



Colchester
City Council

Street Naming & Numbering Policy

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Street Naming and Numbering Policy

CONTEXT

Colchester City Council has the legal responsibility to ensure that streets are named and properties are numbered. Organisations and the general public need an efficient means of locating and referencing properties. The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to Developers and residents of the naming and numbering procedure of the Council. Colchester City Council uses the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 together with the Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907 for the purpose of naming streets and numbering properties. This power extends to commercial property as well as domestic. The Council will name and number streets and dwellings in line with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and Street Naming and Numbering data entry conventions and best practice for the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

All property developments and address additions or changes within Colchester are subject to the official street naming and numbering process. Maintaining a comprehensive and high standard for naming streets and numbering or naming properties is essential as it facilitates:

- Consistency of property information across local government and within the community
- Efficient delivery of mail
- Emergency services and others finding a property
- Reliable delivery of services and products
- Navigation for visitors

APPLICATION OF POLICY

Proposals for street names from developers and the public are welcome for consideration. However, it is recommended, when making an application, that more than one name is put forward in case the first choice does not comply with the guidelines in this policy. It is advantageous for all suggestions for street and building names to reflect the local area or have a connection with Colchester, where possible and where it avoids duplication.

If the Developer declines to provide a name or that name is not suitable, the Street Naming and Numbering Officer will research the site and provide alternative suggestions. The relevant Ward Councillors, Parish/Town Council will be consulted and asked for their comments on the suggested names. If the consultees have alternative suggestions or an objection to the name provided, then another name will be chosen and the consultation process repeated.

Once a suitable suggestion has been selected by the Street Naming and Numbering Officer agreement will be sought with the Developer. If a suggestion does not meet the naming criteria it will be rejected no matter who suggests it.

Once a numbering scheme has been implemented, Royal Mail will allocate postcodes and correspondence from the Council is sent to the Developer or owner confirming the new address. Notification is then sent to statutory authorities such as Royal Mail, the Emergency Services, utility companies and Council departments.

Where street names or previous numbers have been established without reference to Colchester City Council, we have the authority to issue Renaming or Renumbering Orders, under section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847.

In addition to complying with appropriate legislation, this policy is compliant, at the time of implementation, with the document "Data Entry Conventions and Best Practice for the National Land and Property Gazetteer" version 3.4, available from the National Land and Property Gazetteer custodians at www.nlpg.org.uk

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847

- Section 64: Houses to be numbered and streets named - This allows the Council to name streets (i.e. set names for new streets), mark the street name (street nameplate provision) and control interference with such markings (under the legislation interference is a criminal offence).
- Section 65: Numbers of houses to be renewed by occupiers - This requires the occupiers of houses and other buildings to clearly display the number and/or name of their property as well as requiring them to maintain signage to a good standard.

Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907

- Section 21: Power to alter names of streets - This provides for the alteration of street name with consent of two-thirds of the ratepayers/council tax payers living in the street. It also gives power to mark the altered street name and control interference with such marking.
- Section 21: The power to put up a street name sign/marking

Public Health Act 1925

- Section 17-19 Public Health Act 1925 - This legislation covers:
 - New names of streets - notice served by developer and requiring the approval of the Council or (by appeal) the Magistrates' Court (Section 17)

- Alteration of names of streets, and assignment of names of un-named streets - notice by Council, and consideration of any objections by Magistrates' Court (Section 18)
- Marking of street names and control of interference – i.e. provision of street nameplates and prosecution of anyone removing or interfering with the nameplate (Section 19)

Local Government Act 2003

- Section 93: Power to charge for discretionary services - The Local Government Act 2003 brought about new devolved powers for Local Authorities; these included giving Councils new powers to trade and charge for non statutory (i.e. discretionary) services if they are Best Value Authorities (Section 93 of the Act).

CHARGING FOR STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING

A local authority may charge for discretionary services. Discretionary services are those services that an authority has the power but not a duty to provide. An authority may charge where the person who receives the service has agreed to its provision and the charge must not exceed the cost of providing the service.

Therefore, the Council cannot charge for street naming services (since the duty to provide this service is not discretionary), but it can charge for elements of the naming and numbering function (which is a discretionary service) by virtue of Section 64 and 65 of the 1847 Act coupled with Section 93 of the 2003 Act.

For Street Naming and Numbering this charge covers:

- The naming and numbering of new properties (including conversions and rooms on a per room basis).
- Alterations in either name or numbers to new developments after initial naming and numbering has been undertaken.
- Consultation and liaising with external organisations such as Royal Mail, Town or Parish Councils and Emergency Services (as a non-statutory element of naming of streets).

