

West Mersea Seaside Heritage Project

Historic Urban Characterisation Report – Draft



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Introduction

This report details the historic development and character of the Essex coastal resort of West Mersea. Forming part of Essex County Council's Seaside Heritage Project (funded by Essex County Council, English Heritage, Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Southend Unitary Authority) it is one of a series of reports whose purpose is to examine, explore and explain the growth and consolidation of Essex coastal resorts and to outline recommendations for the future conservation of its distinct character zones and many historic buildings and structures of significance.

Each report will include a historical narrative and a character assessment of the historic urban area. The Project seeks to identify the various factors which led to the growth of the resorts and explores what makes each resort different in character and potential. In addition to an overall analysis of the 'life cycle' of each resort, the Project characterises the spatial urban growth and presents the findings via a series of chronologically based GIS generated maps. Fieldwork determines what survives today within each urban character defined and a Gazetteer of significant structures is presented. The results of this Project will form the basis of a synthetic report presenting a comparative regional overview of the seaside heritage of Essex.

West Mersea Summary Narrative

West Mersea is half of an island situated to the south of Colchester and joined to the mainland by a causeway called 'The Strood'. Mersea Island divides neatly into two: whilst East Mersea is mostly farmland, West Mersea contains the commercial and residential development but also has a strong maritime character with a history in boating and yachting and the harvesting of oysters. Throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries boating and the fishing industry have been of great importance in the growth of West Mersea.

The island's history goes back to prehistoric times with Iron Age salt working sites (Red Hills) in abundance and a wealth of Roman remains (including some very high status burials and evidence of settlement) illustrating its importance. The Anglo-

Saxon's also settled on the island and it is clear that fishing was a priority for them as evidenced by a huge fish weir located off Besom Fleet. Throughout all of its known history the harvesting of oysters has been the prime industry on the island and the remains of numerous oyster pits are to be found. Certainly by the 18th century (if not before) this was supplemented by wildfowling with the duck decoy pond at Waldegraves Farm catching huge numbers of wildfowl (primarily pochard) for the London market.

The history of West Mersea as a seaside resort begins in the early 20th century. Boating activities had always been important on the island and with more leisure time available to the working and middle classes West Mersea developed as a centre for yachting. Based in the 'Old City' area around 'The Hard' the yacht club; an annual regatta is still held and attracts very large crowds. Oysters had always been part of the staple diet of islanders and, taking advantage of the popularity of the island as a yachting centre, the oyster industry has established an international reputation for excellence. Its native oysters and other shellfish are on the menus of small restaurants located next to the oyster sheds around 'The Hard' and are extremely popular with tourists.

The beach area is located on the southern side of the island where a stretch of shingle and sand provides the focus for rows of beach huts, a grassy promenade and the Two Sugars Café. Being safe for swimming and boasting a pleasant view across the River Blackwater to Bradwell-on-Sea, the well-kept beach is becoming increasingly popular for families seeking a quiet seaside location. At its eastern extent the Seaview Caravan Park has attractive candy-stripe beach huts fronting the estuary. Together with recreational facilities in East Mersea such as Cudmore Grove Country Park and a second stretch of beach, the island has plenty to offer tourists and presents a model for successful small-scale seaside tourism.

Location

Mersea Island measures approximately five miles east to west and two miles north to south and has a perimeter of twelve miles. It forms part of the northern shoreline of the mouth of the River Blackwater. The island, which is divided into East and West Mersea, can only be reached by a man-made causeway known as the Strood which is covered by high tides.

Mersea's early history

The name Mersea is a derivation of the Anglo-Saxon word 'Meresig' which dates from the early 10th century and means 'island of the pool or mere'. The causeway to the island, the Strood, is thought to have been constructed during the Anglo-Saxon period (around AD 700). With its proximity to the Continent one can presume that Mersea Island was settled by incoming Saxons soon after effective Roman control came to an end. The name for Mersea. is of Saxon derivation as is 'The Strood' (*strod*, 'marshy land').

Mersea's history, however, goes back much further than is suggested by its Anglo-Saxon name. Several Late Iron Age 'Red Hills' or salt working sites have been found on the island. Heaps of oyster shells often accompany these sites showing the popularity of the Mersea Native Oyster which has continued right up to the present day. Remains of Red Hills within the study area can be found on the beach at the end of Seaview Avenue (EHER No. 2229) and further west (EHER 2224) and in an area of oyster pits to the north of The Lane (EHER 2232).

The island's Roman past is clearly visible in a well preserved example (just outside of the study area) of a Romano-British barrow (1st century AD) in Dawes Lane beyond Barrow Hill Cottage (EHER No. 1; SAM No. 32425). Excavated in 1912 its central brick-built tomb was found to contain the cremated remains of a high status individual whose ashes had been placed in a glass jar and then inside a lead casket. In the back garden of a house in Yorick Road are the remains of a Roman mausoleum or 'wheel tomb' (EHER No. 38; SAM No. EX32). Because of its close proximity to the Roman Colonia of Camulodunum (Colchester), West Mersea was extensively settled by the Romans, indeed some wealthy citizens may have had 'holiday homes' on the island. In the central historic area focused around the Church of St Peter and St Paul and West Mersea Hall, archaeological excavations have unearthed mosaic floors belonging to a Roman villa (EHER 2122).¹

By the 11th century the manor of West Mersea had passed to the crown who granted it to the Benedictine Abbey of St Ouen, of Rouen in Normandy who built a small Benedictine Prior next to the parish church EHER no. 2187. 'One fishery' is

¹ Mersea Island John Marriage 1999

mentioned in Domesday, proving that commercial fishing was carried on in Mersea at this time and probably long before.²

West Mersea 1800 – 1900

Unlike other seaside resorts, the railway boom never affected Mersea directly. Heavy goods were brought to the island by boat and barge until the end of World War I and other goods and communications went by carrier. During the Victorian period Mersea Island was essentially a fishing and agricultural community. The harsh lives of Mersea fishermen and agricultural workers is chronicled in 'Mehalah' a novel by the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, Rector of East Mersea from 1870 to 1881. The Tollesbury and Mersea Native Oyster Fishery Company was founded in the 1870s by a group of local fishermen. The Company sold half of its shares to the general public (preference given to local residents) and half were retained by the fishermen. It is the oldest surviving limited liability company in England.



Figure 1 West Mersea jetty at the Hard c.1900

Flooding and sea defences

Mersea Island has experienced several incidences of serious flooding, for example: in 1881 and 1897 when the low-lying Old City was seriously flooded, but although property was damaged there was no loss of life.

² 'Land of St. Ouen's Hundred of Winstree Domesday Book ed. John Morris 32 Essex 1983

The beginnings of the 20th century resort

During the second half of the 19th century the railway provided a new, cheaper form of access to many seaside resorts. The railway never came to West Mersea, although in 1911 a group of local businessmen formulated an ambitious plan to provide a railway between Colchester and Mersea, together with a pier, promenade and hotels. The resort was to have been a 'temperance resort' with no drinking, dancing or gaming. At the time it was planned to have a railway onto the island terminating in a pier; and the proposed line of the railway was to have followed the course of Empress Avenue and Fairhaven Avenue down to the beach. Station Road (now East Road) was to have had a brand new railway station and new hotels along the Esplanade were to have provided accommodation for the middle and working class visitors who would now find West Mersea far more accessible. These plans were abandoned at the outbreak of World War I and were never returned to³.

