in this Character Area until the late 19th century, by the 20th century the area was being developed and has become a mixed area suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from the medieval to post-1960s periods visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Ipswich Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.
- Potential new built development that may block views into the corridor of the River Colne.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has low overall sensitivity to change or new development. There is average biodiversity value (within gardens and also several mature trees), but generally weak historic integrity, with buildings from a mixture of architectural periods and styles. Although there is some intervisibility with surrounding residential areas and occasional views to open farmland to the east, visual sensitivity is generally low.

J20. STRAIGHT ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large area of mixed age suburbs lines Straight Road, which connects London Road (on the north) to Maldon Road (in the south). Properties within this area have developed along the line of Straight Road and generally face the road. The streetscape is wide and varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within front gardens. The area has a bustling and busy character on account of noise and movement associated with Straight Road (running through the centre of the area). There are also several mature street trees lining the road corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear and regular.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Houses usually have small front gardens with a mixture of low walls, hedges and fences at boundaries.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness at the edges of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of ages, including Victorian, post-war and 1960s, and styles of housing within the area.
- Post-war houses are predominantly red brick with white windows.
- Predominantly terraced or semi-detached, with occasional detached plots.

Streetscapes

- Varied streetscape on account of variation provided by vegetation within front gardens and the fact that houses are generally slightly set back from the edge of the road, with an adjacent verge along the corridor.
- Several mature avenue trees along the road.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens provide biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area (with occasional shops along the road corridor), which has a bustling and busy character and relatively distinctive character.

Movement Patterns

- Straight Road provides main busy traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled views north and south along the road corridor.
- Views to adjacent residential areas.

Designations

- Ye Olde Leather Bottle Public House is a Listed Building of special interest (Grade II).
- The Tripe Dyke Scheduled Monument runs through this Character Area.
- Land adjacent to August House, Straight Road, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been record of settlement in this area since the Iron Age with visible remains of Triple Dyke and Prettygate Dyke. After the Iron Age the area remained open heath land with several houses. By the late 19th century, the area was regarded as Lexden Heath, but by the end of the 20th century the area had developed to a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Building, visible archaeological features include:

- Prettygate Dyke, Iron Age.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Mixed architectural history, with buildings dating from the post-war to post-1960s period.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development/expansion of area at western edge, which may block views to adjacent countryside.
- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Straight Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within this area is moderate, with low overall visual sensitivity but moderate biodiversity value and relatively strong historic integrity (on account of the dyke system).

J21. SHRUB END ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively small Character Area encompasses housing which lines the main Shrub End that is within the southwestern half of Colchester's urban area. Houses within the area range from Victorian to post-1960s in date, with a predominance of post-war housing. A mixture of terraced, semi-detached, and detached houses are typical of this area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with all houses facing main road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Clear definition between public and private space, delineated by low brick walls and front gates.
- Houses generally have small front gardens and car parking/drives.

Massing & Enclosure

- Overlooked by adjacent housing to the north and south.
- Area feels generally enclosed along main road corridor by adjacent housing.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of periods and styles.

Streetscapes

- A mixture of materials, front garden boundaries and planting.
- Occasional mature trees line road.

Open Space

- School playing fields to the southeast of Shrub End Road.

Biodiversity

- Urban wildlife habitats within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential.

Movement Patterns

- Shrub End road is main busy route through this area.

Viewing Experience

- No landmarks and few views into or out of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the end of the 19th century this Character Area was predominately agricultural with a few isolated farmsteads and the hamlet of Shrub End. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries piecemeal development has occurred along the road.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There are no recorded visible archaeological features within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from Victorian to post-1960s periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Not enough provision for car parking, leading to on-street parking and potential congestion.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Mature street trees and small patches of woodland contribute to moderate biodiversity value, historic integrity is, however, weak. The area has generally low visual sensitivity, with few long distance views out of the area and occasional views to adjacent housing areas.

J22. LEXDEN ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

This relatively large suburb lines (and also extends from) Lexden Road in the northwestern part of Colchester's urban area. Distinctive character results from several large properties (within large plots) and mature street trees within the streetscape. Buildings generally face the road corridor and range from Georgian to Victorian and post-1960s infill. Views are generally channelled along the road corridor, however Hilly Fields urban greenspace can be seen from the northern edge of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Varied topography throughout the area

Street & Block Pattern

- Mixed street pattern, generally linear along Lexden Road (and more curvilinear moving northwards away from the road).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Some confusion between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively even massing.
- Sense of enclosure varies along the corridor with views to Hilly Fields from the northern edge of the area.
- Large plot sizes and generally low density housing development.

Architecture & Built Form

- Strong historic built form with several historic buildings (mostly 19th century) visible.
- Grand Georgian and Victorian architecture also visible.

Streetscapes

- Distinctive streetscape with several mature trees lining the road corridor.

Open Space

- Large area of school playing fields to the south of Lexden Road.
- Allotment gardens to the north of Lexden Road.

Biodiversity

- Large gardens and mature street trees provide habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential but there are also schools within the area.

Movement Patterns

- Lexden Road is main (busy) route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to Hilly Fields to the north.
- Long distance views along the road corridor.
- Views to Lexden Park to the south.

Designations

- There are seven Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**).
- Lexden Middle Dyke and the Site of pre-Roman Settlement are Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area.
- Philip Morant School, and Cymbeline Way, Colchester are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area had been up until the late 19th century predominately agricultural land, apart from a few houses on the outlying land of Shrub End and Bottle Villages. The area has a large number of Listed Buildings from the 19th century and also a number of World War II remains. By the late 20th century the area had been completely urbanised.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, recorded visible archaeological features include:

- Gun Platform; 17th century;
- Earthworks east of Althancealgach House;
- Lexden Road, Maternity Hospital;
- Drinking Trough, Lexden Road; 19/20th century;
- Spigot Mortar Emplacement;
- Pillbox.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Several of the buildings within this character area have interesting architectural history (dating to several different architectural periods).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development, which may block views to Lexden Park and Hilly Fields and may also impinge on the current spacious character of the area.
- Traffic and congestion along Lexden Road.
- New infill development that may lead to loss of more historic buildings along the corridor.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Deterioration in built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has strong historic integrity, with a large number of Listed Buildings, exhibiting varied and interesting architectural styles. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views along Lexden Road corridor and also to Lexden Park and Hilly Fields from locations within the Character Area. The area has moderate biodiversity value. As a result of the above factors, the Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new build development.

J23. BERGHOLT ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large area of mixed age suburbs lines Boxted Road, which is at the northwestern edge of Colchester's urban area and stretches from the edge of the town centre to Braiswick in the west. Properties within this area have developed along the line of Bergholt Road and generally face the road, with several detached houses (particularly towards the western end). The streetscape is wide and varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within small front gardens. The area has a bustling and busy character on account of noise and movement associated with Bergholt Road.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Relatively varied topography within the area, which slopes overall from north to south across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, with small blocks of houses set back from the road in certain places.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Houses usually have small front gardens with a mixture of low walls, hedges and fences at boundaries.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness at the edges of the area.
- Generally large plots, with several detached houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of ages including Victorian, post-war and 1960s, and styles of housing within the area.
- Post-war houses are predominantly red brick with white windows.
- Predominantly terraced or semi-detached, with occasional detached plots.

Streetscapes

- Varied streetscape on account of variation provided by vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens provide biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area, with occasional shops along the road corridor, which has a bustling and busy character.

Movement Patterns

- Bergholt Road provides a main busy traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open countryside (landscape setting) to the north.

Designations

- Keepers Green, Braiswick, Three Crowns Road, Colchester and Proposed open space Bergholt Road, Colchester are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area was predominately agricultural until the late 19th century, apart from a few cottages, Braiswicklodge Farm and Braiswick House. It was not until the 20th century that the area began to be developed with housing. By the end of the 20th century, the area has become a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Mixed architectural history, with buildings dating from post-war to post-1960s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development/expansion of area at western edge, which may block views to adjacent countryside.
- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Bergholt Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to new development, as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J24. BOXTED ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Boxted Road mixed age suburbs are situated at the northeastern edge of Colchester's urban area and overlook Severalls Hospital to the east and open farmland plateau to the west. Mixed architectural styles are visible along Boxted Road, including post-war housing and more modern post-1960s infill.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern, with buildings lining the western side of Boxted Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space within the Character Area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness to the east, where properties overlook parkland, including several mature deciduous trees to the east.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixed architectural styles along Boxted Road, including post-war housing and more modern post-1960s infill.

Streetscapes

- Open streetscape, which feels somewhat disjointed from the rest of Colchester's urban fabric.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.
- Area overlooks open space to the east (grounds of Severalls Hospital).

Biodiversity

- Few habitats for urban wildlife within this Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of land uses, including residential and commercial.

Movement Patterns

- Boxted Road provides the main access to area from Nayland Road to the south.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across parkland associated with Severalls Hospital to the east.
- Views across open farmland to the west of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area remained farmland with Moore's Farm and Cuckoo Farm, until the 20th century, when the area was residentially developed and can now be seen as mixed age housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- There is mixed architectural history visible within this Character Area, including buildings from post-war and post-1960s periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and traffic associated with Boxted Road.
- Potential new development on the site of Severalls Hospital, which may change the open nature of the eastern edge of the area.
- Potential new development to the west, which may block views across farmland.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

There is weak historic integrity within this Character Area and also generally low biodiversity value. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to and from the grounds of Severalls Hospital to the east and also views from and to farmland to the west. Overall, the area has low sensitivity to change or new build development.

J25. MANOR ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Manor Road Mixed Age Suburbs is situated to the west of the historic core and contains several historic buildings, which create a distinctive and varied character. Street trees scattered throughout the area, provide further visible interest within the streetscape and views to the historic core can be gained from the eastern edge of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Varied topography throughout the area

Street & Block Pattern

- Mixed street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure varies throughout the Character Area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Strong historic built form with several historic buildings alongside more modern buildings.

Streetscapes

- Distinctive streetscape with several mature trees.

Open Space

- Generally no open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Large gardens and mature street trees provide habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential.

Movement Patterns

- Manor Road is a busy route within the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to the historic core from the eastern end of the area.

Designations

- There are twenty-two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) and one building of exceptional interest (Grade I) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- South Way Police Station, Colchester is a Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Settlement has been seen in this Character Area since the Roman period. The area incorporates: part of the Roman walls around the town centre; Crouched Friars Monastery which dates back to the 13th century; Holy Trinity Church dating to the 14th century; and many Listed Buildings from the 17th to 19th centuries. This continuous development can be seen to be continuing into the end of the 20th century with the A134 cutting through it and the number of residential properties increasing.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, recorded visible archaeological features include:

- Town Ditch, Roman;
- Town Walls; Roman;
- Crouched Friars Monastery; 13th century;
- Crouched Friars Monastery, Almshouses; 13th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- There is mixed architectural history visible within this Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development, which may block views to Lexden Park and Hilly Fields and may also impinge on the current spacious character of the area.
- Traffic and congestion along Lexden Road.
- New infill development that may lead to loss of more historic buildings along the corridor.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Deterioration in built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has strong historic integrity, with a large number of Listed Buildings, exhibiting varied and interesting architectural styles. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to the historic core from the eastern end, yet few views out of the Character Area (other than to adjacent areas) from the western end of the area. The area has moderate biodiversity value. As a result of the above factors, the Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new build development.

J26. HYTHE HILL MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Hythe Hill Mixed Age Suburbs are situated in close proximity to the Hythe and contain a mixture of housing styles from a variety of periods (Victorian to post-1960s). There is generally a mixed and fragmented character within the area as a result of a mixture of historic and more modern buildings in close proximity to each other.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area (within the floodplain of the River Colne).

Street & Block Pattern

- Mixed street and block pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space within the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Mixed sense of openness and enclosure.

Architecture & Built Form

- Red brick is predominant material within the Character Area.
- Mix of architectural details and styles.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and harsh streetscape containing utilitarian lighting and detailing.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- General lack of habitats for urban wildlife, other than within back gardens, throughout the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a bustling residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Hythe Hill Road provides the main vehicular route through the site and connects the area to the Hythe and river (to the east).

Viewing Experience

- Views into and along the river corridor.

Designations

- Three are fifteen Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).
- The River Colne is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area has had settlement since the medieval period. There are many Listed Buildings from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, but the main development of the area happened in the late 19th century. This development continued throughout the 20th century and consequently is now mixed in character.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Listed Buildings, recorded visible archaeological features include:

- 79 Hythe Hill;
- Pillbox, Bank of the River Colne.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area has mixed architectural history, with several interesting historic buildings visible alongside more modern development.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and congestion along Hythe Hill Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Loss of historic buildings.
- Deterioration in the quality of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low biodiversity value and moderate visual sensitivity on account of the fact that views into and along the river corridor can be gained. The area has strong historic integrity, with several historic buildings visible alongside more modern development. Overall, this area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development.

J27. HALSTEAD ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**Overall Character Description**

This relatively small area of mixed age suburbs lines Halstead Road, which is at the northwestern edge of Colchester's urban area, in close proximity to Eight Ash Green. Properties within this area have developed along the line of Halstead Road and generally face the road, with several detached houses. The streetscape is varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within small front gardens. The area has a generally quiet and fairly secluded character.

Distinctive Characteristics***Topographical Features***

- Relatively varied topography within the area, which slopes overall from north to south across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, with small blocks of houses set back from the road in certain places.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Houses usually have small front gardens with a mixture of low walls, hedges and fences at boundaries.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness at the edges of the area.
- Generally large plots, with several detached houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of ages (including Victorian, post-war and 1960s) and styles of housing within the area.
- Post-war houses are predominantly red brick with white windows.
- Predominantly terraced or semi-detached, with occasional detached plots.

Streetscapes

- Varied streetscape on account of variation provided by vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens provide biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area, with occasional shops along the road corridor, which has a bustling and busy character.

Movement Patterns

- Bergholt Road provides main busy traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open countryside (landscape setting) to the north.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest***Historic Evolution***

The first recorded evidence of settlement in this area was from the late 19th century, when Chittshills Farm, is shown on the Ordnance Survey map. It has only been since the early 20th century that the area has seen development.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Mixed architectural history, with buildings dating from post-war to post-1960s.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development/expansion of area at western edge, which may block views to adjacent countryside.
- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Bergholt Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to new development, as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity.

J28. LEXDEN PARK MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Lexden Park Mixed Age Suburbs have a spacious and tranquil character, which is dominated by Lexden Park to the west (scattered with mature parkland trees) and several large houses (located within large treed- plots) to the east. The area is situated to the south of London Road, to the west of the historic core and is enclosed to the north and west by adjacent housing areas.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat to the east, with more varied topography to the west

Street & Block Pattern

- Houses are set out around two peripheral roads (Fitzwalter Road and Clare Road), which join London Road in the north.
- Pattern is relatively regular, with several adjacent large plots.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally very clear definition between public and private space within the Character Area.
- Front gardens are set back from the road and contain much mature vegetation, which aids definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- Low density housing area, with houses set within large spacious plots with large front and back gardens.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing consists of several large detached properties, which have mixed architectural style and range from different architectural periods.

