

FRINTON CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN



Tendring District Council

Frinton & Walton Town Council



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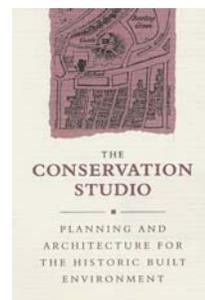
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I.0 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Conservation Area Management Plan

- I.1 While there has been a conservation area at Frinton for some 25 years, its effectiveness depends upon the way in which it is managed. This is not simply a matter of controls being exercised by the District Council, there are incentives too, and significant contributions to be made by local businesses, residents and community groups. The purpose of the plan, therefore, is to show how each can play a part in making Frinton a better place to live in, to work in and to visit.
- I.2 In 2001, Tendring District Council commissioned character appraisals of all the conservation areas in the District. These were updated and adopted as planning documents in 2005. Now, the Council has joined forces with the Frinton & Walton Town Council to commission a management plan for the Frinton Conservation Area so that future decision-making is coordinated with the common purpose of strengthening the qualities of the town. This is the first in a proposed series of management plans that will eventually cover all the conservation areas in the District.

Conservation Areas and their importance

- I.3 Conservation areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. The same legislation has since been consolidated into subsequent Acts and the current powers are to be found in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act in 1990. There are now some 9,500 conservation areas across England and Wales.
- I.4 Local authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This 'specialness' is judged against local criteria commonly laid down in the development plan. Conservation area designation is the primary means by which local authorities can safeguard, for future generations, areas of valued distinctive places that help to define the individual cultural identity of communities.
- I.5 Conservation areas vary greatly in their nature and character. They range from the centres of most of our historic towns and cities, through agricultural villages, industrial areas, model housing estates, and country houses set in their historic parks, to historic transport links and their environs, such as stretches of canal. They also, of course, include coastal resorts.

- I.6 The special character of these areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; trees and street furniture; significant views - all these and more make up the familiar and cherished local scene. Conservation areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings: all the features, listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its character.

The need for proactive management

- I.7 Government policy¹ has made it clear that conservation areas are not necessarily preservation areas. Change is an inevitable facet of modern life and the challenge is to manage change in a manner that does not lose sight of the special historic qualities of a place. Local authorities are expected to publish appraisals of their conservation areas, in order to identify their special interest, and then to prepare management plans to address the issues that arise from that analysis. Indeed, keeping appraisals and management proposals up to date is a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities.
- I.8 Proactive management of conservation areas gives clarity and robustness to decision making, which means that issues may be more defensible in, for instance, planning appeals.



The level crossing gates are both a real and a symbolic entrance to the town. There is much scope here for visual improvements that can be provided through active management.

¹ Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) – *Planning and the Historic Environment* - 1994

2.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 In 2005/06, when the District Council updated the Conservation Area Appraisals that had been prepared in 2001, a consultation exercise was carried out. This involved Town and Parish Councils and certain local amenity bodies. As a result, the documents were amended in the light of comments received before being adopted and published in March 2006.
- 2.2 The Management Plan process is subsequent to the appraisal and a variety of stakeholder organisations were contacted at the outset. On 1 March 2007, a public workshop was held at St Mary Magdalene Church Hall. This was an open meeting advertised in the local press, although people known to have an interest were also specifically invited. The workshop divided into four groups, each with a professional facilitator, to discuss topics arising from the assessment of the conservation area.
- 2.3 Groups and individuals were also encouraged to provide written responses to a simple questionnaire (see Appendix 1) over a subsequent consultation period. These responses and the workshop discussions have been used as a basis for developing the analysis and proposals in this plan.
- 2.4 The first draft of the Conservation Area Management Plan was launched on 31 May 2007 with an exhibition at Frinton Public Library. The draft and the exhibition were also displayed on the District Council's website and the event received coverage in the local press and on local radio.
- 2.5 The exhibition marked a four-week consultation period during which local residents, businesses and amenity groups were invited to make their views known through a simple questionnaire. The feedback is recorded in the Report of Consultation at Appendix 2 and, where relevant, comments have been taken into account in the final Management Plan.