The increasing use of motor transport filled the gap left by the abandoned railway scheme. As the century progressed West Mersea became increasingly popular as a short-break holiday destination and also as a desirable place to live (even if you worked elsewhere in towns such as Colchester). A bus service was provided by Berry's motorbus which ran three times a day to and from Colchester.

WWI

Troops were stationed in Mersea Island during the war. Zeppelin bombing raids were witnessed by the islanders, one crashing at nearby Great Wigborough in 1916; the survivors were brought to Mersea until they could be moved to prisoner-of-war camps. Over five percent of the male population of Mersea (forty-four men) died during the conflict.⁴

The Interwar Period

Unlike other resorts West Mersea did not immediately develop their facilities for the holiday-maker after World War I. West Mersea avoided becoming commercialised, the only concession to its increasing popularity being the beach huts which began to

³ A Short History of Mersea Elsie M Karbacz 1987

⁴ Ibid

appear along the greensward, a few holiday chalets along the Esplanade and a boating lake. A golf course was constructed in East Mersea.

In 1926 West Mersea was made an Urban District with its own self-governing powers. It set about providing a sewerage scheme, a mains water supply, metalled main roads and street lighting. West Mersea Urban District Council purchased for the town the area of beach and greensward extending from Broomhills Road to Seaview Avenue.

Flooding in 1953

In 1953 the 'Great Surge' caused considerable damage. In Mersea the whole Coast Road was severely flooded, houseboats and other craft were broken up and houses badly damaged. At the height of the surge tide the Strood was under six to seven feet of water and many beach huts were swept away. Mersea did not suffer any loss of life during the flooding but some people were made homeless (mostly from the houseboats).

WWII

As part of the front line for invasion, Mersea Island was heavily fortified during World War II. As with other seaside towns, initially evacuees from London and other areas at high risk of bombing raids (particularly children) were resettled there; however, it was later though prudent to move them to more inland areas. Troops were stationed in West Mersea taking over houses vacated by residents. Searchlights were constructed at the Strood and beach huts along the greensward were removed, the beach being mined and covered in barbed wire.

The area along the beach had a series of defences comprising a 4.7 inch coastal artillery battery, a Battery Observation post, horizontally-aimed searchlights and pillboxes. A number of these defences still survive and are listed below:



Figure 2 The 'Two Sugars' café West Mersea beach

EHER Number	Description
10019	Base of pillbox on beach to south of Shears Court
10039	4.7" Gun emplacement No. 2. Converted into The Two Sugars café.
10041	Searchlight emplacement . Provided night-time illumination for the 4.7" guns nearby.
21111	Anti-invasion obstacles comprising a row of concrete blocks with lengths of sharp-ended railway line embedded in them.
21112	Base and some walling of a type FW3/24 infantry pillbox.

Postwar West Mersea

At the end of World War II some of the resort's facilities had become overgrown and derelict (primarily the Boating Lake and the Golf Course) and were never re-instated. The Boating Lake was infilled and built upon and the Golf Course was returned to farmland.

In 1972 West Mersea Urban Council became West Mersea Town Council under the auspices of Colchester Borough Council. The new town council no longer had planning powers but was given powers of recommendation.

Holidays abroad were no longer the prerogative of the rich and many working class families preferred to travel abroad on their holidays rather than visit the traditional English seaside resorts. West Mersea, was, however less affected than larger more commercial resorts such as Clacton and Southend as the appeal of West Mersea had always been as a rural, peaceful “get away from it all” resort. Sailing is one of Mersea’s main attractions and its oyster industry continues to be world famous. The Mayor of Colchester sails into Mersea waters every year, as soon as there is an ‘R’ in the month, to officially open the oyster season.

Residential growth

The residential growth of West Mersea really took off in the 1960s with the population rising from 3140 in 1961 to 4148 in 1971. The population recorded for West Mersea in the 2001 census was 6,925.

Historic Environment Characterisation

West Mersea’s Historic Environment Character zones

The urban characterisation of West Mersea broadly follows the same methodology adopted for Historic Environment Characterisation Projects already completed in Chelmsford⁵ and Rochford⁶, Essex and based on the work carried out by Colin Blandford Associates (CBA) for the Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project.

Whilst these projects (above) analyse environments comprising a range or combination of rural and urban historic landscapes, the characterisation of Canvey Island exclusively focuses on its urban and coastal (seaside) context. The

⁵ *Chelmsford Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, Essex County Council, June 2005

⁶ *Rochford Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, Essex County Council, Rochford District Council

methodology of establishing high level divisions, Historic Environment Character Areas (HECAs) are used in this exercise to establish large character areas, referred to as Historic Urban Character Areas or HUCAs. These areas are subsequently refined and broken down into Historic Urban Character Zones (HUCZ). Together they provide a comprehensive analysis of the historic environment which may be used in the planning process through the production of Local Development Frameworks, Master Plans, Conservation Area appraisals and in the initial considerations of planning applications.

Historic Urban Character Areas



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Figure 3 West Mersea Historic Urban Character Zones

HUCA 1 The Old City

This character area encompasses the 'Old City' and maritime industrial areas of the island known as 'The Hard'. The area is rich in historic assets and has the most densely concentrated area of listed buildings on the island (concentrated along The Lane). The area stretches along the island's western coastline and possesses a multitude of historic assets associated with the island's maritime history representing

both industrial (primarily oyster fishing) and leisure activities (primarily yachting). The earliest buildings date from the first half of the seventeenth century. The area is a major tourist attraction with freshly harvested Mersea oysters being offered in several restaurants located adjacent to active shellfish processing sheds with now redundant 19th century oyster pits providing a historic setting. The area is a major tourist attraction with the appeal of locally harvested oysters, set within an environment boasting an array of historic assets, proving to be a major 'pull factor'.



Figure 4 'The Hard'

HUCA 2 Firs Chase

Forming a section of the western residential area of the island and set back from the 'honey pot' tourism effect of the Old City, this area is characterised by large detached homes in quiet leafy lanes. Several houses of historic significance are located in the area. The Firs Chase Caravan Park has a secluded appeal and commanding views over the Strood Channel and the old oyster pits.

HUCA 3 Historic centre

A cluster of historic assets centred on the junction of High Street South and Church Street mark the historic focal point of the town. The church of St Peter and St Paul dates from the Late Saxon period and The Hall (dating from the 16th century) stands on the south east side of the church.

To the north the area loses its primarily commercial character and roads off High Street North are far more residential in nature.

HUCA 4 Beach and Esplanade

Characterised by an attractive sand and shingle beach with traditional beach huts and a small number of amenities (e.g. The Two Sugars Café) this area has great potential for further leisure development.