Streetscapes

- Diverse and interesting streetscape, with several mature trees and vegetation within front gardens, contributing visual interest.

Open Space

- Lexden Park, a large area of parkland to the west of the area, which contains several mature parkland trees, provides a large area of publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Lexden Park contains many habitats for urban wildlife and is an important nature conservation resource.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Large area of parkland, with adjacent housing area to the east.

Movement Patterns

- Fitzwalter Road and St Clare Road provide the main access routes to this Character Area, from London Road.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open playing fields from backs of properties along Fitzwalter Road.
- Views into Lexden Park from the western edge of housing.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) (see **Appendix C**)
- Lexden Dyke Middle and Lexden Tumulus Iron Age Barrow and Associated Cemetery are Scheduled Monuments.
- The Character Area is within Conservation Area.
- Lexden Park is a Local Nature Reserves.
- Lexden Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Lexden Park, Lexden is a proposed Designated Open Space.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This area witnessed very little activity until the 20th century. Before development the area was a park dating from the medieval period. The 20th century brought about the reduction of the park for Edwardian housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

In addition to the Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings, recorded visible archaeological features include:

- Anti-Tank Cubes in Lexdon Park.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- This area contains several detached properties, which have differing architectural details and interest.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature vegetation within Lexden Park (through old age).
- Potential infill development, which may alter the spacious character and quality of the area.
- Loss of mature vegetation within front gardens.
- Deterioration in quality of built fabric.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has high sensitivity to new development. Lexden Park in particular provides important wildlife habitats and has high overall biodiversity. Historic integrity is also strong, on account of the dyke system, tumulus and associated cemetery. The spacious and distinctive character of the area is sensitive to new development, which may alter the spacing and layout of housing within the area.

J29. JAMES CARTER ROAD AND STANWAY GREEN MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated at the southeastern edge of Colchester's urban area and consists of mixed aged housing surrounding Stanway Green (to the east) and post-1960s housing along Newcastle Avenue (to the west). Housing surrounding Stanway Green has a 'village' feel, with detached properties overlooking a central greenspace, containing several mature trees. Housing along Newcastle Avenue has a curvilinear street pattern with houses set within smaller plots than those surrounding Stanway Green. Open views across adjacent countryside can be gained to the south of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat to the east, slightly more undulating to the west.

Street & Block Pattern

- Relatively irregular street pattern, consisting of curvilinear layout to the east of Stanway Green and mixed pattern surrounding Stanway Green.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space, with houses separated from the road by gates, fences and hedges.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness to the south, with views across open countryside.
- Enclosed to the north by housing and commercial/light industrial buildings along Peartree Road.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of architectural styles, from varying ages surrounding Stanway Green.
- Post-1960s along Newcastle Avenue.

Streetscapes

- Diverse streetscape with several mature street trees surrounding Stanway Green.

Open Space

- Stanway Green has a village green.
- There is a small patch of amenity grassland at the centre of housing along Newcastle Avenue.

Biodiversity

- Habitats for urban wildlife within trees and gardens around Stanway Green.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential throughout the area.

Movement Patterns

- Stanway Green has a quiet character and is accessed from Gryme's Dyke Way.
- Newcastle Avenue provides the main feeder road for housing to the east and is accessed from Straight Road.

Viewing Experience

- Views across countryside to the south of the area.
- Views to adjacent commercial and light industrial units along Peartree Road to the north.

Designations

- Gryme's Dyke at Stanway and Green Gryme's Dyke Middle are Scheduled Monuments.
- Stanway Green and Gryme's Dyke are Designated Open Spaces.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the 19th century this area had been predominately agricultural land. By the early 20th century this area had been fully developed with housing.

Visible Archaeological Features

- In addition to the Scheduled Monuments there are no recorded visible archaeological features.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Architectural history is mixed within this Character Area, with post-1960s housing along Newcastle Avenue and a mixture of ages surrounding Stanway Green.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Loss of mature vegetation within Stanway Green.
- Potential infill development on plots surrounding Stanway Green, which may alter the spacious character and quality of the area.
- Loss of mature vegetation within front gardens.
- Deterioration in quality of built fabric.
- Potential new development to the south of the area, which may block views to open countryside to the south.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate, with open views across countryside to the south and views to housing within the area from adjacent areas of landscape setting. Overall biodiversity value is also moderate, with trees and vegetation within gardens around Stanway Green and along Newcastle Avenue, providing a variety of habitats for urban wildlife.

MARKS TEY

The following Townscape Character Areas have been defined within Marks Tey.

H. Post-1960s Suburbs (see page 121)

H1. Ashbury Drive and Godman's Lane

I. 20th Century Retail, Commerce and Industry (see page 166)

I1. Coggeshall Road Nurseries

I2. Dobbies Lane

J. Mixed Age Suburbs (see page 192)

J1. Coggeshall Road

J2. Church Lane

J3. Station Road and North Lane

J4. London Road East

J5. London Road West

The above Townscape Character Areas are described in the following sections.

H1. ASHBURY DRIVE AND GODMANS LANE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This large area of post-1960s housing is situated at the western end of Marks Tey, to the south of London Road and north of the A12/railway corridor. Buildings are set out in a curvilinear street pattern and consists of a combination of detached and semi-detached housing, which is predominantly built of grey or yellow brick. Most houses have front gardens and drives, with generally a clear definition between public and private space. Character is generally secluded, with views across open countryside from Wilson's Lane, which runs along the southern edge of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street and block pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Overall clear definition between public and private space with front gardens clearly divided from the road or pavement.

Massing & Enclosure

- Relatively high density housing area.
- Sense of openness to the south, with views across open countryside.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing within the area is c.1970s/1980s and is predominantly modern brick, with consistency in style and detail.

Streetscapes

- Occasional street trees provide variety in streetscape, which is generally bland and utilitarian overall.

Open Space

- School playing fields situated at the centre of the area.
- Occasional patches of incidental greenspace scattered throughout the area.

Biodiversity

- Urban wildlife habitats within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, with a school towards the centre of the area.

Movement Patterns

- Godman's Lane and Wilson's Lane provide the main vehicular access routes to this area, although housing is in close proximity to the main (busy) London Road.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across farmland to the south, from Wilson's Lane.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is no evidence of any settlement in the area until the 19th century when a limited number of houses are recorded on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within this area are predominantly modern (post-1960s) and architectural details are consistent with development from this period.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in condition of built fabric.
- Loss of front garden boundaries.
- Traffic congestion in close proximity to London Road.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views across open farmland to the south. The area has moderate biodiversity value (within gardens) but generally weak historic integrity. Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development.

II. COGGESHALL ROAD NURSERIES 20TH CENTURY RETAIL COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a relatively large group of nursery buildings at the western end of Marks Tey, which have a colourful and lively character. A large car park is associated with the buildings, and colourful signage welcomes visitors to stop. The area is situated directly off the main road corridor and views across open farmland can be gained to the north and south, giving an overall sense of space.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Spacious and fragmented block pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Nursery buildings are clearly divided from the main road by a mature belt of vegetation.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of openness both within and also in views from the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Nursery buildings are a combination of wood, glass and brick, with colourful (and garish) associated signage.

Streetscapes

- Lack of streetscape in the formal sense.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within the area.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Bustling area consisting of nursery buildings and an associated car park.

Movement Patterns

- Area is accessed from Coggeshall Road to the north.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to adjacent farmland to the north and south.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been no recorded evidence in this Character Area of any settlement up until the 19th century when Godbolt’s Farm is shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey Map. The 20th century brought about new development to the area in the form of retail and commerce.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Architecture within this character area is relatively modern (predominantly post-1960s).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Colourful and garish signage associated with nurseries.
- Noise and movement along Coggeshall Road.
- Deterioration in fabric of nursery buildings.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this area has moderate visual sensitivity. Nursery buildings are visible from surrounding Character Areas and views to countryside to the north and south can be gained. Overall, the character area has low sensitivity to change or new built development.

12. DOBBIES LANE 20TH CENTURY RETAIL AND COMMERCE and INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a group of relatively large commercial and warehouse units (including timber yard) and works to the north of the A12 and south of the railway corridor. Overall character is harsh, although surrounding vegetation does soften the built form.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Block pattern dominated by large warehouses/buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally no public space within this area and buildings are set back from the road corridor.

Massing & Enclosure

- Buildings enclosed by areas of vegetation/screening.

Architecture & Built Form

- Dominated by large warehouse/works buildings.

Streetscapes

- No streetscape in the formal sense.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- General lack of wildlife habitats.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of commercial and industrial buildings.

Movement Patterns

- Area is accessed from short cul-de-sac, which is immediately parallel to A12.

Viewing Experience

- Few views out of the Character Area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

The only recorded evidence of settlement in this area up until the 20th century was Palmers Farm. The 20th century however brought the development of retail and commerce to the Character Area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings are generally post-1960s (late 1980s/early 1990s) and are consistently pre-fabricated (either brick or corrugated iron).

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in fabric of units.
- Loss of patches of vegetation around the site, leading to greater visual prominence.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has low sensitivity to new development as a result of low biodiversity value, weak historic integrity and moderate visual sensitivity.

J1. COGGESHALL ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses buildings, which have developed along the line of Coggeshall Road (the main road which connects Marks Tey to London Road and Colchester to the east and open countryside to the west). Built form consists of a mixture of architectural styles and ages, from Victorian to post-1960s. Mott's Farm (and associated buildings along Mott's Lane) has also been included within this Character Area. Street pattern is linear, with lanes leading off Coggeshall Road to the north and south. There is variety in plot sizes and proportions, however most properties face the road corridor. Belts of mature vegetation provide some sense of enclosure along the northern side of Coggeshall Road; however, views across open farmland plateau and the tower of St. Andrews Church can be gained to the north.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Straight street pattern, with varying plot sizes and widths along the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Definition between public and private space varies.
- In some cases, front gardens are separated from the road by low hedges or fences, whilst in other cases, there are no boundaries and properties face directly onto the road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Buildings provide a sense of enclosure along the road corridor, however, this is not continuous, allowing views across surrounding countryside (particularly to the north of Coggeshall Road).

Architecture & Built Form

- Combination of styles, ranging from several different architectural periods (Victorian to post-1960s)
- Mott's Farm buildings.

Streetscapes

- Other than pavements lining Coggeshall Road and occasional hedges, there is little formal streetscape within the area.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible greenspace within the Character Area, however open agricultural fields line the northern edge of the area, evoking a sense of open, rather than enclosed character.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity value and habitats for urban wildlife within hedges and occasional trees along Coggeshall Road.
- Wildlife interest within front and back gardens along Coggeshall Road.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, yet also containing farm buildings and nurseries along Coggeshall Road.
- Generally interrupted character due to noise and movement associated with the busy road corridor.

Movement Patterns

- Coggeshall road provides the main (busy) route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across farmland to the north of Coggeshall Road.
- Views to the tower of St. Andrews Church, to the east.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area follows Stane Street, the line of the Roman Road from Colchester. The area around this road has developed slowly and has been agricultural land with several farms and cottages until this century. It has grown considerably during the 20th century into a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Historic and architectural development is visible within the Character Area, as a result of mixture of buildings of differing styles and from different periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and noise associated with Coggeshall Road.
- Potential new development at the northern edge of the Character Area, which may block views to open countryside to the north and views to the tower of St. Andrews Church.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate overall and is higher along the northern edge, with views across open countryside to the north. Housing within this Character Area can also be viewed from countryside to the north of Coggeshall Road. Biodiversity value is moderate and historic integrity mixed.

J2. CHURCH LANE MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is separate from the main area of development along Coggeshall Road and encompasses a relatively distinctive arrangement of buildings, which are centred on St. Andrews Church (towards the northern end of Church Lane). Church Lane is relatively narrow and has a kink in layout halfway along the route, which allows a surprise view of the church which is set back from the road and adjacent buildings. A small group of buildings associated with quarry works dominate the character of the northern end of Church Lane.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with the church and other buildings clustered around Church Lane.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is public car park in front of the church, which is surrounded by walls built from similar materials to the church.

Massing & Enclosure

- Very low density area, which is open to farmland along the eastern, western and southern edges.

Architecture & Built Form

- Church is prominent architectural and historic landmark within the Character Area.
- Several vernacular buildings associated with the church.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape along Church Lane is generally open, with views over adjacent farmland.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within this area, other than the churchyard.
- Area is in close proximity to open farmland to the east and west.

Biodiversity

- Mature field boundaries within adjacent fields provide habitats for wildlife.
- Vegetation surrounding and within the churchyard and car park also provides habitats for wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Area contains church and associated residential buildings.
- Buildings associated with quarry works are located at the northern end of Church Lane.

Movement Patterns

- Main pedestrian and vehicular access to the area is via Church Lane, which is a dead end.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across farmland to the east and west of Church Lane.
- Views back to Townscape Character Area J1 from the landscape setting of Marks Tey.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is no recorded evidence of settlement in this area before the 19th century, during this period there were few developments such as, St Andrews Church and Church Farm. By the end 20th century the area had grown to a mixed area of housing alongside the railway line.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- The Church is a prominent architectural and historic landmark within the Character Area, however associated vernacular buildings also have historic and architectural interest.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential new development to the north of Coggeshall Road or along Church Lane, which may block views to the church or the landscape setting of the church and associated buildings.
- Occasional visitor traffic associated with access to the church.
- Heavy plant and traffic associated with the quarry site at the northern end of Church Lane.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has strong historic integrity on account of the cluster of vernacular buildings, which surround the church and overall biodiversity value is moderate. Visual sensitivity of the area is high as a result of the fact that the tower of the church can be viewed as a landmark from several adjacent Character Areas and also open views can be gained across farmland to the east and west of Church Lane. Overall, therefore the distinctive character of this area has high sensitivity to change or new build development.

J3. STATION ROAD AND NORTH LANE MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a mixture of post-war and post-1960s bungalows and houses that line North Lane, to the north of the railway line and station. Marks Tey junction (containing the railway station, associated utility buildings and car parking) dominates the Character Area at the southern end of North Lane. Brightly coloured signage (associated with the nurseries opposite Marks Tey roundabout also) influences the mixed character of this area. Views across open fields can be gained from the northern edge of this area, however to the south, character is dominated by roundabouts, the railway line and roads.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Sloping gradually upwards from north to south across the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, with houses set out along North Lane.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the Character Area.

Massing & Enclosure

- Area feels generally enclosed to the south, with a more open character to the north.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of post-war and post-1960s housing (predominantly two-storeys) and bungalows lining North Lane, with small front gardens facing the road corridor.