3.0 IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

Legal consequences

3.1 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a general duty to review designations ‘from time to time’ and to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. There is a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals or grant schemes) to that end
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of most buildings in a conservation area² and the local authority, or the Secretary of State, may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area above a minimum size
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than elsewhere
- The Council, or the Secretary of State, may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices
- Powers exist for local authorities, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to assist with the upkeep of buildings in conservation areas, although these are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation

The requirements for planning permission in a conservation area.

3.2 Certain works to family houses within a conservation area, which are normally considered to be “permitted development”, will now require planning approval from the Council. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building works which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without a planning application is substantially smaller in a conservation area than elsewhere.

² If the volume of the building is less than 115 cubic metres, Conservation Area Consent is not required.

3.3 These are:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to family houses in conservation areas where they add more than 10 % or 50 cubic metres in volume to the property (whichever is greater). This is a slightly smaller amount than the usual requirement for planning permission which is limited to 15% or 70 cubic metres, except for terraced houses which are also limited to 10% or 50 cubic metres, wherever they are located
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to family houses in conservation areas, using stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a family house resulting in a material alteration to its shape, most notably the addition of dormer windows
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a family house whose cubic capacity exceeds 10 cubic metres. This is especially important for sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens within conservation areas



Extensions: There are tighter controls in conservation areas in both size and attention to detail.

- ### 3.4
- Where a building is statutorily listed, different legislation applies, as all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building require Listed Building Consent. Furthermore, commercial properties (such as shops and public houses), and houses which are in multiple occupation (flats) have far fewer permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

Satellite dishes.

- ### 3.5
- The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas. These state that the

installation of a satellite antenna on any building or structure within the curtilage of a family house in a conservation area is only permitted development if the following conditions are met:

- The dish does not exceed 90 m.m. in any dimension
- No part of it must exceed the highest part of the roof
- It is not installed on a chimney
- It is not on a building exceeding 15 metres in height
- It is not on a wall or roof slope fronting a highway or footway
- It is located so its visual impact is minimised
- It is removed as soon as it is no longer required
- There is not a dish already on the building or structure.

3.6 If any of these does not apply, a specific planning application will be required, and it is unlikely that permission will be granted.

Telecommunications masts.

3.7 The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in conservation areas without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications*.

Trees.

3.8 Within conservation areas, anyone intending to lop, top or fell a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with the opportunity to assess whether the tree makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. If it does, a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are not exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a managed orchard.

Expectations of local authorities

3.9 The designation and review of conservation areas are legal requirements. In support of these statutory duties, local authorities are expected to commit adequate resources by ensuring they have access to the necessary skills and that they adopt appropriate policies. They should also ensure that communities are sufficiently informed about the implications of designation so that they too can play their part.

3.10 Although the administration of conservation areas is largely a planning function, there are many other actions that can impact on character and appearance, for instance the maintenance of public buildings. It is important,

therefore, that conservation aims are coordinated across all local authority departments.

- 3.11 Standards designed for modern environments should not be applied unthinkingly to areas and buildings that have stood the test of time. Local authorities are, therefore, expected to be sensitive to the special architectural and historic interest of conservation areas and listed buildings in exercising, for instance, building control, fire regulations and highways standards.
- 3.12 The efficient delivery of a conservation service requires regular monitoring of change and the agents of change. Local authorities are expected to undertake periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change.

Expectations of owners and residents

- 3.13 Those who live and work in a conservation area are expected to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this, they must understand the need to take a contextual view of any proposals, rather than acting in isolation. Better proposals will benefit the conservation area as well as the applicant.
- 3.14 Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents can minimise the effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Expectations for community involvement

- 3.15 It is important that communities are well-informed about the qualities of their conservation areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. While the local authority is a useful source of advice, there is a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.
- 3.16 Town councils and conservation area advisory committees can provide a vital interface between communities and local authorities. They can focus local knowledge and local responses to policy initiatives and development proposals.

4.0 FRINTON'S SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST

The Frinton and Walton Conservation Area

- 4.1 A conservation area covering Frinton and Walton-on-the-Naze was first designated on 19 June 1982. It was revised and extended on 20 November 1989. A review of the conservation area was undertaken in 2001 and this was used as the basis for the conservation area appraisal.
- 4.2 A consultation exercise involving the Town Council took place in 2005/06 and the results were taken into account when the conservation area appraisal was formally adopted by Tendring District Council in March 2006. It is now a material consideration in the assessment of planning proposals.
- 4.3 The appraisal divided the conservation area into three principal parts: Walton, Frinton Park and Frinton. This management plan addresses the latter two parts, while Walton will be the subject of a further plan in due course.