HUCA 5 Central Residential

An area characterised by developments of detached houses in substantial plots. Some current development but appears to be in keeping with the area.

HUCA 6 Eastern Residential and farmland

Located at the eastern extent of developed West Mersea, this area offers potential for more leisure facilities which should be in keeping with the character of the esplanade and beach area.

HUCA 7 Eastern Caravan Parks

Two caravan parks are sited to the east of West Mersea's residential area: Seaview Caravan Park and Waldegraves Caravan Park. Both are set in grounds which are partly wooded and Seaview Caravan Park has a private beach and a row of impressive beach chalets.

Historic Urban Character Zones (HUCZ)

The urban character zones are designed to interrogate the Historic Environment and in this case the built environment of West Mersea in far more detail than the broader historic urban character area (HUCA) designations. To achieve this each HUCA is sub-divided into smaller HECZs, each providing analysis, quantification and information suitable for strategic planning

Through the analysis of the main datasets, historic mapping, primary documentary research, the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and secondary sources, it is possible to develop a number of character zones within the HUCAs. The descriptions of each zone seek to highlight their key characteristics and identify any particular significant aspects of the historic environment.

Each character zone is attributed a range of criteria, which are scored using a system based on that developed for English Heritages Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), modified to consider broader zones rather than individual assets. Whilst this scoring methodology is intended as a means to engage with the issues of sensitivity, value and importance, it is not designed to be definitive and may be subject to change.

The six criteria used for the character zones are:

- *Survival*
- *Documentation*
- *Group Value Association*
- *Potential*
- *Sensitivity to Change*
- *Amenity Value*

Each of the criteria above have been scored for each zone on a scale of 0-3, with 0 the lowest and 3 the highest.

Survival

This relates to the state of completeness of the range of historic environment assets within the character zone. The zone may be relatively well preserved or it may have been disturbed by hostile land use/development.

1 = Zone extensively disturbed. Many assets disturbed or destroyed

2 = Zone has little disturbance but few known assets or has many assets but there have been adverse effects from development.

3 = Zone contains known assets which are well preserved.

Documentation

The level of documentation for a zone reflects the extent of investigations that have taken place. Such work includes: historical documentation, field survey/recording, research project

1 = Little or no documentation

2 = A range of documentation containing elements of the above

3 = A wide range of documentation

Group Value Association

Two forms of association are considered: either with historic environment assets of a similar nature or historic environment assets of a similar date. For example a wide range of assets associated with a particular theme e.g. fishing industry would score highly as would a group of buildings/monuments of the same date but with a variety of functions.

1 = Contains few historic assets of a similar date or nature

2 = Contains a limited range of historic environment assets which are related or of a similar date

3 = Contains a wide range of historic environment assets which are related.

Potential

The potential is assessed with reference to the expected average circumstances within the zone. The score considers the nature of the historic environment assets based on current evidence and indicates the likelihood of further assets being present.

1 = The potential for surviving historic environment assets within the zone has been significantly reduced e.g. by development

2 = There are limited known historic environment assets

3 = A range of high quality assets survive within the zone

Sensitivity to Change

Each historic environment zone will be assessed with regard to the sensitivity of the area to development, specifically housing expansion. The score is an indication of the vulnerability of the historic environment assets within the zone to this type of change. A lack of sensitivity to change should not be taken as an indication that no historic environment mitigation would be required to accommodate development. It would be possible to consider sensitivity to other types of change e.g. flood risk management.

1 = The historic environment of the zone could accommodate some development, however specific historic environment assets may suffer adverse effects.

2 = Development is likely to have a considerable impact on the historic Environment character of the zone

3 = The zone's historic environment is highly sensitive to development

Amenity Value

Relates to the actual and/or potential amenity value of the historic environment zone.

The score may relate to uniqueness, historical associations, key landmarks, good access and interest for visitors and educational value etc.

1 = *Historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction. Current knowledge gives limited potential for the historic environment to play a significant role in creating a definable and promotable identity to the area.*

2 = *Historic environment could or does help to define a sense of place.*

3 = *The historic environment plays or could play a key role in the zone's sense of place for local people and visitors. Contains assets which are, or could be, promoted for the benefit of local people or visitors.*

Historic Urban Character Zones Descriptions

1.1 Maritime industrial

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: post medieval
Predominant Type: industrial
Secondary Type: leisure

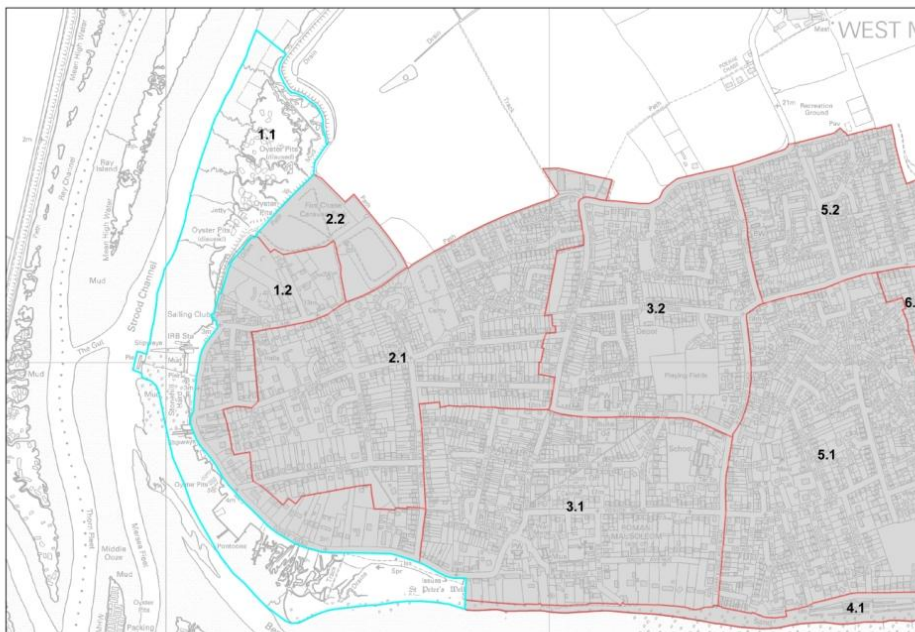


Figure 5 HUCZ 1.1 Maritime Industrial



Figure 6 Oyster sheds at 'The Hard'

Survival	Good survival of key historic assets	3
Documentation	Good historical documentation on growth from contemporary sources	3
Group Value Association	Historic assets form an important group	3
Potential	Some potential to develop historic character of area	2
Sensitivity to change	Loss of historic assets would greatly impact on area	3
Amenity Value	Fairly good, could be enhanced further	3
Total		17

- Working oyster sheds present an attraction for visitors.
- Events such as the Mersea Seafood Festival celebrate the maritime heritage of Mersea Island with a series of events centred on the waterfront.
- The famous oysters can be sampled in restaurants along The Hard.