Streetscapes

- Varied streetscape, which has bland and utilitarian character in places.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible greenspace within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value throughout the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Combination of housing along North Lane and station, car parking, railway line and road.

Movement Patterns

- North Lane provides the main (relatively busy) route to countryside to the north of Marks Tey and connects to the large conglomeration of roundabouts at Marks Tey junction.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open arable fields from the northern end of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

By the end of the 19th century settlement evidence within this area was demonstrated by the centre of the village of Marks Tey and the railway station, it was not until the end of the 20th century that the area was more residentially developed.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- Buildings within the Character Area are generally modern and there is little previous architectural history visible.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Noise and congestion associated with road corridors and roundabouts which meet within the area.
- Noise and disturbance from the railway corridor.
- Deterioration of the built fabric.
- Potential new development to the north, east or west of North Lane which may block open views across arable fields.
- Loss of front gardens to make room for car parking.
- Hard nature and lack of vegetational screening of car parks associated with Marks Tey station.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has a generally mixed character overall low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views across open farmland to the east, west and north of the area and roundabouts/railway corridor visible from surrounding Character Areas. Overall, this Character Area has a low sensitivity to change or new development.

J4. LONDON ROAD EAST MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area comprises development to the south of the A12 railway corridor along the northern and southern sides of London Road. Character is generally fragmented and chaotic, with a mixture of building styles, ages and uses. Some recognisable sense of place is provided by views to farmland to the south of the railway corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Overall linear street pattern with buildings facing London Road and shorter/narrower roads leading off to the north and south.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally poor definition between public and private space throughout the Character Area.
- Properties within the area generally face directly onto the road corridor with few front gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of enclosure along the road provided by buildings along the northern and southern edges of the corridor.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of buildings from different ages and of differing architectural styles throughout the area.
- Modern (post-1960s) Marks Tey Hotel to the north of London Road.
- Commercial and smaller retail units along London Road.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with little vegetation and generally utilitarian paving and lighting along the corridor.

Open Space

- No publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally low biodiversity value throughout the Character Area, with few habitats for urban wildlife.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A mixture of land uses within this area, including residential, commercial and retail, which has a somewhat busy and chaotic character as a result of proximity to A12 corridor and the presence of several roundabouts.
- Marks Tey Hotel.

Movement Patterns

- London Road provides the main vehicular route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Views to open countryside from the southern edges of the area.
- Short distance views, channelled along London Road corridor.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area was undeveloped with the exception of a limited number of farms, by the end of the 19th century. Further development of the area did not take place until the 20th century it developed into a commuter town.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- A mixture of architectural styles throughout the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration of the built fabric of housing.
- Loss of front gardens to make room for car parking.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new build development as a result of low biodiversity, moderate visual sensitivity and weak historic integrity.

J5. LONDON ROAD WEST MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The character of this area is dominated by the Parish Recreation Hall and associated large open playing fields. A row of semi-detached, mixed aged houses line the road, which is immediately parallel to the A12. There is little sense of separation between houses and the road corridor, with small patches of vegetation in places and a mixture of front walls, although the houses do not actually line the A12, and are accessed via a parallel, dead-end road. Character is generally fragmented and incoherent.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Lack of coherent definition between public and private space.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of openness, with fragmented character.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of buildings, ages and styles.
- Recreation hall is a dominant architectural feature within the area.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland, utilitarian and incoherent streetscape.

Open Space

- Large amenity playing fields associated with the Recreation Hall.

Biodiversity

- Overall lack of biodiversity interest within the area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Mixture of residential and recreational buildings.

Movement Patterns

- Generally disjointed movement throughout the area, with cul-de-sac parallel to the A12.

Viewing Experience

- Direct views across and along the A12 corridor.
- Views across open playing fields associated with the Recreation Hall.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There has been little settlement recorded in this area until the beginning of the 20th century when it was being developed. Before this period, the area was predominately agricultural with a few dwellings. By the end of the 20th century, the area had been developed as a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

- A mixture of architectural styles throughout the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Disjointed legibility within the area.
- Deterioration in condition of the built fabric.
- Stark nature of architecture and streetscape.
- Noise and movement associated with A12 corridor.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This area has moderate visual sensitivity on account of views from and to the A12 corridor. However, biodiversity value is low and historic integrity weak with few visible historic buildings, determining overall low sensitivity to change or new development.

2.6 Principles for Accommodating New Development in Colchester

2.6.1 The following broad principles for the generic Townscape Character Types should be read in conjunction with the visual analysis of Colchester's urban structure set out in Section 2.4, and with the relevant detailed Character Area descriptions and their respective sensitivity guidance presented in Section 2.5 (and summarised on **Figure 2.7**).

2.6.2 The overall principle for accommodating new development in Colchester is to ensure that it is sensitively integrated into the townscape character and contributes to the conservation, enhancement and, where relevant, creation of places that exhibit a strong sense of local identity. Proposals for new development should carefully consider the following key urban design elements:

- Routes
- Spaces
- Landmarks
- Edges
- Grids and blocks
- Public and private spaces
- Enclosure and building lines
- Visual cohesion
- Highway design
- Shared use streets
- Paving
- Street furniture

Principles for Colchester's Historic Core

2.6.3 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape elements rather than drawing attention away from them. Specifically, new development within the Historic Core, should:
 - * Seek to maintain more or less continuous facades along the High Street, Crouch Street, North Hill, Queen Street and East Hill.
 - * At the lower, eastern end of the High Street, seek consistency with existing generally 3-storey, flat-fronted residential and commercial properties of 3 to 4 bays;
 - * Seek to retain and enhance where appropriate, medieval jettied upper floors along North Hill;
 - * Seek to retain and enhance medieval buildings and architectural details (steep pitch tiled roofs, jettied upper floors, timber framing and wide proportioned, double hung sash timber windows) within Scheregate;
 - * Seek to retain the Medieval Street Pattern and almost entirely 2-storey buildings (in the smaller streets) within the Dutch Quarter;
 - * Seek to retain and enhance the setting of the Castle (Castle Park) and more or less continuous Victorian terraces to the east;

- * Seek to retain and enhance the setting of St. Botolph's Priory;
- * Seek to maintain small-scale Victorian terraces along Priory Street.

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Historic Core and adjacent Character Types and Areas, specifically:
 - * Long distance, channelled views north from the High Street along narrow streets leading northwards;
 - * Long-distance views northwards along North Hill;
 - * Views to landmark buildings within the historic core from surrounding townscape character areas;
 - * Channelled views eastwards along the High Street towards the 'Jumbo' water tower;
 - * Channelled views eastwards along East Street from the High Street.
- Conserve characteristic streetscape/building materials as identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions, replacing them where necessary, and reflect these details/patterns in any new floorscapes/buildings. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Seek to maintain the rich variety of materials used across all the design periods;
 - * Seek to conserve remaining examples of decorative plasterwork (pargeting) along the High Street;
 - * Seek to conserve and maintain Georgian double hung sash timber windows along the High Street;
 - * Seek to conserve and enhance fine ashlar masonry in Portland stone or other decorative stone on the faces of Victorian and Edwardian buildings along the High Street;
 - * Seek to use paint colours and types, windows and downpipes that are in keeping with the surrounding historic environment;
 - * Seek to maintain diversity within the streetscape along Trinity Street (visible Medieval and Georgian frontages);
 - * Seek to conserve and enhance double hung sash windows within the Dutch Quarter;
 - * Seek to conserve and maintain remaining sections of the Roman Town Wall;
 - * Seek to conserve and maintain fine medieval timber framed houses along East Hill;
 - * Seek to conserve, maintain and enhance distinctive individual historic buildings identified within each Townscape Character Area.
- Consider additional/new planting within the streetscapes to form a green setting to development.
- Ensure new development enhances the topography of the Historic Core by maintaining a constant number of storeys of buildings along the skyline.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views along the approaches to the Historic Core.
- Any new development should follow the intrinsic scale and fine grain of the urban structure set by the historical plots.
- New proposals within this Townscape Character Type should address the key threats identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through appropriate restoration and enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek to improve buildings, which are in poor repair and currently detract from the quality of the streetscape;
 - * Seek to integrate public direction signs and information signs, which currently detract from the quality of the historic environment;
 - * Seek practical and safe design solutions for integrating pedestrian and vehicular movement, which are sympathetic to the historic environment (particularly along the High Street).

- The siting and design of any new retail developments in the Historic Core should reflect local character, including careful design of advertising, lighting and signage.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in public realm enhancement schemes.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes and existing historic buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the sensitive design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.
- Proposals for conversions of historic buildings in the Historic Core should carefully consider materials/forms, the design of internal spaces, the curtilage of the building and employ sensitive construction methods.
- Proposals for extensions to existing listed buildings in the Historic Core should carefully consider the impact on the local streetscape, address issues of privacy/overlooking and daylight/sunlight, and incorporate sensitive building forms, materials and details.
- The fitting of solar panels and satellite dishes to listed buildings and other buildings within the Conservation Area should be carefully considered.

Principles for Colchester's Urban Greenspaces

2.6.4 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Protect the open character of greenspaces as important elements of the overall townscape.
- Preserve high quality historic element(s) of greenspaces, and prepare conservation management plans for historic parks and gardens.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between greenspaces and surrounding built-up Character Areas.
- Consider additional/new planting to enhance the green character of public open spaces, particularly along the edges of greenspaces.
- Conserve the pattern of key views from greenspaces, and along the approaches to such areas. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Seek to maintain and enhance panoramic open views from Hilly Fields across the River Colne and from High Woods Country Park to the skyline of the historic core;
 - * Seek to maintain and enhance channelled and open views along the River Colne corridor from Castle Park/ Cricket Ground, Riverside Walk and the Hythe Urban Greenspaces;
- New development around the edges of greenspaces should reinforce the positive character and local distinctiveness of this Townscape Type through the use of appropriate building materials and styles.
- Develop strategies for the restoration and enhancement of poor quality greenspaces.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in greenspaces.

Principles for Colchester's Victorian Suburbs

2.6.5 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve high quality historic townscape element(s) that contribute to the Victorian character of this type, as identified in the relevant Character Area description.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Victorian Suburbs and adjacent Character Types and Areas.
- Conserve characteristic streetscape/building materials, replacing them where necessary, and reflect these details/patterns in any new floorscapes/buildings. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Seek to conserve and maintain traditional Victorian brick, tile and architectural details within housing along Barrack Street, Maldon Road, Old Heath Road and other smaller linking roads;
 - * Seek to maintain predominantly continuous terraced facades along streetscapes;
 - * Seek to maintain consistency in buildings heights and massing.
- Consider additional/new planting within the streetscape to form a green setting to development.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views from and into the Victorian Suburbs, specifically:
 - * Channelled views along terraced streets (including Barrack Street, Maldon Road and Old Heath Road);
 - * Views from the Garrison from Old Heath Road Suburbs;
- Any new development should follow the scale and grain of the urban structure set by the historical plots.
- New development should reinforce the positive character and local distinctiveness of this townscape type through the use of appropriate building materials and styles as identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes and existing historic buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.
- Proposals for conversions of historic buildings should carefully consider materials/forms, the design of internal spaces, the curtilage of the building and employ sensitive construction methods.
- Proposals for extensions to existing listed buildings should carefully consider the impact on the local streetscape, address issues of privacy/overlooking and daylight/sunlight, and incorporate sensitive building forms, materials and details.
- The fitting of solar panels and satellite dishes to listed buildings and other buildings within Conservation Areas should be carefully considered.

- New proposals within this Townscape Character Type should address the key threats identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through appropriate restoration and enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - Seek to retain original Victorian doors and window frames and limit the introduction of plastic replacement alternatives;
 - * Seek to limit potential backland (back garden) developments that do not respond to street and block pattern;
 - * Seek ways to encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than replacement with parking spaces/ front drives;
 - * Seek ways to manage on-street parking, which detracts from streetscape consistency.

Principles for Colchester's Edwardian Suburbs

2.6.6 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve high quality historic townscape element(s) that contribute to the Edwardian character of this type.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape elements rather than drawing attention away from them.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Edwardian Suburbs, the adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside.
- Conserve streetscape/building materials, replacing them where necessary, and reflect these details/patterns in any new floorscapes/buildings. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Seek to retain original Edwardian doors and window frames and limit the introduction of plastic replacement alternatives;
 - * Seek to maintain consistency in building materials along Elmstead Road;
 - * Seek conserve and enhance the layout and architectural details of Edwardian buildings within Severalls Hospital.
- Consider additional/new planting to form a green setting to development.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views between the built-up area and the surrounding open countryside, specifically:
 - * Views to Severalls Hospital from adjacent Townscape Character Areas and landscape setting areas.
- Any new development should follow the scale and grain set by the historical plots.
- New development should reinforce the positive character and local distinctiveness of this townscape type through the use of appropriate building materials and styles.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes and existing historic buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the sensitive design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.

- Proposals for conversions of historic buildings in the Edwardian Suburbs should carefully consider materials/forms, the design of internal spaces, the curtilage of the building and employ sensitive construction methods.
- Proposals for extensions to existing listed buildings in the Edwardian Suburbs should carefully consider the impact on the local streetscape, address issues of privacy/overlooking and daylight/sunlight, and incorporate sensitive forms, materials and details.
- The fitting of solar panels and satellite dishes to listed buildings and other buildings within Conservation Areas should be carefully considered.
- New proposals within this Townscape Character Type should address the key threats identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through appropriate restoration and enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek to retain original Edwardian doors and window frames and limit the introduction of plastic replacement alternatives;
 - * Seek to limit potential backland (back garden) developments that do not respond to street and block pattern;
 - * Seek ways to encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than replacement with parking spaces/ front drives;
 - * Seek ways to manage on-street parking, which detracts from streetscape consistency.

Principles for Colchester's Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs

2.6.7 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs and adjacent Character Types and Areas.
- Consider additional/new planting within streetscapes to form a green setting to development.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views from and into the Inter-War/ Post-War Suburbs, specifically:
 - * Channelled views north and south along Villa Road and London Road;
 - * Open views to the perimeter of the Garrison from Boadicea to Butt Road Inter-War/ Post-War Suburbs;
 - * Glimpse views to parkland and mature trees associated with Severalls Hospital from Defoe Crescent;
 - * Open views to adjacent greenspace from Cowdray Avenue.
- New development should consider using a varied mix of building materials and styles.

- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek ways to maintain and enhance existing built fabric;
 - * Encourage planting of native trees and shrubs within front gardens;
 - * Seek ways to encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than replacement with parking spaces/ front drives;
 - * Conserve mature trees within incidental greenspaces and playing fields and consider replacement of older trees where applicable;
 - * Seek ways to integrate street clutter to form a coherent streetscape;
 - * Seek ways to manage on-street parking, which detracts from streetscape consistency;
 - * Seek ways to soften streetscapes with new planting.
- Large-scale new developments should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in new development and public realm enhancement schemes.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes and existing buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.