Summary of special architectural and historic interest

- 4.4 The appraisal details the history of Frinton and its planned layout with wide streets and large house plots enclosed by the railway and the sea. The generally low density contrasts with the continuous frontages of the commercial focus on Connaught Avenue. The architecture is described as '*a built catalogue of English domestic architecture from the foundation of the resort in the 1890s to its heyday in the 1930s*'. This range includes Arts and Crafts houses, such as Voysey's Homestead, and the Modern Movement houses of Frinton Park laid out by Oliver Hill.



The Homestead by CFA Voysey: Perhaps the most important house in Frinton.

Summary of the character and appearance of the area

- 4.5 In addition to architecture and planform, the character of Frinton derives from generous planting both within the building plots and the streets. The wide streets have grassed verges punctuated by trees, and in 1903 the spaciousness was further enhanced when the Greensward was laid out to provide a coastal defence.
- 4.6 The Greensward and the beachfront provide the essential recreational area on which Frinton thrived as a resort. However, local people are proud of the absence of commercialism in these areas, which no doubt led Pevsner to describe the seaside resorts of Essex as '*ranging in character from uproariously popular Southend to select Frinton*'.³
- 4.7 The high proportion of local shops, as opposed to national multiples, in the retail core is regarded by many as a significant aspect of Frinton's character.
- 4.8 The Designations and Opportunities Map records the conservation area boundary and suggested additions, listed buildings and those that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. This latter category is a generous selection from the unlisted buildings. It includes all those with elements of Arts and Crafts or Modern Movement detailing. It also includes, for instance, the bungalows in the Central Avenue area because they were historically the natural response when completion of the Frinton Park Estate in the Modernist style eventually failed.



The beach that gives Frinton much of its purpose.

³ Pevsner, Nikolaus – *The Buildings of England: Essex* – 2nd Ed. 1965

5.0 CONSERVATION AREA POLICY

National policy and guidance

- 5.1 Central government policy on conservation areas is contained in PPG15.⁴ This covers the designation of areas and the responsibilities that stem from designation, including the appraisal of the special interest of conservation areas and the control of development affecting them. It also makes the general point that *'conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another'*.
- 5.2 PPG15 sets the expectations by urging local authorities *'to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment'*. The expectations are further developed in English Heritage guidance on the appraisal and management of conservation areas.⁵

The Local Development Plan

- 5.3 The current Local Plan was adopted in April 1998. It provides comprehensive policies for the review of conservation areas, and the control of development within them. Further policies address the need to control the design of new buildings, shopfronts, advertisements and the siting of satellite antenna.



Maintaining the quality of shopfronts through development control is vital to the character and prosperity of streets such as Connaught Avenue.

⁴ PPG15 - *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the historic environment* - 1994

⁵ English Heritage – *Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals* – 2005

English Heritage – *Guidance on Management Proposals for Conservation Areas* – 2005

5.4 Site specific policies seek to restrict non-retail uses in Connaught Avenue in order to maintain the predominance and vitality of shopping uses. They also promote the use of rear servicing of shops.

5.5 The local plan proposes a restriction on the height of new buildings and it designates the Avenues as an Area of Special Character where residential uses will be maintained. There are also policies to maintain the character of Modern Movement houses in the Frinton Park Estate

The Re-Deposit Draft Replacement Local Plan

5.6 For some time, the District Council has been working on a successor to the Local Plan to cover the period up to 2011. This was the subject of a public inquiry that ran from late 2006 into spring 2007. It is likely to be adopted later this year.