Key Issues

It is important to preserve the many historic assets of the area.

Recommendations

Historic assets should be preserved and enhanced with more interpretation and improved access and parking.

1.2 Old City residential

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: post medieval
Predominant Type: residential
Secondary Type: commercial

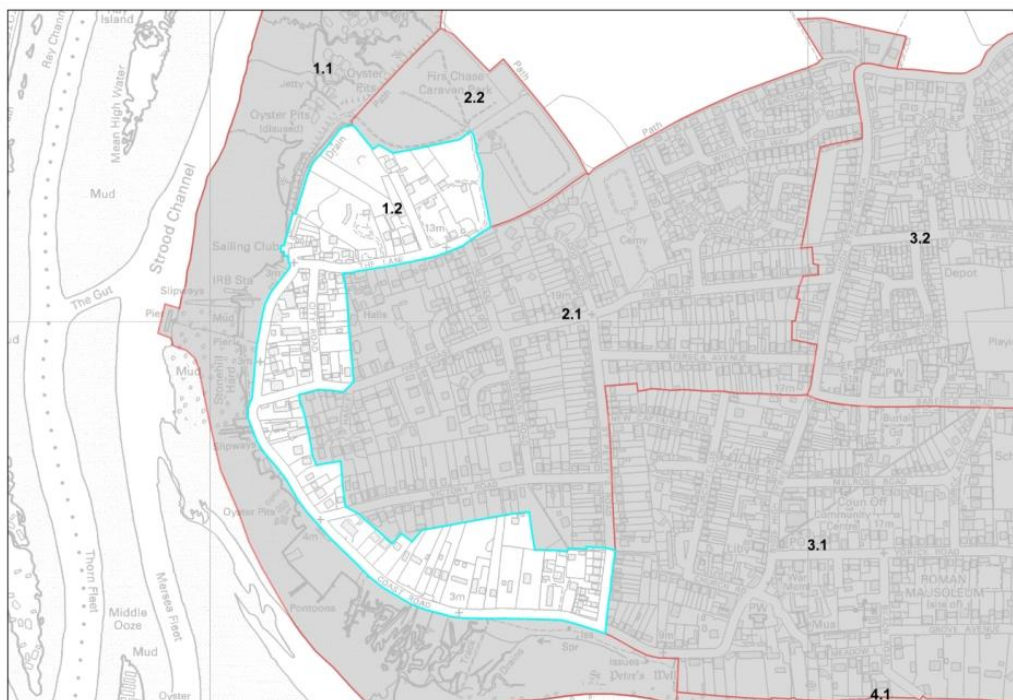


Figure 7 HECZ 1.2 Old City Residential



Figure 8 Concentration of listed buildings in 'The Lane'

Survival	Good survival of key historic assets	3
Documentation	Good historical documentation on growth from contemporary sources	3
Group Value Association	Historic assets form an important village group	3
Potential	Some potential to develop historic character of area	2
Sensitivity to change	Loss of historic assets would greatly impact on area	3
Amenity Value	Very high, could be enhanced even further by providing better parking etc.	3
Total		17

- Has the highest concentration of historic buildings on the island. These include a cluster of houses at the bottom of The Lane: The Old Victory (mid 19th century) and Nos. 1-3 The Lane (dated 1624).
- Historic assets attract tourists but the Coast Road offers little parking.

Key Issues

Cramped feel, parking can be a problem on busy days.

Recommendations

Historic assets should be preserved and enhanced with more interpretation and much has already been done towards this aim.

2.1 Firs Chase residential

Predominant Period:	modern
Secondary Period:	/
Predominant Type:	residential
Secondary Type:	/

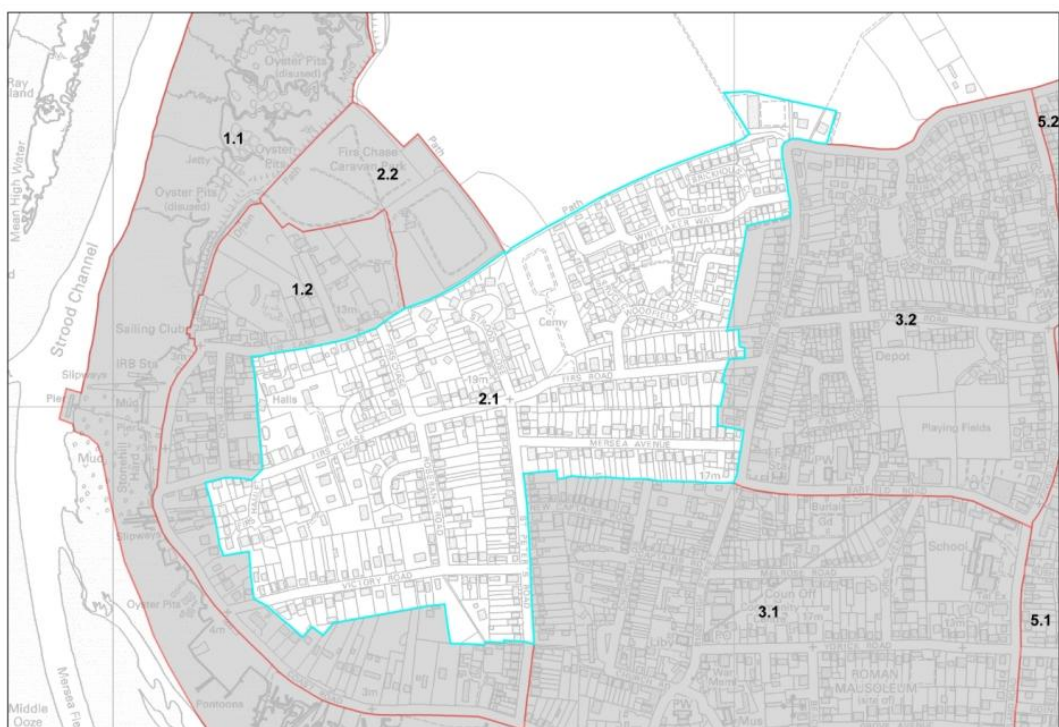


Figure 9 HECZ 2.1 Firs Chase Residential

- Mature well-spaced properties, mostly detached and semi-detached.
- Pleasant residential area with some historic assets.