Principles for Colchester's Garrison Suburbs

2.6.8 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve historic townscape element(s) where feasible through incorporation into regeneration masterplans/development frameworks.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance visual linkages between the Garrison Suburbs, adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside, specifically:
 - * Open views south across Abbey Fields from Circular Road North and Circular Road South;
 - * Views to landscape setting from the southern edge of the Garrison;
- Consider additional/new planting to provide a green setting to development.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek to retain and replace where appropriate, mature trees within the Garrison;
 - * Seek to conserve and enhance historic garrison buildings;
 - * Seek ways to soften and visually integrate large areas of car parking associated with barrack buildings;
- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through strategies for the enhancement of greenspace within the Garrison.
- Large-scale new developments should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.

Principles for Colchester's Post-1960s Suburbs

2.6.9 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Post-1960s Suburbs, adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside.
- Consider additional/new planting within and at the edges of the built-up areas to provide a green setting to development.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:
 - * Views to open playing fields to the west of Queensbury Avenue;
 - * Open views across farmland plateau from Lucy Lane Suburbs;
 - * Views across Lexden (Gryme's Dyke) and King George Field from Wheatfield Road Suburbs;
 - * Views to Lexden Park from Church Lane;
 - * Open views across Cheshunt Field/ Gosbecks archaeological park from the southern edge of Cunobelin Way suburbs;
 - * Open views west along Braiswick Road to open countryside and into the valley of St. Botolph's Brook;
 - * Views to the town centre skyline from Peto Avenue Suburbs;
 - * Open and glimpse views Guildford Road along the Colne River Corridor;
 - * Open and glimpse views across Salary Brook Valley to the east from Longridge Suburbs;
 - * Open views along the River Colne from the Hythe.
- Consider opportunities for the use of colour render to enliven the façades of buildings.
- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through strategies for the enhancement of streetscapes and public open space.
- Large-scale new developments should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in public realm enhancement schemes.

Principles for Colchester's 20th Century Retail, Commercial and Industrial Townscapes

2.6.10 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve and incorporate industrial heritage element(s) within development and regeneration proposals.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape elements rather than drawing attention away from them.

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between this townscape type, adjacent Character Types and Areas and the surrounding open countryside.
- Consider additional/new planting to provide a green setting to development.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:
 - * Views along London Road from Copford Place;
 - * Views to open countryside from the southern and western edges of Shurb End Road;
 - * Long distance views to the historic town core from the southern end of Turner Rise Retail Park;
 - * Views along the Colne river corridor from the Hythe;
 - * Open views across adjacent landscape setting from Gosbecks Road.
- Consider opportunities for the use of colour render to enliven the façades of buildings.
- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through strategies for the enhancement of streetscapes and public open space.
- Any large scale new developments should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.
- The siting and design of business parks and industrial sites should reflect local character, including careful design of advertising, lighting and signage.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in new development and public realm enhancement schemes.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek ways to soften and integrate large areas of car parking associated with retail, commercial and industrial buildings;
 - * Seek ways to integrate signage with colours and materials within adjacent character areas.
- Proposals for conversions and reuse of historic buildings for retail, commercial or industrial uses, should carefully consider materials/forms, the design of internal spaces, the curtilage of the building and the construction methods.

Principles for Colchester Mixed Age Suburbs

2.6.11 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form as identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between this townscape type, adjacent Character Types and Areas and the surrounding open countryside.
- Consider additional/new streetscape planting to provide a green setting to development.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:

- * Short and long distance views along London Road corridor;
- * Open views to Lexden Springs Park to the north of London Road;
- * Views to High Woods Country Park from Turner Road Suburbs;
- * Views to Bourne Mill and Pond from the Bourne Road;
- * Views to open countryside (landscape setting) to the north of Bergholt Road.

- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through strategies for the enhancement of streetscapes and public open space.
- Any large-scale new developments should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Conserve original window frames and doors;
 - * Encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than conversion to parking or front drives;
 - * Seek ways to integrate colourful signs associated with small businesses and shops;
 - * Encourage maintenance and management of front garden boundaries.

Principles for the Landscape Setting of Colchester

2.6.12 The following principles should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Character Area/Landscape Setting Area information set out in Section 2.2.

A2 Wooded Roman River Valley

- Conserve the historic quay at Rowhedge, which makes a positive contribution to local landscape character;
- Consider the landscape pattern and structure of large woodland areas, and the role that they have in the composition of views to and from the area.

A3 Roman River Valley Floor

- Conserve the undeveloped and generally open nature of the floodplain;
- Consider the visual impact on the floodplain of new development at Wivenhoe;
- Seek opportunities for habitat restoration along the floodplain.

A4 Colne River Valley Floor

- Conserve the open character of the floodplain;
- Maintain cross valley views through careful consideration of development within the floodplain;
- Protect and conserve the distinctive WWII defensive features within the area (particularly anti-tank pimples).

A5 River Valley Slopes

- Ensure any new small-scale development in, or on the edges of Fordham, Wivenhoe, West Bergholt and Colchester is of an appropriate scale, form and design and uses materials which respond to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles and materials;
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials;
- Maintain cross-valley views;
- Conserve views of the river and floodplain;
- Ensure that new woodland planting is designed to enhance existing landscape character and species composition reflects local provenance.

A6 Ardleigh River Valley

- Conserve views into the valley from the east;
- Consider the impact of any new development on the southern edge of Colchester (Greenstead and Welshwood Park), which would be visually intrusive if sited on the valley sides;
- Screen visually intrusive urban-edge development within Colchester (Greenstead and Welshwood Park) with selective tree planting.

B2 Easthorpe Farmland Plateau

- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to landscape character, and is well integrated into the surrounding landscape;
- Ensure that any development on the edges of Marks Tey and Copford responds to traditional settlement patterns and uses design and materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- New farm buildings such as sheds should be sensitively located within the landscape to respect local character and avoid the skyline.

B3 Southern Colchester Farmland Plateau

- The reuse of redundant agricultural buildings, particularly black timber-framed and boarded barns, should be encouraged;
- Ensure any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to landscape character;
- Screen existing visually intrusive modern housing development along the southern edges of Colchester (adjacent and north of Gosbecks archaeological park) with new structure planting;

- Conserve and manage small patches of woodland which play an important role in framing views within and into/out of the area;
- Ensure any extensions to existing housing developments avoid visual intrusion.

B6 Great Horkesley Farmland Plateau

- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Conserve the landscape setting of existing settlements, such as Boxted, Great Horkesley and West Bergholt, ensuring where appropriate that infill development does not cause linkage with the main Colchester settlement;
- Conserve panoramic and framed views into the Stour River Valley corridor to the north of the character area;
- Encourage screening, using tree belts of visually intrusive modern farm buildings.

B7 Langham Farmland Plateau

- Ensure that the design of new agricultural buildings reflects the local vernacular style, and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Ensure that development upon the northern edge of the plateau is not visually prominent within views from the Stour River Valley Corridor to the north;
- Ensure that development upon the southern edge of the plateau is not visually prominent within views from the Ardleigh River Valley Corridor to the south.

B8 Wivenhoe Farmland Plateau

- Conserve the landscape setting of Wivenhoe and southern Colchester (Greenstead);
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Conserve open views along the Colne Valley and towards Wivenhoe.

D3 Colne Drained Estuarine Marsh

- Conserve the distinctive landscape setting of Wivenhoe and Rowhedge historic settlements;
- Ensure any new buildings and infrastructure, or any other redevelopment is of an appropriate scale, form, design, materials and uses colours that respond to landscape setting and landscape character;

- Avoid reduction in the extents of adverse impacts on existing important habitats such as coastal grazing marsh;
- Conserve open views across the river and character area and ensure that new development does not



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3.0 THE CHARACTER OF TIPTREE

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3.1 Settlement Profile

Location and Context (see Figure 1.1)

3.1.1 Tiptree is located approximately 10 miles to the southwest of Colchester, 6 miles from Maldon and also 5 miles from Witham and 3 miles from Kelvedon. Tiptree has a population of 8,306 (based on 2001 Census). Tiptree is located close to the A12, which connects to the main motorway network via the M25. Mainline trains to London serve nearby Kelvedon and Witham, but not Tiptree. A bus service connects Tiptree with Maldon and Colchester.

Key Features (see Figure 3.1)

- Range of local shops and services, including two medium-sized supermarkets and a shopping precinct.
- Jam factory to the south of the village (run by Tiptree and Wilkin & Sons Limited) with an associated museum, visitor's centre and tearoom.
- Village comprises housing of varying ages, with predominance from the 20th century.
- Tiptree windmill (converted to housing) is a landmark within the village.
- 20th century development spread out along the principal routes running north-south and northwest-southeast.
- Tiptree Heath (the largest surviving heathland in the county) to the south west of the village.
- 20th century housing developments, mostly detached houses or bungalows and some new low-rise blocks.
- Groups of Victorian houses and shops and occasional older properties along the principal traffic routes.
- Original village characteristic of relatively isolated groups of cottages and houses within a smallholding setting lost by infill development.
- The substantial and impressive Victorian church (St. Luke's) situated on the west side of the main Colchester Road and close to the village centre.
- Victorian buildings and later housing schemes in brick, of various colours, with tile or slate roofs.
- Victorian houses and shops generally rendered and painted in part, which has been copied to provide a decorative detail on some later housing developments.
- 20th century development has swamped the original characteristics of the older village.
- Recent infill development of generally characterless design and detail.

3.2 The Landscape Setting of Tiptree

Overview

3.2.1 The *Landscape Character Assessment of Colchester Borough*³¹ defines 'Landscape Character Types and Areas at 1:25,000 scale' around Tiptree.

3.2.2 Informed by the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment, the *Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough*³² study identifies in more detail 'Landscape Setting Areas' at 1:10,000 scale within the fringes of Tiptree.

Landscape Character Types within the Setting of Tiptree

3.2.3 'Landscape Character Types' are broad tracts of land that share common characteristics of geology, landform, vegetation, land-use and settlement. They are generic landscapes which reoccur throughout the Borough.

3.2.4 There is one Landscape Character Type within the setting of Tiptree, which is shown on **Figure 1.2**. Its key characteristics are summarised below:

F - Wooded Farmland

- Elevated broad ridge landform (part of SW-NE aligned ridge);
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland;
- Several nucleated settlements, with a clustered settlement pattern;
- Well wooded with woodland blocks (including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland); copses and hedges;
- Framed views of the Blackwater Valley through gaps in hedgerows;
- Enclosed character in places.

Landscape Character Areas within the Setting of Tiptree

3.2.5 'Landscape Character Areas' are geographically unique areas with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics, both physical and experiential, that combine to create a distinct sense of place.

³¹ Landscape Character Assessment of Colchester Borough (CBA for Colchester BC, 2005)

³² Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough (CBA for Colchester BC, 2005)

3.2.6 The distribution of the two Landscape Character Areas within the setting of Tiptree are shown on **Figure 1.2**, and their character and key visual characteristics are described below.

F1 Messing Wooded Farmland

This plateau landscape is situated on a broad, elevated ridge, dissected by a number of small streams, providing undulations and giving the appearance of a gently folded landscape. Large areas of mixed woodland (Layer Wood and Pods Wood) punctuate areas of predominantly arable farmland, consisting of large rolling arable fields. Smaller regular patches of woodland are a characteristic feature of the southwestern corner of the area, extending from a band of similar landscape pattern, which extends across the Borough boundary into areas of landscape to the southwest. The network of minor roads is lined with mature hedges. Single mature trees in field boundaries and standing within fields create distinctive landscape features, which contribute to a unique sense of place. There is a sense of tranquillity within the area, away from the fringes of Tiptree settlement.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Framed views to the distinctive square tower of All Saints Parish Church (Messing) from several locations within the farmland plateau;
- Large patches of woodland are distinctive landscape features which are always visible on the skyline;
- Long-distance panoramic views across adjacent (Easthorpe Farmland Plateau) from winding roads to the east and west of Messing.

F2 Tiptree Wooded Farmland

This area of wooded farmland encapsulates the south, east and western edges of Tiptree settlement and extends outside the Borough boundary to the southeast. A mosaic of small to medium-sized arable fields create predominantly small-scale field pattern, which is interspersed with many small patches of mixed woodland. Settlement pattern is predominantly linear, including Tiptree Heath and the northern extent of Tolleshunt Knights, which extends to the southeast of the Borough boundary. Farmsteads are also scattered throughout the area. To the south of the village of Tiptree Heath, a large area of remnant heathland, containing areas of acidic grassland and dwarf shrub heath, provides a visually distinctive landscape belt, particularly when gorse, surrounding the edges of the heathland, is in bloom. Land-uses within Tiptree's fringes (such the orchards at Tiptree preserves factory and sewage works to the east) assert a human influence over landscape character in this area. The landscape pattern is more fragmented and chaotic than in other parts of the area. Although woodland cover is not as extensive as within Messing Wooded farmland, the high frequency of small patches of woodland, leads to an overall wooded feel within the character area.

Key visual characteristics include:

- Short distance, framed views across Tiptree Heath from roads leading out of the settlement;
- Long-distance framed views across adjacent Abberton flooded river valley to the east and other farmland areas to the south;
- Views to the north restricted by large areas of woodland (Pods Wood and Layer Wood within Messing Wooded farmland);
- Short-range views to Layer Marney tower from the eastern edge of the character area.

Landscape Setting Areas around Tiptree (see Figure 3.2)

3.2.7 The setting of the settlement has been analysed by discrete 'Landscape Setting Areas'. The visual analysis identifies:

- key open spaces
- visually significant trees and woodland
- significant water features
- ridgelines
- settlement edges
- harsh abrupt urban edges
- distinctive gateways
- key views to and from the settlement
- landmarks

3.2.8 Each Landscape Setting Area has been evaluated in terms of the following factors:

- *Intrinsic Landscape Qualities* – the number of positive visual, ecological and historic qualities/features;
- *Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting* - the extent to which an area has distinctive backdrops, distinctive approaches, green corridor linkages, allows critical outward and inward views;
- *Visual Characteristics (Visual Prominence and Intervisibility)* – the extent to which an area has prominent topography and/or is widely visible from surrounding areas.

3.2.9 This evaluation has been used to assess the degree of inherent sensitivity against the following criteria:

- *High Sensitivity* – Area unlikely to be able to accommodate even relatively small-scale changes without extensive degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to fully address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- *Moderate Sensitivity* – Area may be able to accommodate changes with some degradation of character and value, although mitigation measures would be required to fully address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- *Low Sensitivity* – Area should be able to accommodate major changes with only very limited, if any, significant degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures should be able to fully address all potential landscape/environmental issues.