5.7 The replacement echoes the existing range of policies without the need to re-state national guidance. Chapter 10 provides specific policies for Frinton-on-Sea, Walton-on-the-Naze and Kirby Cross. They recognise the need to protect and enhance the historic character of the conservation area and the need to:

- Avoid the dilution of the shopping 'offer' in Connaught Avenue by resisting concentrations of non-shopping uses
- Refuse applications for development that would reduce the spacious character of The Avenues Area of Special Character
- Resist proposals for change of use or intensification in The Avenues Area of Special Character
- Promote the provision of rear servicing for shops
- Address traffic, parking and pedestrian issues in the town centre

The Local Development Framework

5.8 Although the replacement Local Plan has yet to be approved, the Council has already started work on the Local Development Framework (LDF) to cover the period up to 2021. In time, LDFs will succeed local plans to provide a more managerial approach to local planning. The first step towards the framework is a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS, which has now been approved, sets out the documents that will be relevant and a timetable for their production. It is important, therefore, that the protection and management of the historic environment are adequately represented on this agenda.

5.9 In particular, it will be necessary to ensure that the character of the conservation area is defined in the LDF so that characteristics, such as

spaciousness and low density can be protected from the threat of over-development.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 5.10 When guidance is formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), following public consultation, it has the full weight of planning policy. It is important, therefore, that conservation advice that cannot be included in principal policies should be adopted as SPG. At present, the Council has no SPG that relates to the historic environment, although it does rely upon a shopfront guide produced by the County Council. The County also publishes guidance on technical matters, such as pargetting, pointing with lime mortar, conservatories, the renewal of timber window frames and infill development.

Future Guidance

- 5.11 The approved Local Development Scheme sets out the arrangements for transferring some of the existing guidance into the LDF. In addition, the agenda for the LDF provides for the development of new guidance, to be known as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). These include SPD on Open Space and a generic SPG on Conservation Areas. The Council is also committed to reviewing the need to bring forward SPDs on further subjects as issues may warrant and staff resources permit. Clearly, there is scope for the addition of guidance on historic environment issues at the next opportunity.



Boundary walls, especially those making use of misshapen kiln reject bricks, are an important feature of the conservation area. Guidance on boundary walls would explain that importance, suggest appropriate detailing and address issues such as creating new openings and parking in front gardens.

6.0 THE CHALLENGES FRINTON FACES

- 6.1 A wide range of issues that may threaten the historic character of the conservation area have emerged from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, from consultation with particular interest groups, from the public workshop held on 1 March 2007 and from the questionnaires issued then and at the exhibition.

Maintaining Frinton's uniqueness

- 6.2 The qualities of Frinton were considered to be undermined by ill-considered developments, some of which have involved the demolition of older houses, resulting in uncharacteristic higher densities. Concerns were expressed that the level crossing gates, that so define Frinton, may be changed. There were also fears that local shops may be vulnerable to being taken over by national multiples leading to a 'clone town' effect.

The impact and location of new development

- 6.3 The historical houses in the Avenues tend to be individual, often asymmetrical, designs set in large plots. This character is easily eroded by poorly designed alterations and extensions, by the sub-division of plots and by the construction of similar and undistinguished house types. These issues are not restricted to the Avenues: tall modern buildings dominate parts of the Esplanade, while there have been proposals to replace single houses in Frinton Park with flat developments.



Tall development out of place in the context of the Greensward and the Esplanade.

- 6.4 There is criticism also of the large blocks built on Connaught Avenue in the 1960s. However, it must be acknowledged that Frinton is no stranger to

radically different architecture, as the Modern Movement houses demonstrate, and it may be that the evidence of later periods is part of that continuum. What is important for Frinton is that quality is maintained and this has been the problem for Connaught Avenue.

Managing the pace of change

6.5 While it may be the desire of many people to resist all change, it must be accepted that change is inevitable. This is manifest in new development, but it is less obvious in the gradual increase of vacant space above shops, advertising in the form of plastic shopfronts and 'A' boards on pavements, blank elevations to supermarkets, and traffic congestion particularly caused by service vehicles.

6.6 Clearly there is a major challenge to find ways to accommodate change without losing sight of the special qualities that make Frinton unique.

Maintaining character and appearance

6.7 There is abundant evidence of the tendency for historical detail to be lost when building elements are replaced. The timber joinery of doors and windows is often replaced with plastics, and concrete substitutes are used for roofing materials. Erosion is also seen in the details of shopfronts and boundary walls. Each individual case may be insignificant, but the cumulative effect can be damaging.