Survival	Some historic assets		2
Documentation	Low		1
Group Value Association	Medium		2
Potential	Some potential to develop historic character of area		2
Sensitivity to change	Medium		2
Amenity Value	Medium		2
Total			11

2.2 Firs Chase Caravan Park

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: commercial
Secondary Type: residential

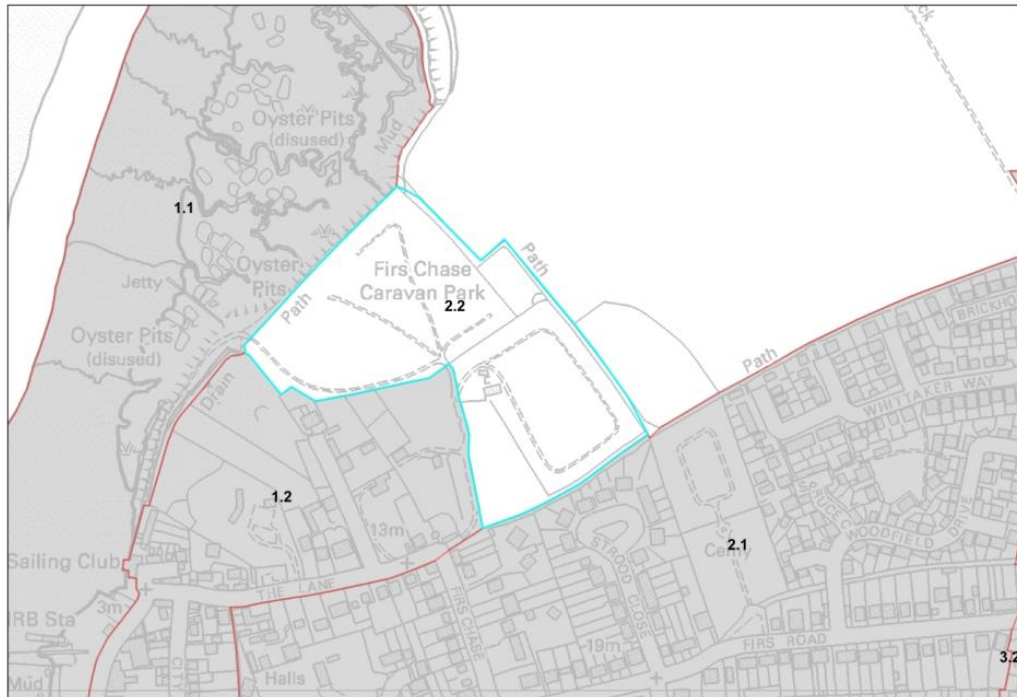


Figure 10 HECZ 2.2 Firs Chase Caravan Park



Figure 11 Firs Chase Caravan Park

- Caravan Park with pleasant views over the Strood Channel.
- In an unobtrusive setting, the caravans do not detract from the historic assets clustered around the 'Old City'.

Survival	Few historic assets	1
Documentation	Little	1
Group Value Association	Provides open space	1
Potential	Some potential to develop historic character of area	2
Sensitivity to change	Much change has already taken place	2
Amenity Value	High	3
Total		10

3.1 Historic Centre

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: post medieval
Predominant Type: commercial
Secondary Type: residential

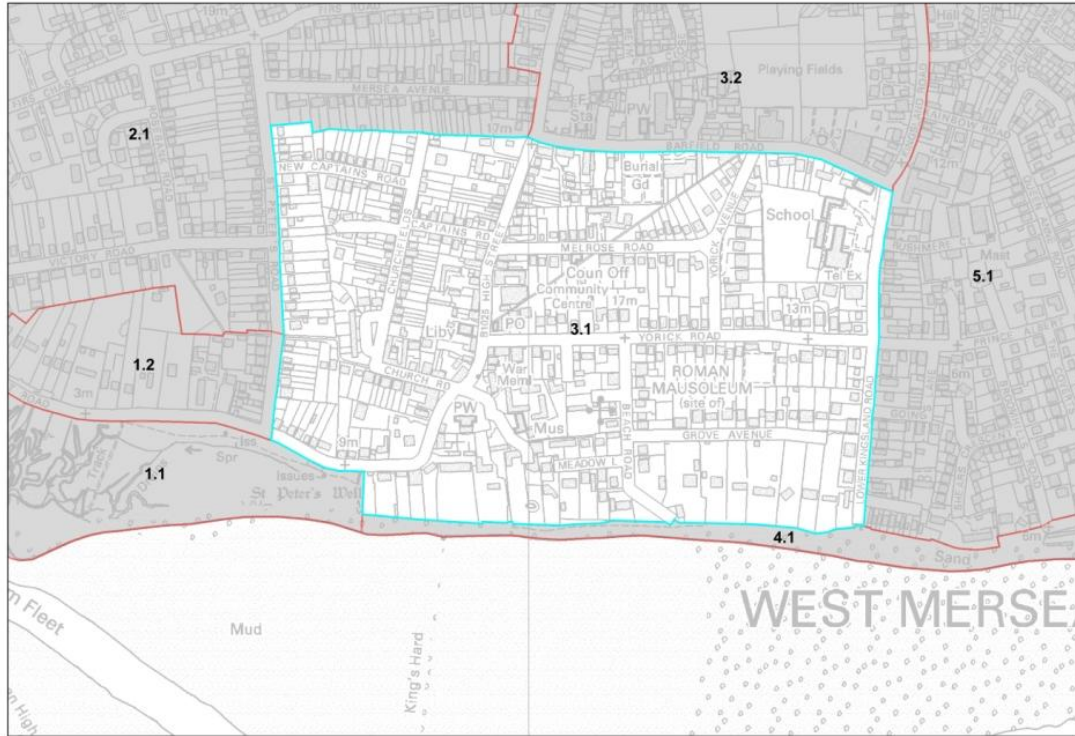


Figure 12 HECZ 3.1 Historic Centre



Figure 13 The Old Post Office, Historic centre

- The Church of St Peter and St Paul lies at the heart of historic West Mersea.
- The area boasts remains dating back to the Roman period and the Museum show cases this rich history.
- Other historic assets cluster around the church: the town sign; the old Post Office; the Hall; the Museum and the War Memorial.
- Shops, restaurants, a public house and other commercial facilities are located along the High Street and Church Road.

Survival	Fairly high	2
Documentation	Good contemporary records	2
Group Value Association	High, important grouping of historic assets around church	3
Potential	Medium	2
Sensitivity to change	High	3
Amenity Value	High	3
Total		15

Recommendations

Historic assets should be preserved and enhanced with more interpretation and much has already been done towards this aim. Museum could be better sign posted.

3.2 Uplands residential

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: residential
Secondary Type: commercial