These charges are to be paid prior to any changes being made. Changes made without contacting the Council will not be officially recognised and will not be registered with the relevant services and organisations.

Details of charges for Street Naming and Numbering can be found on our website [here](#). Fees and charges applicable for the street naming and numbering service/s will be reviewed annually during the Council's budget setting process.

NAMING STREETS AND NUMBERING PROPERTIES

Colchester City Council adheres to Section 64 of The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 which implies a requirement to make sure properties are numbered (or named) and marked as such. It is the Council's responsibility to make sure that the street name plates are displayed. However, if any person should destroy or deface a street name plate or display an unofficial name or number on their property, then that person shall be liable to a fine under the provision of Criminal Justice Act 1982.

Where a street is created as all or part of a new development, all costs for the erection of new street name plates will be paid for by the property developer. There is a specification for the plates and their locations and the authority should be contacted for advice. Maintenance of street name plates becomes the responsibility of Colchester City Council only once the developer has left the site and the street has been adopted.

In the event of unresolved disagreement, a final decision will be taken by the officer who has delegated powers to approve street names within the Council's constitution, there will be no right of appeal.

Changing a street name or a sequence of property numbering shall be avoided, unless there is specific and sufficient reason to do so. This may come in the form of a new development in the street, or a request from the Emergency Services. The Council will pursue alternative solutions and only change the name or numbering as a last resort. In the event that the street name or numbering needs to be changed the following steps shall be taken:

- Consultation takes place with all affected rate-payers and the appropriate Ward and Parish Councillors.
- A report, with evidence of the correct percentage of rate-payers' approval (at least two thirds), shall be made to the Portfolio Holder for Street Naming and Numbering, seeking their endorsement to instigate the change.

CRITERIA FOR NAMING STREETS

The following criteria will be used when naming streets:

No street name plate can be erected until the street name has been confirmed in writing by Colchester City Council

- Colchester City Council will endeavour to promote names with a local or historic significance to the area. However, it is not sufficient cause to object to a name if it fails to meet this criterion.

- Names with a common theme are encouraged on large developments, preferably with a local or historic connection. Two developments with the same theme within the authority area will not be permitted.
- Any street name that promotes a company, service or product will not be allowed.
- Names based on a developer's trading name are seen as advertising and are not acceptable. An exception to this may be made for a company that no longer exists, if used solely in a historical context and the claim of advertising cannot be made.
- Names suggested by the developer may be used if they comply with the general street naming procedures and there are no objections from Colchester City Council and appropriate Ward or Parish Councillors.
- New street names shall not duplicate any name already in use in the authority area.
- Distinctions by thoroughfare type within the same or adjoining area are to be avoided, e.g. Butterworth Drive and Butterworth Road.
- Suffixes used should be appropriate for the type of street. For example 'Close' should only be used for a dead end street or no through road and 'Walk' should only be used for a pedestrian street.
- Street names with phonetically similar names must also be avoided, e.g. Willows Avenue and Winnows Avenue.
- Street names should not contain a number, even if spelt as a name. For example, Seven Foot Lane: "20 Seven Foot Lane" could be misinterpreted as 27 Foot Lane.
- Street names that may be considered or construed as obscene, racist or which would contravene any aspect of the Council's equal opportunities policies will not be acceptable.
- Street names that may be open to re-interpretation by graffiti or shortening of the name shall be avoided.
- New street names shall not end in "s" where it can be construed as either a possessive or plural, neither shall they commence with the word "The" or 'A'.
- All punctuation, including apostrophes, shall be avoided.
- Words of more than three syllables and the use of more than two words (excluding the thoroughfare type) shall be avoided.
- Street names are unacceptable if they are likely to cause spelling difficulties, as these may lead to confusion. New street names shall not be assigned to new developments when such developments can be satisfactorily included in the current numbering scheme of the street providing access.
- Consent must be sought for the use of a name with Royal connotations.
- In order to avoid causing offence either by inclusion or exclusion, no street shall be named after any living person. In limited circumstances a street can be named after deceased individuals (at the discretion of the Street Naming and Numbering Custodian) after a period of 3 years from the passing of that person.
 - The person must have been of good standing.
 - It must be possible to evidence that they had clear links to the local community and that that community was enhanced by the service they gave.
 - Written consent is required from the immediate family or estate of the deceased person to have a street named after them.