6.8 The same has been noted in the undermining of the plain simplicity of the Modern Movement houses. The Conservation Area Appraisal, for instance, notes the use of rough render, poor detailing of copings and balconies, brown plastic windows and dense unsympathetic planting.



Plain simplicity is the essence of the Modern Movement houses.

- 6.9 A decline is also reported in the maintenance of public areas. Failing trees are not replaced, paving is less maintained and the grass is cut less often. In some parts there is a clutter of redundant or unwanted signage and street furniture.
- 6.10 A sign of changing times, however, is that the beach huts that once had to be discreet are now seen as 'drab'. Here, more vitality is sought.

Supporting vitality and vibrancy

- 6.11 While housing may look after itself with an adequate level of controls, the economic core of Connaught Avenue is more fragile and it is important that it is supported if it is not to suffer decline or radical change. Traffic and parking, loading and servicing have been identified as significant factors, but promoting support for local shops is vital if existing values are to be maintained.



The impact of a continuous fascia can be reduced by dividing it into separate properties.

7.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Designation

- 7.1 The boundary of the conservation area has been considered several times, when it has been extended in the past and in the course of the character appraisal. There are those who have suggested that the whole of Frinton south of the railway line should be included, but there is a danger that this would simply dilute the special interest that justifies designation.
- 7.2 Properties between Pole Barn Lane and Hadleigh Road, and between Winchester Road and Raglan Road, for instance, are later and more mixed in character. While they may have pleasant qualities, they cannot be said to have the ‘*special architectural and historic interest*’ that is necessary for designation as a conservation area.
- 7.3 At this stage, therefore, it is proposed to include Upper Fourth Avenue for the sake of completeness, as the character appraisal recommends, and to make minor additions on Upper Third Avenue, Connaught Avenue and Raglan Road.
- 7.4 Frinton and Walton are distinctly separate places with their own identities. It is suggested that the conservation area should be divided, in recognition of their respective characters, into one for Walton and one for Frinton and the Frinton Park Estate. This division has already been acknowledged in the approach to management plans.
- 7.5 Where there are buildings that have special local interest, but do not qualify nationally as listed buildings, there is increasing support from central government for Local Listing⁶. Although there is no statutory basis for local lists, they have been accepted as significant considerations in planning appeals.
- 7.6 To establish a local list, it is necessary to establish criteria and procedures. Local lists are particularly effective where communities are involved in the selection, but the list must also be endorsed by the local authority. Suggested criteria are:
- **Design merit:** Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note? Does it have qualities of age, style or distinctive characteristics relative to the area? Does it have landmark quality?

⁶ For instance in the White Paper – *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* – March 2007

- **Historic interest:** Does it relate to an important aspect of local social, economic, cultural, religious or political history? Does it have an historic association with an important local feature?
- **Historic association:** Does it have close associations with famous local people or events (must be well documented)? Does it relate closely to any statutorily protected structure or site?
- **Survival:** Does it survive in a substantial and recognisable form? Are historic features and layout still present? Does it represent a significant element in the development of the area?
- **General:** Does it provide an important visual amenity locally?

7.7 In Frinton's conservation area, buildings for local listing would be selected from those already identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area. Other structures may also qualify, such as seaside shelters or items of street furniture. Some local people have already begun to make suggestions.



Second Avenue: Several of the large houses that typify the conservation area would be eligible for local listing.

Promotion and training

- 7.8 It is important that local people should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information on the history of Frinton and its special qualities. This could be an outcome of the character appraisal process.
- 7.9 Community involvement already happens. The Frinton Residents' Association, for instance, has a Planning Sub-committee. There may, however, be benefits in formalising a Conservation Area Advisory Committee to act as an important interface between local understanding and Council decision making.

- 7.10 There are opportunities to improve skills at all levels. The District Council's Historic Environment Champion will be instrumental in seeking to raise awareness of conservation issues among elected councillors. The County Council is the key to the improvement of historic building craft skills in the building trades through its programme of training events based at Cressing Temple Barns.
- 7.11 Essex County Council has further important roles: It maintains the Historic Environment Record for the county, it provides specialist archaeology advice, it holds the Buildings-at-Risk Register, it carries out research into the historic environment of Essex, and it publishes information and guidance.