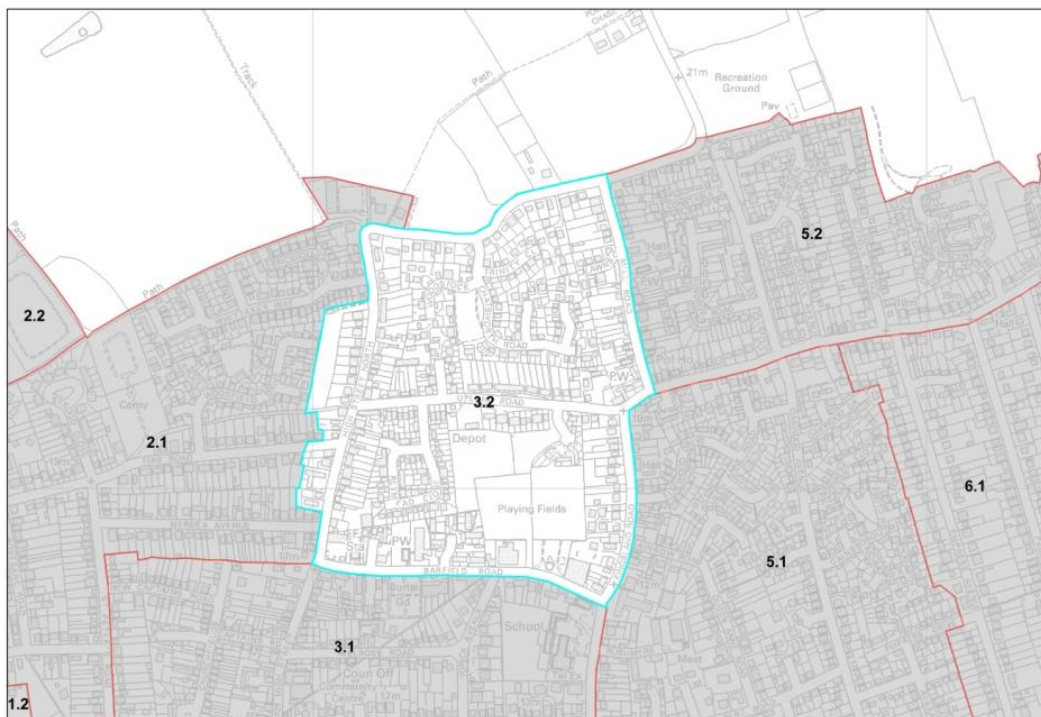


Figure 14 HECZ 3.2 Uplands residential

Survival	Few historic assets	1
Documentation	Low	1
Group Value Association	Medium	2
Potential	Some potential to develop historic character of area	2
Sensitivity to change	Medium	2
Amenity Value	Medium	2
Total		10

- Mixed residential area with some historically important buildings.

4.1 Beach and Esplanade

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: post medieval
Predominant Type: leisure
Secondary Type: commercial



Figure 15 HECZ 4.1 Beach and Esplanade



Figure 16 Beach Huts

- The beach and esplanade is attractive with rows of multi-coloured beach huts, some belonging to Seaview Caravan Park (see HECZ 7.1)
- Historic assets such as the Two Sugars Café. This is a WWII gun emplacement which has been successfully converted into a café from which customers can enjoy a commanding view over the estuary.
- Recent installations such as the historic anchor on the greensward enhance the area.
- Colchester Borough Council has about 384 sites that are rented out on a long term basis to beach hut owners. The sites are on Victoria Esplanade between Seaview Avenue and Broomhills Road



Figure 17 Looking across the Blackwater Estuary towards Bradwell, Two Sugars Café in foreground

Survival		2
Documentation		2
Group Value Association		3
Potential		3
Sensitivity to change		3
Amenity Value		3

Total		16
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Figure 18 Anchor on the greensward overlooking the beach and estuary

5.1 Central residential south

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: residential
Secondary Type: commercial

5.2 Central Residential north

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: residential
Secondary Type: /

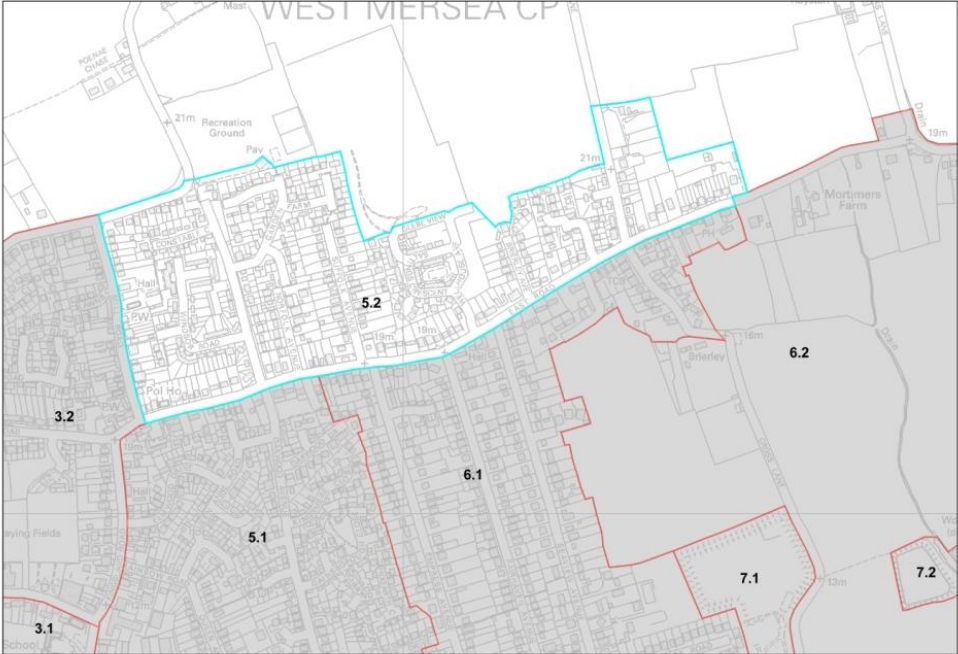


Figure 20 HECZ 5.2 Central Residential north

- Mixed residential housing, mostly of modern date.

Survival		2
Documentation		1
Group Value Association		1
Potential		2
Sensitivity to change		2
Amenity Value		1
Total		9

6.1. Eastern residential (south of East Road)

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: residential
Secondary Type: /

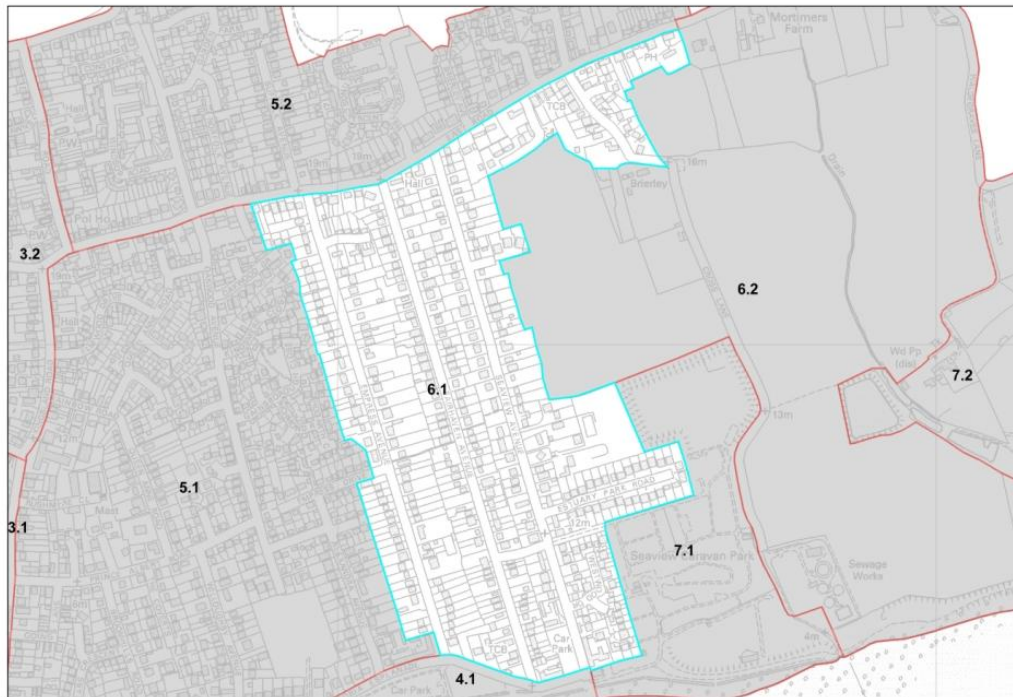


Figure 21 Eastern residential (south of East Road)

- Mixed residential housing, mostly of modern date.