3.2.10 The sensitivity and value of the Landscape Setting Areas around Tiptree is summarised below.

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low						
1	•			•				•			•			•				
2		•			•			•			•			•				•
3	•			•				•			•			•				•
4		•				•		•			•			•			•	•
5		•			•			•			•			•			•	

3.3 Historical Evolution of Tiptree

3.3.1 The physical structure of the landscape has had a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity around Tiptree. The influence of human activity, in turn, makes a major contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape. The following section provides a summary of the evolution of Tiptree, with particular reference to the growth of the urban form in relation to the surrounding historic settlement pattern and how this has shaped the character of the town today. The historical evolution of the town since the late medieval is illustrated in **Figure 3.3**.

Iron Age

3.3.2 During the Iron Age there was no concentrated settlement at Tiptree as the soil was found to be too poor to cultivate, but it was the meeting place for the two tribes known as the *Catuvellauni* and the *Trinovantes*.

Early Medieval (1066 – 1348)

3.3.3 It is believed that a certain oak tree on the heathland in Tiptree was the site for where the village got its name. A smuggler named Tipper was meant to have stashed his loot in the hollow of the tree from where it would be collected and his payment left.

3.3.4 Tiptree is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, but by 1204 an area of 404.67 ha of wasteland had been recorded and known as Tiptree Heath. Within Tiptree is the Augustinian Priory of St. Mary and St

Nicholas founded by the Tregoz Family. The priory, its actually founding date unknown, was in existence before 1218. In 1218 the Church of Tolleshunt Tregoz was granted to the priory by Geoffrey de Tregoz and later confirmed by his son, William. The priory and convent in turn had the licence to enclose 24.28 ha of forestland, after this the only recorded grant is the grant of 60.29 ha of land and 1.61 ha of wood in Great Braxted in 1302 by Ranulph de Monte Caniso and his wife.

Post Medieval (1541 - 1901)

3.3.5 When Thomas Wolsey, chancellor to Henry VIII suppressed the smaller monasteries, Tiptree Priory and Convent was found to be the smallest in Essex. However, it still owned the manor of Tiptree and the churches of Tiptree and Tolleshunt. Evidence of the priory can be seen today in place name evidence, such as Monks Farm and Priory Road.

Modern (1902 - Present)

3.3.6 Jam making was the major business in Tiptree during the 20th century, and it became well known for its produce. Nearly the whole of the parish was taken over by the growing of fruit and seeds, and other activities associated with the making of jam. Today the factory can be seen to the south of the village, and is a major tourist attraction.

3.3.7 In 1904 the railway opened, a 16.09km stretch from Kelvedon to Tollesbury via Tiptree. The line was however closed in 1962. The railway brought added prosperity to the jam factory.

3.3.8 Tiptree has expanded considerably during the 20th century. The once linear settlement, centred around the crossroads, has expanded in all directions especially along the route ways. Tiptree Heath is the only remaining original historic heathland in Essex.

Present Day Urban Form

3.3.9 The present day urban form is shown on **Figure 3.3**. The key visible historic features surviving in the present day townscape are listed below:

Key visible historic features dating to the Post Medieval (1541 – 1901):

- Elm Farmhouse, Messing Road; 16th century, Grade II
- Oak Cottage, Maldon Road; 17th century,
- Maypole Public House, Maypole Road; 17th century, Grade II
- Stable south of Elm Farmhouse, Messing Road; 17th century, Grade II
- Theobalds Farmhouse, Tiptree; 17th century, Grade II

- Barn to south of Elm Farmhouse, Messing Road; 17th century, Grade II
- Tiptree Cottage, Maypole Road; 18th century, Grade II
- Tiptree Villa, New Road; 18th century, Grade II
- Pan in the Wood, Rookery Lane; 18th century, Grade II
- The Anchor Public House, Station road; 18th century, Grade II
- Brook Hall, Factory Hill; 18th century, Grade II
- Brook House, Maldon Road; 18th century, Grade II
- Hollytree Farmhouse, Maldon Road; 18th century, Grade II
- The Studio, Maldon Road; 18th century, Grade II
- Numbers 1 and 2, Coast Road; 18th century, Grade II
- Tiptree Chapel, Chapel Road; 19th century, Grade II
- Windmill, Church Road; 19th century, Grade II
- Part of Messrs Wilkinson's Jam Factory, Factory Hill; 19th century, Grade II
- York House, Kelvedon Road; 19th century, Grade II
- Manor House Farmhouse, Maldon Road; 19th century, Grade II
- Milldene, Ransome Road; 19th century, Grade II
- 43 Station Road; 19th century, Grade II
- Tiptree Hall, Tiptree Hall Lane; 19th century, Grade II

3.4 Visual Analysis of Tiptree's Urban Structure

3.4.1 The urban structure of Tiptree is set out in plan form on **Figure 3.4**, and is illustrated by the photographs set out in **Figure 3.5**.

3.4.2 The urban structure of the settlement is derived from an analysis of the particular relationships of the urban features and elements outlined below:

- **Nodes** – distinctive points within the structure of the settlement (such as junctions, crossings, convergence of routes, or other places of particular importance in townscape terms).
- **Landmarks** – visually significant buildings or other physical structures (such as churches, memorials, town halls, squares, or buildings of special architectural/historical interest).
- **Gateways** – main points with strong sense of entrance and arrival to the historic core of the settlement along principal approaches.
- **Urban Areas** – the main built-up areas of the urban fabric
- **Vegetation Buffers** – areas of vegetation and/or open space that provide visual/physical separation between developed land uses.
- **Urban Green Space** – major areas of private and public open land within the urban fabric of the settlement such as parks, amenity open space, playing fields, cemeteries, etc.
- **Key Views** – views of the settlement within the urban areas and views out from the settlement linking it with the surrounding countryside.
- **Blackspots** – visually significant buildings or other physical structures that detract from townscape character.

- **Skylines** – visually significant urban skylines typically seen in profile.
- **Edges** – visually significant interfaces between different urban land uses.
- **Movement Corridors** – principal road and rail routes, and the network of minor roads, streets and lanes within the urban fabric.

3.4.3 The visual analysis of the settlements overall urban structure has informed the definition of the Townscape Character Types and Areas set out in the following section, the descriptions of which should be read in conjunction with this analysis.

3.5 The Townscape Character of Tiptree

3.5.1 Drawing on the historic analysis and visual analysis of Tiptree within its setting, this section identifies, maps and describes the townscape character of Tiptree.

3.5.2 Five Townscape Character Types have been identified (see **Figure 3.6**):

- B. Retail Core
- F. Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs
- H. Post-1960s Suburbs
- I. 20th Century Retail, Commerce and Industry
- J. Mixed Age Suburbs

3.5.3 Each Townscape Character Type is broken down into Townscape Character Areas (see **Figure 3.6**).

3.5.4 For each identified TCA, the following information is provided:

- Overall Character Description
- Distinctive Characteristics
- Historic and Architectural Interest
- Threats to Townscape Character
- Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

B. RETAIL CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

Townscape Character Areas

B1. Tiptree



Generic Description

Character Areas within this type contain a number of small properties, which are generally arranged along a linear High Street, which forms a central spine within the settlement. Shops and offices usually face the road and form a more or less continuous façade along the street, creating a sense of enclosure. Areas within the retail core have a bustling and lively character and are often busy pedestrian and vehicular routes.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly retail units, set out along a linear street.
- Forms part of the central spine of the settlement.
- Continuous building frontages which create a sense of enclosure.
- Colourful shop frontages and signage.
- Range of architectural styles and ages.

B1. TIPTREE RETAIL CORE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated at the centre of Tiptree and contains a number of relatively small shops and other commercial properties, which face the linear road corridor (Church Road). Character is generally busy and bustling as a result of busy pedestrian activity throughout the area. Buildings along the main street range from several different periods of architectural development. Towards the southern end of the area, the relatively large new supermarket (Tesco) and a low-rise housing development changes the scale of block pattern within the area. Other larger developments within the area include a single storey-shopping precinct (c. 1950s/1960s) and superstore (Co-Op). St Luke's Church (adjacent to a school and playing fields) is a dominant landmark towards the centre of the Character Area. Generally few long-distance views can be gained out of the area, other than views to adjacent residential Character Areas.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern, with most buildings facing the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- In some cases, shops and businesses have small areas of concrete hardstanding providing limited space for car parking.

Massing & Enclosure

- Area is generally enclosed on all sides by adjacent residential development.
- Medium density development along Church Road, with a more or less continuous façade along the road corridor.

Architecture & Built Form

- 1950s/1960s shopping precinct along Church Road.
- Modern (21st century) superstore development and associated low-rise housing.
- Mixed architectural styles and details throughout the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape is generally bland, but with an attractive avenue of trees along Church Road.
- On-street car parking along Church Road is a feature of this area.

Open Space

- School playing fields towards the centre of the area, off Church Road.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for urban wildlife within this Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Bustling retail and commercial area, with pockets of residential development set back from Church Road.

Movement Patterns

- Church Road provides the main north-south vehicular access route through the Character Area, and connects with Colchester Road in the north and Factory Hill in the south.
- Several informal bustling pedestrian routes within the Character Area.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few long distance views out of the Character Area, other than views to adjacent residential Character Areas.

Designations

- There are no designations within this area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There had been little development in this area by the end of the 19th century, with the area being predominately agricultural land with a limited number of houses. During the inter-war period development within the area commenced, and has continued through to the present day.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Cast Iron signpost, 20th century

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Mixed architectural history visible dating from post-war to post-1960s development.

Threats to Townscape Character

- On-street parking.
- Loss of mature trees along Church Road, due to old age.
- Bland, utilitarian nature of the main shopping precinct.
- Generally poor condition of pavements and streetscape.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within this Character Area is low. There is average biodiversity value within the trees lining Church Road, however overall historic integrity is weak and parts of the streetscape are in poor condition. Visual sensitivity is also low, with few views into or out of the area, other than to immediately adjacent residential areas.

F. INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs within the main settlements of Colchester Borough are generally set out around a number of crescents and cul-de-sacs. There is strong consistency in architectural style and detailing, with townscape character dominated by pre-fabricated materials of a mass produced nature. Consistency in building materials contributes to a cohesive character and streetscape, which is often relatively bland, with utilitarian street lighting and paving detail. Where front gardens exist, there is mixed definition between public and private space, with some stark boundaries consisting of low walls, fences and hedges. Large areas of playing fields and smaller areas of incidental green space, which are sometimes surrounded by mature vegetation, often punctuate built fabric. Predominant materials include yellow or buff brick with some pebbledash and render during the inter-war period, and red brick lower storeys with rendered upper storeys during the post-war period. On-street parking is a key characteristic of inter-war housing, whilst private front drives are more of a feature in post-war areas. A common threat to townscape character within inter-war areas is the conversion of front gardens to areas of hardstanding to create car parking space, leading to loss of associated wildlife habitats/biodiversity value.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential area containing a mixture of inter-war (1918-1942) and/or post-war (1946-1959) housing.

Inter-War

- Regular layout based around a number of crescents and cul-de-sacs.
- Predominantly a mixture of short terraces and semi-detached houses.
- Often weak sense of place, with standard layout and design details, using materials which have been mass produced.
- Private front gardens often enclosed by a combination of low walls, hedges and fences
- Often on-street parking.
- Houses often rendered and/or painted in cream or other light pastel colours.
- Streetscape is often utilitarian and can have a bland or harsh character .

Post-War

- Predominantly rectilinear street pattern with a mixture of semi-detached and detached houses.
- Houses often have private front gardens, containing hedges, and also private drives.
- Metal and timber casement windows.
- Houses often have red brick lower storeys with white or cream rendered upper storeys.

Townscape Character Areas

- F1. Cedar Avenue
- F2. Arnold Villas

F1. CEDAR AVENUE INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a relatively small area of inter-war housing, set around one main close, Cedar Avenue, which connects to Oak Road in the north and Cedar Avenue in the west). There is average definition between public and private space within the area, with most houses having small, square front gardens which are separated from the road by low clipped hedges, wooden and metal front gates or concrete posts. Architecture within the area is uniform, with a relatively stark and bland streetscape and overall lack of sense of place within the area. There are few views out of the area, other than to adjacent residential Character Areas to the north and south.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Housing set out around one main close, Cedar Avenue, which connects to Oak Road and Walnut Tree Way.
- Uniform block pattern, blocks of semi-detached houses and three-long terraces, all of which are of two-storeys.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Average definition between public and private space.
- Most houses have small, square front gardens or front drives which are separated from road by low clipped hedges, wooden and metal front gates and concrete posts.

Massing & Enclosure

- At eastern end, houses all face an oblong area of mown amenity grassland, leading to a sense of openness overlooking Oak Road.
- Area feels more enclosed at western end where housing overlooks post-1960s semi-detached houses.

Architecture & Built Form

- Very uniform architecture.
- All houses are built from red brick with tile roofs and regular chimneys.

Streetscapes

- Relatively stark, bland, utilitarian streetscape, delineated by low trimmed hedges, with some on-road parking.
- Lack of sense of place.

Open Space

- One area of mown open amenity grassland at junction with Oak Road.
- No play equipment or seating.
- Six semi-mature deciduous trees.

Biodiversity

- Some value in hedges and small trees within front gardens.
- Overall weak biodiversity value throughout area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, inter-war housing area.

Movement Patterns

- Area is relatively quiet and set back from the main Maypole Road.

Viewing Experience

- Views to adjacent residential Character Areas.
- Overall mono-colour, dominated by red brick of housing.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There is no recorded evidence of any settlement in this Character Area before the Well Oak Public House is recorded in the 19th century. The inter-war period saw this area develop into a residential estate.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development, which breaks the line of the streetscape and is also not consistent with massing, form and materials of existing houses.
- Deterioration of built fabric on a plot-by-plot basis.
- Planting of ornamental trees or shrubs within gardens, which are not in keeping with native species.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of low biodiversity value, low visual sensitivity and weak historic integrity.

F2. ARNOLD VILLAS INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area contains a small close of predominantly inter-war houses that are set back from Green Lane, towards the north-eastern end of Tiptree. Adjacent residential areas to the east provide a sense of enclosure and there are generally few views into or out of the area, other than to directly adjacent residential areas.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular pattern with houses set around a crescent (Arnold Villas).

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space, with low walls or fences separating small areas of front gardens from the road.

Massing & Enclosure

- There is a sense of enclosure to the east, provided by adjacent residential areas.
- Sense of openness in places to the west, with glimpse views to playing fields.

Architecture & Built Form

- Housing within the area is predominantly inter-war, with consistency in architectural style and detail.
- Houses are generally detached.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland and utilitarian streetscape, with some variety provided by patches of vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- Few areas of public open space within the Character Area, however housing is in close proximity to semi-private playing fields to the west.

Biodiversity

- Some habitats for urban wildlife within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a residential area.