Policy and guidance

- 7.12 Planning policy in the adopted and replacement local plans covers general points in relation to conservation. There is now a need for more specific policies, controls and guidance to support the managerial approach that is necessary for the long term future of Frinton. It is important to establish these needs now so that they can feed into the programme for the Local Development Framework, which will succeed the existing local plans.



Public realm: A manual would promote better materials and detailing than this highly visible mass concrete street corner.

- 7.13 Issues where guidance will make a significant difference to public understanding include:
- New buildings in historic areas – Siting, design and materials
 - Shopfronts – Design approaches for different types of building
 - Traditional doors and windows – Maintaining , repairing and replacing as well as energy efficiency and sustainability

- Streetscape manual – Treatment of the public realm, building on the guidance provided by English Heritage.⁷
- Boundary walls and parking within gardens – Retaining historical detail, planting, landscaping
- Trees and hedges – Maintenance, species, legal requirements
- Treatment of Modern Movement houses – Particular guidance for particular circumstances

7.14 Where guidance has public support and has been formally adopted by the District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document, it will carry weight in the consideration of planning proposals. Guidance also reduces the need for the Council to repeat advice in every case.

Control

7.15 Local authorities already have controls available through their planning powers, and much depends upon how they are interpreted and implemented. For instance, any material changes to the appearance of properties that are not single dwellings require planning permission, but the interpretation of what is 'material' is left to the Council. A new shopfront is generally regarded as a material change, but there is less certainty about the renewal of windows on upper storeys or a change in roof materials.



Despite the retention of shopfronts, the strong contribution that this building makes to the character of the conservation area is diminished by the insensitive replacement of windows on the upper floors.

7.16 Single dwellings have considerable permitted development rights that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission. These works include, for example, changes to doors, windows, roof materials or rainwater goods and the construction of minor extensions.

⁷ English Heritage – *Streets for All: East of England* – 2005

Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to historic areas. An Article 4(2) direction, prepared and approved by the District Council, can remove permitted development rights. This does not necessarily prevent alterations, but it does mean that planning permission is required.

- 7.17 Commercial buildings and flats have fewer permitted development rights, but an Article 4(1) direction can be useful for controlling, for instance, the painting of walls. These directions can only be approved by the Secretary of State.
- 7.18 There would be scope for three Article 4 directions in Frinton for the Avenues, Connaught Avenue and the Frinton Park Estate.
- 7.19 It has been suggested that Frinton would benefit from more prescription over the design of new buildings at the outset, rather than leaving the design issues to be argued in each case. One way to do this would be to introduce a design code. Coding would set out principles for new buildings according to their location and context. The guidance provided by the design code would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document with the implication that planning decisions would be more straightforward where proposals are put forward in accordance with the code.
- 7.20 A common complaint is that planning decisions are inconsistent. While each has to be determined on its own merits, much can be achieved by having detailed policy and guidance, and training to help elected councillors to work within these constraints.

Enforcement and monitoring

- 7.21 It is important to have an objective understanding of change so that informed responses can be made. These may be adjustments to policy and practice or action for enforcement and compliance. As English Heritage puts it:
‘The aim should be to establish a virtuous circle of monitoring, review and action as necessary to maintain a sustainable equilibrium’
- 7.22 It is recommended that a photographic survey is undertaken as a baseline record for measuring change, monitoring building condition and to provide evidence for enforcement. For the latter, however, it is important that the record is updated every four years because breaches more than four years old cannot be enforced against.⁸ Communities can assist with this work.

⁸ The four year rule applies to enforcement against works carried out without planning permission or contrary to a condition of an existing permission. There is no time limit for enforcement related to listed building consent.

- 7.23 Most local authorities subscribe to the Cabinet Office *Enforcement Concordat*, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement, such as openness, consistency, proportionality and responding to complaints. The District Council should take these forward into an enforcement strategy in order to:
- Explain the scope of planning enforcement
 - Openly define priorities
 - Set measurable standards for service delivery
 - Explain how investigations are carried out
 - Explain enforcement procedures and enforcement actions
- 7.24 While the need to ensure public safety will always come first, enforcement in relation to the historic environment should generally have the next highest priority because so much historic fabric is irreplaceable. The strategy should also explain the circumstances when the Council would make use of Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity (S215) Notices.