Survival		2
Documentation		1
Group Value Association		1
Potential		2
Sensitivity to change		1
Amenity Value		2

Total		9
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6.2. Farmland east of Cross Lane

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: agricultural
Secondary Type: residential

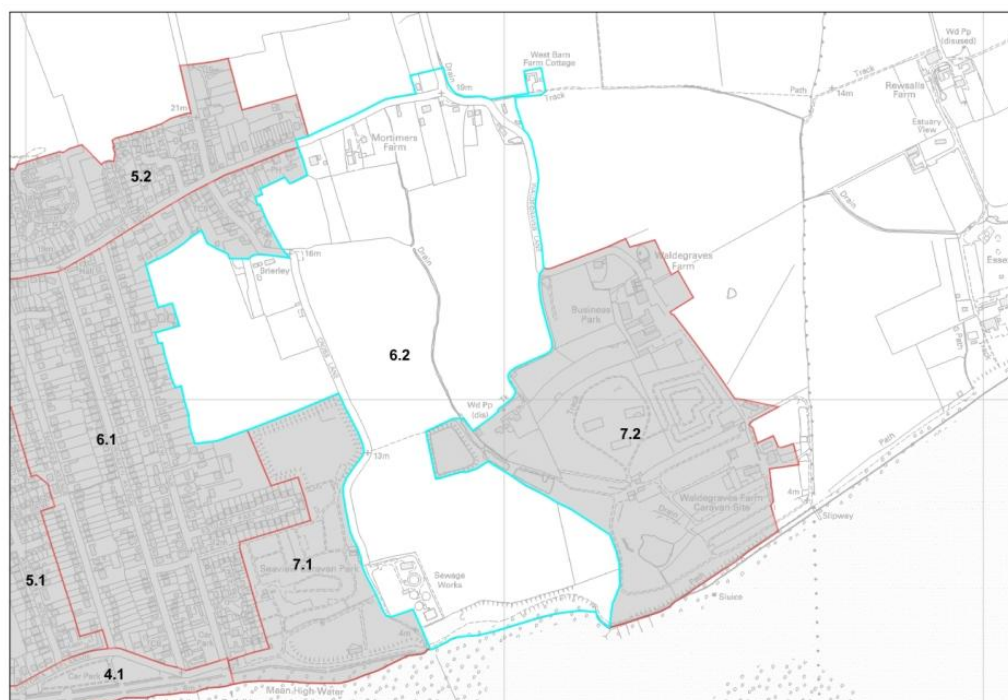


Figure 22 Farmland east of Cross Lane

Survival		2
Documentation		1
Group Value Association		1
Potential		2
Sensitivity to change		2
Amenity Value		2
Total		10



Figure 24 Seaview Caravan Park

- Holiday Park set in 30 acres of partly wooded ground.
- Includes a row of attractive beach cabins (see front cover) designed by AR Dixon which “bring the beach cabin into the 21st century”.
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Survival		2
Documentation		1
Group Value Association		2
Potential		2
Sensitivity to change		1
Amenity Value		3
Total		11

7.2 Waldegraves Farm Caravan Park

Predominant Period: modern
Secondary Period: /
Predominant Type: leisure
Secondary Type: commercial

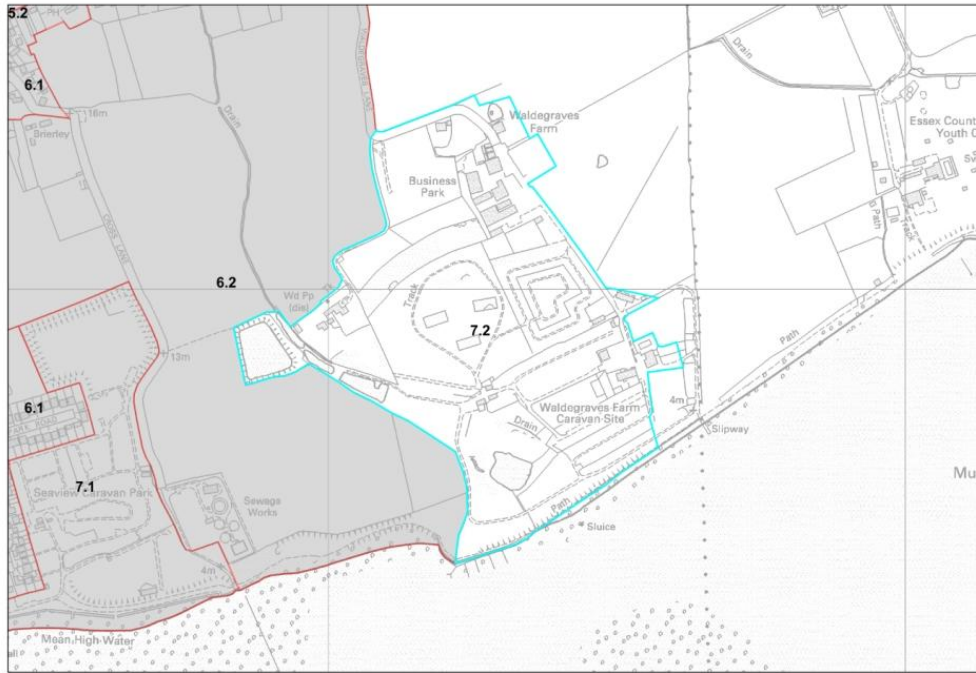


Figure 25 HECZ 7.2 Waldegraves Farm Caravan Park

Survival		2
Documentation		1
Group Value Association		2
Potential		2
Sensitivity to change		2
Amenity Value		3
Total		12

- Holiday Park with attractive grounds.
- A duck decoy pond is within the park and is a scheduled ancient monument (SAM No. 32411; HER No. 2302)

Historic Environment Management Issues

Cultural Heritage Legislation

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 sets out the requirement for Scheduled Monument Consent for any works of demolition, repair and alteration that may affect a Scheduled Monument. Likewise, under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Listed Building consent is required for any works that may affect the special architectural or historical interest of Listed Buildings and there is a presumption against development which would adversely harm the setting or special architectural or historic interest of Listed Buildings.

The National Heritage Act 2002 extended English Heritage's remit into the marine zone below the low-water line and out to the 12 mile nautical limit of UK territorial waters around England. It also amended the definition of 'ancient monuments' in the National Heritage Act 1983 and the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to include sites in, on or under the seabed within the seaward limits of the UK waters adjacent to England.