- A copy of the written consent should be submitted to Colchester City Council. If this is not possible, the Council will attempt to contact family members to obtain consent.
 - If the named person has been deceased for more than 50 years then written consent is not required.
- Consideration will also be given to the possible sensitivities that may arise from naming streets after controversial or notorious figures, and to the likelihood that the public perception of a deceased person may change – for better or worse – in the future.

CRITERIA FOR ADDRESSING PROPERTIES

The following criteria will be used when addressing properties:

- When making an application for a plot or development to be numbered, the developer must provide the following information:
 - Planning Application Number – Street Naming and Numbering for new development can only be administered subject to approved planning, and without this no address will be allocated.
 - Plans clearly showing plot numbers, location in relation to existing land and property, and the placement of front doors or primary access on each plot.
 - Internal layout plans, if appropriate, for development that is sub-divided at unit or floor level.
 - Building Regulation Number, once available, to indicate that work has commenced.
- Where an existing street does not contain numbered properties, new properties will require a name. For an infill development of two or more properties accessed by a private drive, and if deemed appropriate by the Street Naming and Numbering Officer, the Council will agree with the developer the name of a property group, e.g. 1 - 4 Berryfields, East Bay.
- Property with a premise number must always use and display that number. Where a property has a name and an official number the number must always be included in the address and displayed on the property. The name cannot be regarded as an alternative. This is enforceable under section 65 of the Towns Improvements Act 1847.
- All new property development shall be numbered rather than named. Exceptions will apply in existing streets where no numbering scheme exists, or where the extent of infill numbering has been exhausted. On a street without numbers, a name will be allocated to new properties. New property names should not use the prefixes 'The' or 'A'
- New streets shall be numbered with odd numbers on the left-hand side and even numbers on the right, commencing from the primary entrance to the street. Where the street is a thoroughfare between two other streets, the numbering shall commence at the end of the street nearest the centre of the town or village.
- Consecutive numbering may be used in a cul-de-sac or in a situation where there is no scope for future development in the street.

- The number of a property will be allocated to the street onto which the front door faces. If the front door provides no direct access from that street, an exception may be made.
- Numbers should remain in sequence and there shall be no exclusion of any number due to superstition or personal preference.
- Flats and units shall be given individual numbers where possible; the sequence of the numbering depends on access to front doors of individual premises. When a numbered property is converted to flats, the flats should be numbered, e.g. Flat 1, 20 High Street. A numbering scheme such as Flat A/Flat B or First Floor Flat shall be avoided. The same shall apply for units, apartments and other forms of property sub-division.
- If flats are built on a numbered street and cannot be logically integrated into the current numbering of that street, a name will be given to the block and the flats numbered internally, e.g. 1 Fiddlers House, 27 Ipswich Road.
- When new properties are built on an existing street and there are no available numbers to use whilst retaining the current sequence, a letter shall be used as a suffix, e.g. 15a.
- Where a building consists of a number of flats, offices, retail units or similar, each unit should be addressed. Numbering should follow the natural circulation of the building, i.e. the lowest number should appear nearest to the main entrance. On upper floors, numbering should begin adjacent to the main stair core or lifts. The direction of circulation should be maintained throughout the building
- In order to avoid causing offence either by inclusion or exclusion, no buildings shall be named after living individuals.
- New street names shall not be assigned for the sole purpose of avoiding numbers with a suffix.
- A business name shall not take the place of a number or a building name.
- Private garages and buildings used for housing vehicles and similar purposes will not be numbered.
- A piece of land, e.g. a farmer's field, cannot be given an official address, only property on that piece of land can have a conventional address for the purposes of delivering mail and services.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY ADDRESSING

All elements of an address, with the exception of postcode and post town, are defined by Colchester City Council. The numbers and names assigned to property and the official names assigned to streets are the Intellectual Property of the authority.

Allocation of postcodes is managed by the Royal Mail and must be confirmed by them. Colchester City Council may undertake this process on the applicant's behalf and inform the applicant and other interested parties. The authority reserves the right to complete a Street Naming and Numbering application without the provision of postcode or post town information. The maintenance of postcode information, and any future change to individual postcodes or postcode sectors, is the responsibility of the Royal Mail. Colchester City Council accepts no responsibility or liability for omission of postcode or post town information, nor for any failure of services arising from this omission.

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as necessary at these reviews.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Street Naming and Numbering please write to Street Naming, Colchester City Council, Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester, CO3 3WG or email streetnaming@colchester.gov.uk

VERSION CONTROL

Purpose:	To specify how the Council fulfils its street naming and numbering duties
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