Movement Patterns

- Housing is based around a small cul-de-sac, which is set back from Green Lane to the east.
- Green Lane is a relatively busy feeder road for adjacent housing to the east.

Viewing Experience

- Generally few views into or out of the Character Area, other than to adjacent Character Areas.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Up until the 19th century there were no recorded settlements in this Character Area. The land was predominantly agricultural land. The 20th century saw the development of the area as inter-war suburbs.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within the area predominantly dates to the inter-war period and architectural history and qualities are generally consistent with this architectural style.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Demolition/replacement of single plots or houses with new modern development, which breaks the line of the streetscape and is also not consistent with massing, form and materials of existing houses.
- Deterioration of built fabric on a plot-by-plot basis.
- Planting of ornamental trees or shrubs within gardens, which are not in keeping with native species.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Generally this Character Area has low visual sensitivity with few views out of the area, other than to adjacent residential Character Areas. Biodiversity value is low and overall historic integrity weak, resulting in overall low sensitivity to change or new build development, despite intact and cohesive inter-war street pattern and layout.

H. POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Post-1960s suburbs account for a relatively large proportion of the current built environment within the main settlements in the Borough. These areas consist predominantly of housing, which is often arranged in an estate, with a curvilinear street pattern and a number of cul-de-sacs leading from a main road. Materials are often mass produced (brickwork and windows) and the character of streetscape has a tendency to be utilitarian, containing bland street lighting and details. The number of small greenspaces, playgrounds or areas of mown amenity grassland, punctuating built form within the area varies.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly residential areas, containing houses built between 1960 and the present day.
- Housing is usually arranged in estates, containing a number of cul-de-sacs leading from a main road.
- Houses often have private front and back gardens and are either semi-detached or detached, with occasional short terraces.
- Back gardens are often separated from the road using wooden fencing.
- Materials consist of mass produced brickwork, often red and beige.
- Streetscape is often utilitarian, containing bland street lighting and details.
- Estates usually contain a number of small mown amenity grassland greenspace areas, sometimes containing brightly coloured children's play equipment.

Townscape Character Areas

- H1. Oak Road and Walnut Tree Way
- H2. Barbrook Lane
- H3. Wilkin Drive
- H4. Newbridge Road
- H5. Vine Road and Blue Road
- H6. Rectory Road

H1. OAK ROAD AND WALNUT TREE WAY POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses an area of predominantly post-1960s housing towards the northern urban edge of Tiptree. Large, detached houses line Oak Road, whilst housing along Walnut Tree Way is a combination of terraced and semi-detached post-1960s houses set around a number of smaller closes. There is generally mixed definition between public and private space throughout the Character Area with some gardens facing directly onto the road, with no front boundaries, whilst others are separated by a combination of low walls and hedges. There is a generally secluded character within the area, with views across farmland to the north and glimpse views to the water tower (along Kelvedon Road) from the western end of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Larger, detached post-1960s houses situated along Oak Road. Plots have large back gardens and small front gardens.
- Relatively uniform plots of terraced and semi-detached post-1960s houses within the remainder of the area, which is set out around a number of closes, leading off Walnut Tree Way.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses along Oak Road have front gardens, which are separated by a combination of walls and hedges.
- Overall poor definition between public and private open space within housing along Walnut Tree Way.
- Some front gardens face onto the road with no boundaries whilst others are delineated with low trimmed hedges, fences and brick walls.
- Some on-road and on-verge parking.
- Some houses have front drives instead of gardens.

Massing & Enclosure

- More sense of space along Oak Road than within the housing estate.
- Housing along Walnut Tree Way and associated closes is relatively densely arranged, however, there are large tracts of mown amenity grassland/verges with occasional street trees.

Architecture & Built Form

- Oak Road contains modern (c.1980s?) detached houses built predominantly from red brick.
- Yellow brick semi-detached houses are sited along Walnut Tree Way with a combination of brown/beige patterned rendered upper-storeys.

Streetscapes

- Streetscape within Walnut Tree Way housing estate feels safe, but is generally bland and stark.
- Tracts of wide mown grass verge soften the streetscape in places.
- More varied streetscape along Oak Road, with greater variety of planting in front of gardens.
- Overall lack of recognisable sense of place.

Open Space

- Several tracts of informal/incidental mown amenity grassland within the housing estate.
- Area contains a large triangular school playing field.

Biodiversity

- Mown amenity grassland areas.
- Some diversity in planting within front gardens along Oak Road.
- Occasional single small mature street trees, providing habitats for urban wildlife.
- Average biodiversity overall.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, however, area also contains Barnards Primary School (Townsend Road) and the Oak Public House (Oak Road).

Movement Patterns

- Oak Road is a relatively busy short cut between Kelvedon Road and Colchester Road.
- The housing estate along Walnut Tree Way is generally quiet and feels separated from Tiptree Centre.

Viewing Experience

- Overall there are few views out of the area.
- Glimpse views to the water tower can be gained from western end of Oak Road.
- Views across farmland to the north can be gained from the rear of properties along Oak Road.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

There was little settlement in this area before the 19th century apart from the Maypole Public House in the 17th century and several houses recorded as being built in the 18th century. The 19th century saw little more development in the area apart from the building of the Kings Arms Public House. The area was predominately agricultural land until the mid 20th century when it was developed in the 1960's to a residential area.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest in this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

There is a mixture of post-1960s architecture throughout the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Potential vandalism to areas of public open space.
- Loss of vegetation within front and back gardens and deterioration of garden boundaries where present.
- Potential conversion of front gardens to driveways to provide more car parking.
- Extensions to the front and back of houses, which may alter the current line of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Historic integrity is mixed (with two Listed Buildings: Maypole Public House and the Pan in the Wood House). Overall biodiversity value is also moderate, with several habitats for urban wildlife within front and back gardens. Visual prominence is low, however intervisibility is moderate, with views to surrounding townscape and landscape setting areas from the area.

H2. BARBROOK LANE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

This suburb of post-1960s housing is situated at the southeastern edge of Tiptree's urban area, overlooking open countryside to the north. Street pattern is predominantly curvilinear, with two-storey, semi-detached and detached properties arranged around a series of closes. The cul-de-sacs have a quieter character than Barbrook Lane, which is a relatively busy traffic route connecting to adjacent Character Areas to the east and west.



There are a limited number of patches of publicly accessible open space within the Character Area, however the playing fields associated with Milldene Primary School along the northern edge of the area provide a sense of space and place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern with several avenues and closes leading off Barbrook Lane, to the north, and Green Lane, to the east.
- Block pattern is regular with a combination of semi-detached and detached houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between front gardens and pavement or road, however, orientation within several of the closes/avenues is confusing.

Massing & Enclosure

- Housing is of medium density with predominantly two-storey buildings.
- Within school playing fields to the north of Barbrook Lane, there is a sense of openness as there also is to the north of the area, with glimpse views across countryside to the north.

Architecture & Built Form

- Semi-detached and detached brick houses.
- Materials are predominantly red and yellow brick.

Streetscapes

- Vegetation within front gardens provides some variety within streetscape, however, tarmac surfacing and utilitarian lighting contributes to bland character overall.
- Block paving and gravel are common in front drives.

Open Space

- Milldene Primary School Playing Fields within the northern half of the area.
- Generally few pockets of incidental open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Several habitats for urban wildlife within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Area is predominantly residential although there is a school (Milldene Primary) along Barbrook Lane.

Movement Patterns

- Barbrook Lane and Green Lane are the busiest vehicular routes, with quieter avenues and cul-de-sacs leading off these roads.
- Pedestrian access is mainly via pavements.

Viewing Experience

- Open views to countryside to the north.
- Short views within cul-de-sacs.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

There is no recorded evidence for any settlement in this area before the 19th century. The land was predominately agricultural, with evidence of a windmill and other agricultural buildings. It was not until the 1960s that there was residential development on a greater scale.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within this area generally dates to the late 1970s/early 1980s, with pockets of more modern housing development within the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration of physical fabric of the public realm.
- New development along the northern edge, which may be visible from surrounding landscape setting.
- Potential extensions to houses or garages, which may alter the line of the street.
- Planting of ornamental trees and shrubs, which do not respect local native vegetation.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of garden fences and hedges.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Overall visual sensitivity is moderate, with views gained to and from adjacent countryside to the north of the area. Biodiversity value is generally average within front and back gardens, however historic integrity is weak.

H3. WILKIN DRIVE POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

The character of this area is dominated by a relatively large modern development (c.2000) at the northeastern edge of Tiptree's urban area. Housing is arranged around a curvilinear street pattern, with several crescents leading to the north and south off Wilkin Drive. Architecture is dominated by the colourful facades (blue, yellow and pink plaster with red brick) of two- and three-storey houses. A relatively wide stream corridor, containing lots of mature



vegetation, has been retained within the centre of the housing area and there are also several pockets of greenspace, including a children's playground and grassland, dotted amongst the urban fabric. Orientation within the Character Area is often confusing, however, there is some recognisable sense of place provided by open views to countryside from the northern edge of the Character Area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Curvilinear street pattern, with several crescents leading off Wilkin Drive to the north and south.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- Some houses have very small front gardens, which are separated from the road by black iron railings.
- Other houses face directly onto the road corridor, with no clear division between private space and streetscape.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density housing development, with several areas of publicly accessible open space dotted amongst the urban fabric.

Architecture & Built Form

- Modern (c.2000) development, which consists of a combination of two- and sometimes three-storey houses.
- Housing has a colourful character, with a combination of red brick and yellow, blue and pink plaster faced houses.
- Pronounced differences between architectural style within this Character Area and within adjacent housing to the west.

Streetscapes

- Generally stark, bland and uninteresting streetscape with few street trees and standard highway bollards, lighting and signage.
- Greater visual interest within streetscape in close proximity to the tract or wedge of greenspace, lining the stream corridor, which has been retained within the centre of the housing development.
- There is lots of mature vegetation within the stream corridor.
- On-street parking is visible in places, even though several of the roads are narrow and not really designed for this type of parking.

Open Space

- Several pockets of publicly accessible open space including a children's playground/small playing fields within the Character Area.
- Mature stream corridor running through the centre of the area.

Biodiversity

- Several habitats within the stream corridor running through the centre of the Character Area.
- General lack of habitats within front or back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a quiet residential area, especially within crescents set back from Wilkin Drive.

Movement Patterns

- Wilkin Drive provides the main route through the area, connecting with Chapel Road to the east and Grove Road to the west.

Viewing Experience

- Views along the enclosed stream corridor within the centre of the Character Area.
- Open views to countryside along the northern edge of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

Recorded evidence suggests that there was no settlement in this area until the mid 20th century when the area was developed for housing in the 1960's, before this time the area was open land.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Housing within this area generally dates to c.2000, with no earlier architectural history visible within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- On-street parking.
- Loss of vegetation within stream corridor as a result of old age or lack of maintenance.
- Bland streetscape, with little vegetation to soften urban streetscene.
- Potential new development within farmland to the north, which may block open views from the northern edge of the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development overall as a result of moderate visual sensitivity and moderate biodiversity value. Views can be gained to and from countryside along the northern edge of the Character Area. The stream corridor running north-south throughout the Character Area provides an important wildlife habitat, however, general biodiversity value within gardens is low.

H4. NEWBRIDGE ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

Newbridge Road post-1960s suburb is situated at the eastern edge of Tiptree’s urban area and overlooks open countryside to the north and east. Housing is predominantly two-storey buff/yellow brick with white or brown facing at either upper or lower storeys and was built during the 1970/1980s. The street pattern is generally regular, with several parallel avenues leading from the eastern side of Newbridge Road. At the western end of Grove Road, several detached houses add a spacious element to the character of the area. Opposite the junction of Grove Road and Newbridge Road a housing estate is in the process of being built (March 2006). Glimpse views to open countryside can be gained from the northern and eastern edges of the area.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Gently sloping from north to south across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, grid-like street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- Houses generally have small front gardens, which are separated from the road by a combination of low hedges, fences and gates.

Massing & Enclosure

- Medium density housing area with few pockets of open space amongst the built form.
- Generally two-storey detached housing along Newbridge Road and Grove Road.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of post-1960s housing styles and architectural details.

Streetscapes

- Generally bland streetscape with occasional street trees along Newbridge Road and Grove Road.

Open Space

- Generally no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Varying wildlife habitats within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a bustling residential area, which is secluded in parts, and properties are set back from the roads.

Movement Patterns

- Newbridge Road and Grove Road provide the main vehicular access routes to the area

Viewing Experience

- Open views to countryside to the north and east of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

Before residential development in the 1970s this area was predominately agricultural with a few isolated farm buildings.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Lack of open space within the Character Area.
- Deterioration of physical fabric of the public realm.
- New development along the northern and eastern edges, which may be visible from surrounding areas of countryside.
- Potential extensions to houses or garages, which may alter the line of the street.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development, as a result of low biodiversity value and weak historic integrity. Visual sensitivity is however moderate, with open views to and from countryside at the northern and eastern edges of the area possible.

H5. VINE ROAD AND BLUE ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a relatively large area of post-1960s housing at the western edge of Tiptree's urban area. Properties are generally semi-detached or detached and are set within moderate to large sized plots. There is little recognisable sense of place along the main road corridor, however, views to the countryside along the western edge provide some localised sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Generally flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Pattern is roughly grid-like in form, with houses set back from a number of short, often dead-end, roads leading off Vine Road/Blue Road.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area.
- Small front gardens are separated from the road by a mixture of fences and hedges.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness along the western edge of this area, with views to open farmland to the west.
- Sense of enclosure along the road corridor.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of architectural styles and details through the area, mostly dating to post-1960s.
- Yellow and red brick are the dominant materials.

Streetscapes

- Street trees and vegetation within front gardens provide visual interest along Vine Road/Blue Road.

Open Space

- Small areas of amenity grassland and playing fields scattered throughout the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Average biodiversity value within front and back gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential.

Movement Patterns

- Vine Road/Blue Road is the main busy vehicular route through the area.
- Other roads leading off the main road corridor are quieter and more secluded.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across adjacent countryside to the west of the Character Area.

Designations

- There are three Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see Appendix C).

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

The 17th and 18th centuries saw little development in this area, there are however several Listed Buildings from these periods that still survive. The 19th century brought further development of the area with more isolated cottages. The area was still predominately agricultural until the mid 20th century when it was developed into a residential settlement.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest in this Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration or loss of front garden boundaries.
- Deterioration in built fabric throughout the Character Area.
- Busy traffic along Blue Road/Vine Road.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development as a result of generally low biodiversity value and low visual sensitivity. Historic integrity is mixed, with three Listed Buildings within the area.