For archaeological sites which are not covered by the above Acts, protection may be afforded by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 through the use of planning conditions.

National Planning Policy Guidance

PPG 15

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (1994) outlines the Government's advice to developers and local authorities in their consideration of development proposals affecting, amongst others, Listed Buildings and their setting, Conservation Areas and historic buildings.

With regard to sustainable development and balancing the need for new

development with the need to preserve the historic environment the PPG comments that:

'the historic environment of England is all pervasive, and it cannot in practice be preserved unchanged. We must ensure that the means available to identify what is special in the historic environment, to define through the development plan system its capacity for change; and, when proposals for new development come forward, to assess their impact on the historic environment and give it full weight alongside other considerations' (PPG 15, 1.3)

PPG 16

Advice on the treatment of archaeology in the planning process is laid out in Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG16) 'Archaeology and Planning'. This document outlines the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains and how they should be preserved or recorded. It gives particular attention to the discovery and handling of archaeological remains within the development process.

The guidance seeks to balance the preservation of significant archaeological remains with the demands of modern society and continuing development. PPG16 recognises archaeological remains to be fragile and a finite, non-renewable resource that can contain irreplaceable information about the past (paragraph 2.6). The guidance gives a presumption in favour of in situ preservation of archaeological remains, particularly those considered to be of national importance.

PPG 20

Planning Policy Guidance Note 20 (PPG20) 'Coastal Planning' covers the character of the coast, designated areas, heritage coasts and the international dimension. It discusses types of coasts, policies for their conservation and development policies covering risks of flooding, erosion and land instability, as well as coastal protection and defence. It outlines policies for developments which may specifically require a coastal location, including tourism, recreation, mineral extraction, energy generation and waste water and sewage treatment.

Spatial Strategy

Colchester Borough

Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea are the main district settlements outside of Colchester Town. These settlements will accommodate about 1600 homes and provide shops and services to their surrounding rural hinterland. The distinct local character of other villages will be protected and local housing and employment development will be supported to meet community needs.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities

The natural environment, countryside and coastline will be conserved to protect the Borough's diverse history, archaeology, geology, and biodiversity. Development will be directed away from sites of landscape and conservation importance and land at risk from flooding. The unique character of Colchester villages will be protected, with only limited development supported to meet identified needs for local employment, affordable housing and community facilities.

Core Policies

The policies in the Core Strategy provide the overarching policy direction for the Local Development Framework, and for the delivery of development, infrastructure, facilities and services in Colchester to 2021.

West Mersea, with a population of 6,925 in 2001, is a relatively self-contained coastal community offering quality tourism and recreation opportunities. The West Mersea waterfront will be conserved for its historic maritime character and distinctive maritime-related local businesses. There are some limited development opportunities in West Mersea and approximately 280 new homes will be developed during the plan period, including over 200 homes that have already been approved or completed. An additional 173sqm of net retail floorspace will also be sought to service the residents of Mersea Island. Key facilities to be delivered in West Mersea include allotments and a new health centre.

Conservation Area

A Section of West Mersea at the far end of Coast Road is designated as a

Conservation Area. On the seaward side of Coast Road the Conservation area stretches from the Monkey Steps across St Peter's Well Meadow over the mudflats where the Houseboats are moored across the oyster beds, boat yards and dinghy parks down to Mersea Hard ending at The Nothe. On the landward side of Coast Road it starts at the Victory Pub and continues down to The Lane - it does not extend beyond the boundaries of the back gardens in Coast Road and is bounded at the far end (except for one small section) by City Road. Most of The Lane comes within the area as far as the sub station.

Gazetteer of Significant Buildings

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Church Road

Part of the church (lower part of the west tower) is thought to have belonged to the Benedictine priory established in AD 1046; the upper part is probably 14th century (as is most of the rest of the church). North porch added in the 15th century; later additions from 16th to 19th century.



Figure 26 Church of St Peter and St Paul

Mersea Island School, Barfield Road

School and house by Horace Darken, 1871-2. Domestic Gothic, brick with stone dressings. Additional classrooms by J.W.Start, c.1897, with two broad gabled wings and bell-turret on little columns.



Figure 27 Mersea Island School

The Hall, SE side of the church

16th century timber-framed and plastered with large hipped roof and canted bay.

Yew Tree House, Coast Road

Early 18th century, of blue bricks and red dressings. Two storeys, five bays, with segment-headed windows and parapet and Tuscan doorway.

The Lane (off Coast Road)

A group of listed buildings along the Lane.

No 1 (Picaroon Cottage) and No 3 (Mariners Way) Listed Grade II



Figure 28 'Mariners Way', The Lane

C17 origin altered in C18 and later. Two storeys and attics. Double gabled bays. Brick faced front with band, rendered central chimney stack. Three window range to front with Victorian double-hung sashes. External doors each end of front, one with date panel above 1624 1H.

Nutshell Listed Grade II



Figure 29 'The Nutshell', The Lane

C17. Of one bay, one storey and attic. Timber framed, weatherboarded, gambrel roofed and pegtiled. One chimney rear slope south. Plain door on ground storey and one pair of small-paned sashes. A flat dormer to north.

No. 2 Periwinkle Listed Grade II

C18. Much modernised. Small 2 storey building, some brick fencing, some weatherboarding roof of tiles and slates. Casement windows largely modern. Probably originally a C18 fisherman's cottage.

No 5 (Bluebird Cottage) Listed Grade II

Small weatherboarded cottage, probably C18-C19. One storey and attics, the roof tiled. Central chimney stack. Included for group value.

No 6 Listed Grade II

Probably C18 origin. Timber framed roof mansard and tiled with central chimney stack. One storey and attic, one dormer to the front. Modern applied timber work to external walls.

No 9 (Anchor Cottage) Listed Grade II



Figure 30 'Anchor Cottage', The Lane

Dated circa 1575 on modern plaque. A long range, timber framed with white weather boards, of one storey with attics. Ridged, gabled and pegtiled roof, red brick modern chimney near centre. One flat dormer central, south pitch. Central modern door to ground storey and mixed fenestration. Three modern casements, left a pair of small-pane- sashes, modern door, 2 small eaves-level casements, 2 small-pane sashes; then a casement. Glazed extension on right, under pegtiled lean-to roof. Painted brick end wall and gable.

Upland Road Water Tower

Built in 1924 this water tower is in the campanile style with the tower in multi-colour bricks with a blue brick plinth. Built by local men with local bricks made at the brickworks in Kingsland Road (employed by builders Clifford White's). An artesian well was bored and pipes lain under Mersea's roads providing the island with its own water supply (cost of the whole project £24 000). The iron tank is painted red oxide colour having a copper-covered pavilion roof with a wooden turret, itself having a copper covered pavilion roof with weathervane on the apex. Window openings have all been bricked in and have half-round gauged arches in rubbed bricks. Unlisted but should be recommended for local listing.