H6. RECTORY ROAD POST-1960s SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large area of post-1960s suburban housing is directly to the east of Tiptree's retail core. An adjacent residential area to the west, and the backs of commercial properties to the east generally enclose the area. Housing is set out within a curvilinear arrangement along several crescents leading off Rectory Road. Some sense of place is provided by views to Church Road, one of the main retail areas within Tiptree, at the eastern edge of the area. There is generally clear definition between public and private space and a general consistency in architectural style and detail throughout the area. Tiptree windmill (off Mill Close) is a distinctive and locally recognisable landmark within this Character Area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- This area is predominantly flat.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is curvilinear with a series of drives and closes leading off Rectory Road and Anchor Road.
- Block pattern is generally regular throughout the area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Houses generally have small front gardens, which separate them from the street.
- There is generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area.

Massing & Enclosure

- The built form is punctuated by a small area of grassland to the north of Rectory Road.
- Houses generally face the road.

Architecture & Built Form

- Houses are consistently red and beige brick, with white or black windows and tile roofs.
- Tiptree windmill (without sails) is a dominant landmark in views into and within the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Lighting and general paving materials along the streetscape are utilitarian.

Open Space

- A small patch of amenity grassland is situated to the north of Rectory Road, within the centre of the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for urban wildlife within the Character Area.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- A relatively bustling residential area, in close proximity to the retail core and also to several busy roads within the area (Rectory Road and Maldon Road).

Movement Patterns

- Maldon Road to the west and Church Lane/Rectory Road, to the east, provide the main vehicular access routes to the area.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views along Church Road to the east, to retail properties.
- Short-distance views to adjacent residential Character Areas.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

Although generally more developed than other areas of Tiptree, this area was still predominately agricultural by the end of the 19th century, with the majority of development within this area occurring post-1960s.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest within this Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to fronts or backs of houses (possible porches and garages) that may alter the existing form and line of the streetscape.
- Planting of ornamental trees and shrubs, which do not respect local native vegetation.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of garden fences and hedges.
- Potential expansion of adjacent retail development to the east, which may lead to a loss of the coherent residential character of the area.
- Deterioration or loss of Tiptree windmill (prominent architectural landmark).

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall sensitivity to change or new development within this Character Area is low. Overall biodiversity value is low, with few habitats for urban wildlife within gardens. Historic integrity is also weak and although short-distance views to adjacent Character Areas can be gained, overall visual sensitivity is also low.

I. 20th CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Generic Description

Character Areas within this type contain a combination of retail, commercial or industrial land uses. Street and block pattern is usually large-scale and dominated by a series of medium-sized or large warehouse units. Whilst several of the areas are situated at the periphery of Tiptree's urban area, commercial and retail areas are also located at the centre of the urban fabric. Colourful and often garish signage is associated with retail and commercial units, and whilst adding diversity to the character of the area, it is also a visual detractor, which in most cases is highly visible from surrounding Character Areas. There is often a lack of recognisable sense of place within Character Areas of this type, as a result of the mass-produced nature of some of the materials (e.g. corrugated metal and plastic panels).

Key Characteristics

- Combination of retail, commercial and light industrial land uses.
- Large warehouse units are often arranged in retail estates and business parks.
- Large-scale street pattern, often punctuated by numerous large car parks.
- Colourful mix of signage which is often dominant in views to each area.
- Often lack of sense of place, with materials including mass-produced metal panels, often in white, brown or grey.

Townscape Character Areas

- I1. Tower End
- I2. Wilkins Jam Factory

II. TOWER END 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated at the northwestern edge of Tiptree, situated along the western edge of Kelvedon Road. Character within the area is dominated by a series of small-scale light industrial and commercial units (with bright or colourful signage), which are set out along a small cul-de-sac. In addition to these units, the red brick 'Tiptree Water Tower' provides a landmark building within the area, helping to determine a sense of arrival in Tiptree when approaching from the north along Kelvedon Road. There is generally clear definition between public and private space throughout the area, with each buildings possessing its own car parks, separated from the main road by a combination of metal fences. Open views across farmland, can be gained from the northern edge of the Character Area.



Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Small-scale light industrial and commercial area set out along one cul-de-sac, which leads off Kelvedon Road.
- Fragmented block pattern with a range of warehouse buildings of different size and shape.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Good definition between public and private space, commercial and industrial units have their own car parks, which are separated from the main road by a combination of metal fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- The Character Area is relatively self-contained and feels separate from main area of Tiptree.

Architecture & Built Form

- Distinctive red brick water tower.
- Combination of warehouse and office units, built from a variety of coloured corrugated metal panels (green/brown).
- One three-storey yellow brick office building.

Streetscapes

- Poor sense of place at southern end of Character Area, with no views towards the main area of Tiptree.
- Some sense of place/sense of arrival along Kelvedon Road with views to the water tower, which is a prominent landmark.
- Bland, stark, utilitarian streetscape with standard 'anywhere-style' lamp posts and metal fences.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Mown grass verges and occasional coniferous tree belts provide habitats for wildlife, however overall biodiversity is weak.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly light industrial and commercial warehouse units.
- Associated car parking.

Movement Patterns

- Quiet area, which is set back from main road.

Viewing Experience

- Views to landmark water tower and open fields to the south, containing several mature deciduous trees at field boundaries.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

This area was known as Perry's Wood until the 20th century when it was developed into an area of retail and commerce.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Tiptree Water Tower.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Buildings are generally late 1980s/early 1990s and are consistently pre-fabricated, either brick or corrugated iron with colourful signage. Tiptree Water Tower provides a key architectural landmark within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Dominance of brightly coloured and garish signage, which is visible from the surrounding landscape.
- Expansion of retail/commercial area into surrounding landscape.
- Increase in traffic and car parking associated with the area.
- Lack of planting/soft landscaping to soften harsh edges of commercial/light industrial buildings.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has generally moderate visual sensitivity, with occasional views to the Water Tower from surrounding Character Areas and also when approaching southwards along Kelvedon Road. Open views across farmland to the north also contribute to this level of sensitivity. Overall biodiversity value is weak and other than the water tower, there are few buildings of historic interest creating a weak historic integrity. Overall, this character area has low sensitivity to change or new built development.

12. WILKINS JAM FACTORY 20TH CENTURY RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area is situated at the southeastern edge of Tiptree and overlooks open farmland to the north, east and west. Wilkins Jam Factory, consisting of a combination of modern and older buildings, including the factory, museum and tea shop, dominates the character of the area. Modern museum buildings are low-rise red brick and black timber-faced, whilst the factory buildings are silver pre-fabricated warehouses. Two associated tall chimneys are distinctive landmarks within views from adjacent Character



Areas. Hints to the original fabric and layout of the factory can easily be seen in the tall red brick wall, which surrounds the site, and also in the prominent older entrance arch, with associated gates. Open views to the south across a gently sloping valley can be gained from the southern edge of the car park, including views across adjacent orchards which are associated with the factory. A recognisable sense of place is provided by the smell of various different types of jam, which drifts across Tiptree.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Flat at the northern end of the area, gradually sloping southwards throughout the area, towards the valley to the south.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern consists of a relatively small number of large factory buildings, with smaller associated museum and shop buildings.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- There is generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Factory buildings are surrounded, to the south, by a relatively large car park which is separated from the road, to the east, by a tall red brick wall.

Massing & Enclosure

- Sense of openness to the south of the site, with open views across countryside.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of factory warehouses (corrugated metal construction) and smaller red brick/black wooden panelled buildings.

Streetscapes

- Lack of streetscape in the formal sense, although there are patches of ornamental planting within the car park.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Generally few habitats for wildlife within the Character Area, however, the area is adjacent to open countryside to the south (delineated by low hedges, which provide wildlife habitats).

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Busy factory and shop/museum area.

Movement Patterns

- The factory, shop and museum are accessed from Factory Hill to the east, which is a fairly busy road.
- 'Factory corner' junction is particularly busy, especially at the beginning and end of factory hours.

Viewing Experience

- Two factory chimneys are visible landmarks from several surrounding Character Areas.
- Open views across countryside to the south and east.

Designations

- There is one Listed Building of special interest within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Archaeological Interest

Historic Evolution

There was no evidence of any settlement in this area until the 19th century, during this century there was only small development with a limited number of isolated cottages. The area was predominately agricultural land. The 20th century saw this area develop into a retail and commerce area, mainly due to the Wilkins Jam Factory and the land that is associated with it.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

Architectural history and development within this area is associated with the factory and its growth. Several parts of earlier factory buildings are visible within the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Busy traffic associated within the factory.
- Deterioration in built fabric of factory buildings and warehouses.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. Visual sensitivity is moderate, with views to and from the countryside to the south and east, and factory buildings visible from several surrounding Character Areas. Biodiversity value is low, however the area has a mixed historic character, with visible historic links to earlier phases of factory development within the area.

J. MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE



Townscape Character Areas

- J1. Maypole Road
- J2. Grove Road to Chapel Road
- J3. Maldon Road
- J4. Station Road
- J6. Tiptree Heath

Generic Description

Townscape Character Areas within this type contain a mixture of building styles and details from a range of development periods, from medieval through to post-1960s. Character is generally mixed and although predominantly housing, may also contain small groups of shops or other commercial properties. In several cases, housing has developed along a main road corridor, with all properties facing the road. Clear development on a plot-by-plot basis can often be seen, as historic buildings have given way to modern alternatives.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly housing areas that contain a mixture of ages and styles from various examples of the types described above.
- Housing has often developed along a main road corridor.
- Housing usually faces the main road, with a combination of front and back gardens.
- Housing is a mixture of semi-detached, terraced and detached areas.
- Diverse and mixed character with a wide range of architectural periods, materials and details.

J1. MAYPOLE ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This linear area of mixed age suburbs lines Maypole Road, running from the northern edge of Tiptree southwards towards Windmill Green. Properties within this area have developed along the line of Maypole Road and generally face the road. The streetscape is relatively wide and varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within small front gardens. The area has a bustling and busy character on account of noise and movement associated with Maypole Road. Although the area generally has a residential character, with several varying architectural ages and style visible, school buildings and associated playing fields along the eastern edge of the corridor and Windmill Green, a large, open area of grassland surrounded by mature trees at the boundaries, within the southeast of the area, create a sense of space and recognisable sense of place.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Street pattern is linear, with houses set back from Maypole Road and also arranged around Windmill Green (triangular greenspace) in the southeast of the area.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space.
- Houses usually have small front gardens with a mixture of low walls, hedges and fences at boundaries.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the road corridor.
- Sense of openness to the north of the area, with glimpse views across farmland.
- Open views across Windmill Green, to adjacent residential areas, in the southern half of the area.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of ages, including Victorian, post-war and 1960s, and styles of housing within the area.
- Post-war houses are predominantly red brick with white windows.
- A mixture of semi-detached and detached properties.
- Several architecturally interesting properties along the northern edge of Windmill Green, overlooking the greenspace.

Streetscapes

- Generally varied streetscape on account of vegetation within front gardens and mature trees surrounding Windmill Green in the southern half of the area.

Open Space

- School Playing fields to the east of Maypole Road.
- Windmill Green, surrounded by mature trees, provides an open, triangular publicly accessible area of playing fields towards the south of the area.

Biodiversity

- Wildlife habitats within front and back gardens and also vegetation surrounding Windmill Green provide biodiversity interest.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential area, which has a bustling and busy character, with Thurstable School to the east of Maypole Road.

Movement Patterns

- Maypole Road provides the main traffic route through the area.

Viewing Experience

- Glimpse views to countryside at the northern end of the area.
- Views generally channelled along the road corridor.
- Views across Windmill Green to adjacent residential areas.

Designations

- There are three Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within the Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There were several buildings recorded from the 18th century, two of which still survive; an 18th century windmill and Tiptree Cottage. The 19th century saw more development, but the area still remained predominately agricultural until the 20th century when more large scale development was undertaken.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

There is a mixed architectural history within this Character Area, with buildings dating from the post-war to post-1960s periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Traffic and congestion along Maypole Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern/plastic alternatives.
- Ornamental planting of shrubs and small trees within front gardens, which would be out of character with native vegetation.
- Maturing and eventual loss of trees surrounding Windmill Green due to old age or lack of maintenance.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Historic integrity within this Character Area is mixed on account of the presence of different phases of modern development alongside older (sometime listed) buildings. There is moderate biodiversity value within gardens along Maypole Road and also within vegetation surrounding Windmill Green. As a result, the area is moderately sensitive to change or new development.

J2. GROVE ROAD TO CHAPEL ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area contains a mixture of different areas of housing of different architectural styles and dating from different periods of urban development. A combination of Victorian, post-war and modern (post-1960s housing) line New Road and Chapel Road. Several shorter cul-de-sacs lead off these two main roads. Overall, street and block pattern are quite regular. Two large areas of playing fields punctuate the urban form, one are to the south of Grove Road, and another to the south New Road. Both of these open spaces have a relatively peaceful and tranquil character, surrounded in places by mature vegetation, and also contain colourful children's play areas. Despite its close proximity to Tiptree's main retail area, this residential area has a secluded and quiet suburban character.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with most houses facing the main road.
- Plot size varies, depending on semi-detached or detached nature of houses.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear separation between private and public realm.
- Front gardens are delineated by low walls or hedges, dividing them from the adjacent road.

Massing & Enclosure

- Character feels enclosed to the north and east by post-1960s development, and is generally open to countryside to the south.
- The area is enclosed to the west by the back of retail and commercial properties.

Architecture & Built Form

- Range of details and styles from Victorian, post-war and post-1960s periods.
- Interesting row of uniform Victorian terraces at the southwestern end of Chapel Road, with small, neat front gardens.

Streetscapes

- Varying architectural details and styles provide interest.
- Some sense of place is provided by views into and across relatively large areas of playing fields.

Open Space

- Two large areas of publicly accessible open space (playing fields) within the Character Area, to the south of Grove Road and New Road respectively.

Biodiversity

- Occasional semi-mature street trees provide some diversity.
- Biodiversity value within private gardens is average.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly a secluded residential suburb.

Movement Patterns

- Grove Road and Chapel Road provide main vehicular traffic routes through the area, however, these are not particularly busy or congested.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open countryside to the east of the area.
- Short-distance views to surrounding residential Character Areas, including views from and to Tiptree's main retail area (Church Road).

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historical Evolution

Apart from a few isolated houses by the 19th century, this area was to remain agricultural land until the area was developed throughout the 20th century.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from the Victorian to post-1960s periods visible along streets throughout the area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Deterioration in garden boundaries.
- Vandalism to playing fields and sports/children's play equipment within the public realm.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.
- Potential new built development that may block views from the area across relatively open fields to the east.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development on account of weak historic integrity (no Listed Buildings), moderate biodiversity value, vegetation surrounding playing fields and within gardens, and generally low visual sensitivity, short-distance views to adjacent Character Areas.

J3. MALDON ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses housing along both sides of Maldon Road, which links housing at the northern end of Tiptree, with Tiptree Heath to the south. Towards the southern end of the Character Area, views across open farmland (to the west) provide recognisable sense of place, whilst views within the northern half of the area are generally channelled along the road corridor. Housing dates from the Victorian to post-war periods, with occasional post-1960s infill and there is a diverse mixture of architectural detail throughout the area. Houses are generally set within large plots and although properties face the road corridor, relatively large front gardens separate them from the road corridor.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Regular, linear street pattern, with houses generally facing the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the area, although in most cases, gardens are separated from the road by a mixture of fences and low hedges.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the northern part of the road corridor, with a more open character at the southern end with views across countryside to the west.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of architectural styles and details, with red brick as the dominant material.
- Tiptree Villa, Brook House and the Chapel are particularly interesting architectural landmarks within the Character Area.

Streetscapes

- Interest provided by varying vegetation, within front gardens, and small street trees, along the road corridor.

Open Space

- There is no publicly accessible open space within this Character Area, however, small patches of incidental grassland are sprinkled throughout the area.

Biodiversity

- Habitats for urban wildlife within front and back gardens along the road corridor.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, with a busy and somewhat hectic character as a result of traffic on Maldon Road.

Movement Patterns

- Maldon Road provides the main vehicular access route through this area.

Viewing Experience

- Channelled views along the road corridor from the northern half of the area.
- More open views across adjacent countryside to the west of Maldon Road to the south.

Designations

- There are three Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see Appendix C).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

This Character Area is along one of the main roads in Tiptree and has the most recorded development lining it for periods we have evidence for, i.e. the 18th and 19th centuries. The 20th century saw yet more development along the road and it has thus become an area of mixed age settlement.

Visible Archaeological Features

- Scattered House, 20th century.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

There is generally a mixed architectural history throughout the area, with a range of different architectural styles visible. Tiptree Villa, Brook House and the Chapel are particularly interesting architectural landmarks within the Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Traffic and congestion along Maldon Road.
- Replacement of windows on older properties with modern plastic alternatives.
- Extensions to buildings (for example front porches), which may alter the existing line of form of streets.
- Potential infill or ‘backland’ development, which may alter the spacious character of several of the plots within this area.
- Lack of publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall, this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. The area has mixed historic integrity, with styles related to several different periods of development (including three Listed Buildings). There is average biodiversity value within gardens along the road corridor, and visual sensitivity is moderate, particularly along the southwestern edge, with views to and from farmland to the west.

J4. STATION ROAD MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

This relatively small Character Area encompasses housing which lines Station Road, connecting with Chapel Road to the east and Maldon Road to the west. Houses within the area range from Victorian to post-1960s period, and are typically detached within medium to large-scale plots. There are few areas of publicly accessible open space within the area, and views are generally channelled along the road corridor. Occasional commercial/retail properties are also situated along the corridor. The area has a generally busy and bustling character as a result of traffic along Station Road.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Road slopes gradually upward from east to west across the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern with all houses facing main road.
- Plot sizes vary, but are generally large in comparison to adjacent residential areas to the north.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally mixed definition between public and private space, with occasional patches of incidental greenspace along the road corridor.

Massing & Enclosure

- Overlooked in places by adjacent housing areas and also by retail core to the north.
- Area feels generally enclosed, along main road corridor, by adjacent Character Areas.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of periods and styles.

Streetscapes

- Occasional street trees line the road.
- Overall lack of harmony.

Open Space

- No open space within this Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Varying habitats for urban wildlife within gardens within the road corridor.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Residential and occasional small-scale retail/commercial.
- Bustling character, particularly at the eastern end.

Movement Patterns

- Station provides a main access route to this area.

Viewing Experience

- No landmarks and few views into or out of the area other than to adjacent retail/residential Character Areas.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this Character Area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Until the 20th century this land was to remain agricultural land with the only settlement in the area being Brick Farm. By the end of the 20th century it had developed into a mixed suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

This area has mixed architectural history with buildings ranging from the Victorian to post-1960s periods.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Lack of maintenance of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Congestion associated with 'factory corner' at the eastern end of the area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has low sensitivity to change or new development on account of overall weak historic integrity and low biodiversity value/visual sensitivity, with few long distance views out of the Character Area, other than to adjacent Character Areas.

J5. SURREY LANE AND BULL LANE MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This relatively large Character Area is located at the southern edge of Tiptree and contains a mixture of architectural styles. The area is open to the south to farmland, which provides a sense of place and open character. The area has a generally secluded character with a number of houses (of varying sizes and styles) set back from Station Road. Although the area is predominantly residential, the Anchor Public House provides architectural and historic variation.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Fragmented and somewhat irregular street pattern.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Mixed definition between public and private space throughout the Character Area.

Massing & Enclosure

- General sense of enclosure along the northern edge of the area, with greater sense of space to the south, across adjacent farmland/countryside.

Architecture & Built Form

- A mixture of architectural styles within the area.

Streetscapes

- Generally mixed streetscape, with some variation provided by vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- School playing fields to southeast of Maldon Road.

Biodiversity

- Several habitats for urban wildlife within gardens.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential throughout the area.
- Area also contains school and public house.

Movement Patterns

- Surrey Lane and Bull Lane provide the main vehicular routes through this mixed area.
- A public footpath connects housing in the area to the Jam Factory to the east.

Viewing Experience

- Views across open countryside to the south.
- Views to Wilkins Jam Factory from the eastern half of the Character Area.

Designations

- There are two Listed Buildings of special interest (Grade II) within this Character Area (see **Appendix C**).

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

Apart from the Anchor Public House and a few cottages, this area was agricultural until the 19th when a few more buildings are recorded. Throughout the 20th century, the area developed into a mixed age residential settlement.

Visible Archaeological Features

- No recorded archaeological interest within this Character Area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

This area has mixed architectural history and character, which is visible in the range of buildings that are present.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Loss of vegetation within front gardens.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

Overall this Character Area has moderate sensitivity to change or new development. The area has moderate visual sensitivity, with views to and from farmland at the southern edge of the area and views to Wilkins Jam Factory from the eastern end. Historic integrity is mixed, with architecture from several periods visible and two Listed Buildings within the area.

J6. TIPTREE HEATH MIXED AGE SUBURBS TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overall Character Description

This Character Area encompasses a distinct residential area to the southwest of Tiptree (Tiptree Heath), which includes several relatively large detached properties lining the B1022. Most properties along the northern side of the main road, date to c.1980s/1990s and are generally consistent in architectural style and detail with the use of mock timber being a key characteristic). Along the southern side of the road, there is greater variety in architectural styles and detail. Properties are set back from the road corridor within a combination of large (northern side of the road) and medium-sized (along the southern side of the road) properties. Although properties line the road corridor, there is little sense of enclosure with several gaps between properties.

Distinctive Characteristics

Topographical Features

- Predominantly flat throughout the Character Area.

Street & Block Pattern

- Linear street pattern, with most properties facing the road corridor.

Private/Public Realm Interface

- Generally clear definition between public and private space, with front garden boundaries delineated from the road corridor by a range of different garden fences.

Massing & Enclosure

- Lack of sense of enclosure along the road corridor, with gaps between properties.
- Open views to countryside from east and western edges of the Character Area.

Architecture & Built Form

- Mixture of ages and styles of properties along the main road corridor.

Streetscapes

- Generally diverse streetscape on account of the fact that properties are set back from the road and there is diversity in vegetation within front gardens.

Open Space

- There are several patches of publicly accessible open space within the Character Area.

Biodiversity

- Several habitats for urban wildlife within gardens along the road corridor.

Land Use, Culture & Vitality

- Predominantly residential, which lines a busy main road.

Movement Patterns

- The B1022 provides the main vehicular route through this Character Area.

Viewing Experience

- Open views across countryside/farmland plateau to the east and west of the area.

Designations

- There are no designated sites within this area.

Historic and Architectural Interest

Historic Evolution

There were several buildings present in this area by the end of the 19th century, but it was predominately agricultural and open land. The 20th century saw the main development of the area into a mixed age suburb.

Visible Archaeological Features

- There is no recorded archaeological interest in this area.

Architectural History and Qualities of Buildings

There is generally mixed architectural history within this Character Area.

Threats to Townscape Character

- Extensions to front or back of buildings (garages, conservatories), which alter the line of the street and may lead to a loss of front gardens.
- Deterioration of built fabric, leading to replacement with materials, which are not consistent with adjacent houses.
- Loss of vegetation within front gardens.
- Potential 'backland' or back garden development, which will alter the spacious character of several plots within this Character Area.

Evaluation of Sensitivity to New Development

Indicators of Townscape Value	Many	Some	Few
Intrinsic Landscape/Townscape Qualities			
	High	Moderate	Low
Biodiversity Value			
Visual prominence			
Intervisibility			
Re-creatability			
	Strong	Mixed	Weak
Historic Integrity			

This Character Area has moderate overall sensitivity to change or new development on account of moderate biodiversity value, with several habitats within gardens along the road corridor) and moderate visual sensitivity, with views to adjacent countryside from the eastern and western edges of the area.

3.6 Principles for Accommodating New Development in Tiptree

3.6.1 The following broad principles for the generic Townscape Character Types should be read in conjunction with the visual analysis of Tiptree's urban structure set out in Section 3.4, and with the relevant detailed Character Area descriptions and their respective sensitivity guidance presented in Section 3.5 (and summarised on **Figure 3.7**).

3.6.2 The overall principle for accommodating new development in Tiptree is to ensure that it is sensitively integrated into the townscape character and contributes to the conservation, enhancement and, where relevant, creation of places that exhibit a strong sense of local identity. Proposals for new development should carefully consider the following key urban design elements:

- Routes
- Spaces
- Landmarks
- Edges
- Grids and blocks
- Public and private spaces
- Enclosure and building lines
- Visual cohesion
- Highway design
- Shared use streets
- Paving
- Street furniture

Principles for Tiptree's Retail Core

3.6.3 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape elements rather than drawing attention away from them.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Retail Core and adjacent Character Types and Areas.
- Consider additional/new planting within the streetscape to form a green setting to existing development, specifically along the High Street.
- Consider opportunities for the use of colour render to enliven the façades of buildings.
- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through appropriate enhancement strategies.

- New retail developments should enhance local character through careful design of advertising, lighting and signage.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in public realm enhancement schemes.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes, and existing historic buildings, and incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details.

Principles for Tiptree's Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs

3.6.4 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs and adjacent Character Types and Area.
- Consider additional/new planting within streetscapes to form a green setting to development.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:
 - * Views to adjacent residential areas from Cedar Avenue;
- New development should consider using a varied mix of building materials and styles.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through appropriate enhancement strategies.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek ways to maintain and enhance existing built fabric;
 - * Encourage planting of native trees and shrubs within front gardens;
 - * Seek ways to encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than replacement with parking spaces/ front drives;
 - * Conserve mature trees within incidental greenspaces and playing fields and consider replacement of older trees where applicable;
 - * Seek ways to integrate street clutter to form a coherent streetscape;
 - * Seek ways to manage on-street parking, which detracts from streetscape consistency;
 - * Seek ways to soften streetscapes with new planting.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes, existing historic buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.

Principles for Tiptree's Post-1960s Suburbs

3.6.5 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between the Post-1960s Suburbs, adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside.
- Consider additional/new planting within and at the edges of the built-up areas to provide a green setting to development.
- Maintain a high density in the built form.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:
 - * Glimpse views to the water tower from Oak Road and Walnut Tree Way Suburbs;
 - * Open views to countryside from the southern edge of Wilkin Drive Suburbs;
 - * Open views to countryside to the north and east of Newbridge Road Suburbs;
 - * Open views to countryside to the west of Vine Road and Blue Road Suburbs.
- Consider opportunities for the use of colour render to enliven the façades of buildings.
- New proposals should address less positive aspects of character within this townscape type through strategies for the enhancement of streetscapes and public open spaces.
- Large-scale new developments on the edge of the built-up area should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services, and the provision of public open space.
- Where relevant, public art should be included in public realm enhancement schemes.

Principles for Tiptree's 20th Century Retail, Commercial and Industrial Townscapes

3.6.6 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve townscape element(s) of cultural value.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between this townscape type, adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside, specifically:
 - * Views to the landmark water tower within Tower End 20th Century Retail, Commercial and Industrial area;
 - * Views to landmark jam factory chimneys.

- Consider additional/new planting to ensure effective screening of buildings from the surrounding open countryside.
- Any large-scale new developments on the edge of the built-up area should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services.
- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies, specifically:
 - * Seek ways to soften and integrate large areas of car parking associated with retail, commercial and industrial buildings;
 - * Seek ways to integrate signage with colours and materials within adjacent character areas.
- The design of new buildings should be sensitive to local character through careful design of advertising, lighting and signage.

Principles for Tiptree's Mixed Age Suburbs

3.6.7 It is recommended that, within the context of an overall strategy for this type of conserving, enhancing and, where relevant, restoring key characteristics, as described in the relevant Character Area descriptions, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure that any new development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access and visual linkages between this townscape type, adjacent Character Types and Areas, and the surrounding open countryside.
- Consider additional/new planting to provide a green setting to development, particularly along the built-up edge with the open countryside.
- Conserve the pattern of key views, specifically:
 - * Short-distance views to surrounding residential areas;
 - * Views to Wilkins Jam Factory from Surrey Lane and Bull Lane Mixed Age Suburbs;
 - * Open views across farmland plateau to the east and wets of Tiptree Heath Mixed Age Suburbs.
- New development should enhance the character of this townscape type through the use of varied building materials and styles.
- Large-scale new developments on the edge of the built-up area should include a strong landscape framework that takes into account the incorporation of parking and services, and provision of public open space.
- Infill developments should respect and enhance the local character of streetscapes and any existing historic buildings, incorporate appropriate forms, materials and details, and give emphasis to the design of landscapes/gardens in the grounds surrounding buildings.

- New proposals within this townscape type should address the threats to townscape character identified in the relevant Character Area descriptions through enhancement strategies. Specifically, proposals should:
 - * Conserve original window frames and doors;
 - * Encourage maintenance of front gardens, rather than conversion to parking or front drives;
 - * Seek ways to integrate colourful signs associated with small businesses and shops;
 - * Encourage maintenance and management of front garden boundaries.

Principles for the Landscape Setting of Tiptree

3.6.8 The following principles should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Character Area/Landscape Setting Area information set out in Section 3.2.

F1 Messing Wooded Farmland

- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Encouraging restoration of redundant rural buildings;
- Encourage screening, through tree planting, of visually intrusive modern farm buildings;
- Maintain panoramic views across farmland plateau to the north;
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape to accord with existing landscape character.

F2 Tiptree Wooded Farmland

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Tiptree and Tiptree Heath settlements;
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character;
- Encourage the planting of tree groups around visually intrusive modern farm buildings;
- Small scale development should be carefully sited in relation to exiting farm buildings;
- Introduce measures to ensure restoration of gravel workings maximises benefits to wildlife and provides areas for recreation.