Neglect can be addressed through conservation area management

Schemes of enhancement

- 7.25 Physical improvements to Frinton may be general throughout the conservation area or specific to particular sites. General improvements to public areas would include raising the quality of materials and detailing for paving, coordinated schemes for signage and lighting, planting and maintenance of street trees and verges, and management of traffic and servicing.
- 7.26 There are also general improvements to be made to commercial property. Better use of upper floors would provide economic benefits, and passive security for premises and streets. Shopfront improvements more suited to the character of the buildings would increase their attractiveness. However, long term survival of the commercial core depends upon economic

attractiveness and there could be benefits in promoting local patronage through a loyalty scheme.

7.27 Site specific proposals include:

- A better setting for the railway station and level crossing gates. This is where the first impression of Frinton is made



Improvements to the 'gateway' could include pavilion developments to either side, less tarmac and more planting.

- Improvement of the junction of Connaught Avenue and Old Road. This 'gateway' to the shopping area could be enhanced by more-sensitive developments on the raw ends of the 1960s buildings that currently frame the street



Connaught Avenue: An enhancement scheme would provide a narrower carriageway, wider pavements, build-outs to provide crossing places, better paving, signage, and planting. Further improvements could be made to shopfronts and rear servicing.

- The shopping experience in Connaught Avenue would be lifted by a coordinated programme of paving and planting. Build-outs from the pavements would provide pedestrian crossing points and traffic restraints. Associated works would include better shopfronts, more subdued advertising and the promotion of rear servicing
- There is scope for further enhancements at the junctions of Ashlyns Road with Fourth Avenue, Connaught Avenue with Holland Road and, at the Frinton Park Estate, where Central Avenue meets the Greensward. Here there are opportunities to reclaim excess carriageway for pedestrian use, to provide better planting, and to provide better amenities, such as seating and signage



Enhancement opportunities: Pedestrian walks and at Fourth Avenue.

- A solution is also required for the disused buildings at the Walton Road end of Central Avenue
- The pedestrian walks that thread through the conservation area could be enhanced by better surfaces, lighting and signage

- Contrary to the expected conservatism of Frintonians, there is a popular view that the beach huts would be enlivened by the introduction of colour. Indeed, the Association of Frinton Beach Hut Owners is not averse to this



8.0 DELIVERING ACTION

A Vision for the future of Frinton's Conservation Area

- 8.1 It is important that Frinton should be self-sustaining both socially and economically if it is to remain in anything like its present state. Achieving this requires constant management. There is always a natural desire to leave things as they are but, in reality, nothing stands still in a changing world. Like gardens, places have to be nurtured.

A Strategy to deliver this future

- 8.2 It is important that the strategy for future management should be more than a 'wish list'. In addition to a series of proposals, the strategic aspect must include timescales and responsibilities. These are provided in the Action Plan at Appendix 3, which establishes a programme that will enable a managerial approach to achieve an equilibrium for the Frinton Conservation Area.
- 8.3 The Plan includes actions for the short, medium and long term timescales. The latter may only be aspirations at present, pending the development of resources, but it is important for Frinton to have ambitions.
- 8.4 Resources, however, are not the issue for immediate actions. Spending decisions are constantly being made and the challenge is to ensure that those investments are made in ways that benefit the special character of the conservation area.
- 8.5 Success will require commitment by all Council services and their partners to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, such as planning permissions, building control, fire regulations and highways standards, which is why an inter-service forum is suggested. Likewise, it is important that when resources are deployed, they should be coordinated to ensure that the investment is in the best interests of the town as a whole.
- ### **Priorities for action**
- 8.6 While significant and visible advances could be made by implementing grand projects for the enhancement of eyesore sites, these are heavily dependent on funding. More fundamental and of lasting value will be action to secure the basic foundations of sound policy and guidance. Policy development is already happening with the forthcoming Local Development Framework – the need is to secure an appropriate emphasis on the historic environment as a driver for quality, social cohesion and economic stability.
- 8.7 Similarly, there is a major issue of maintaining the qualities that already exist. There may be debates as to how the public sector commits maintenance

budgets, but this is also an issue for private owners. This is promoted by the organisation *Maintain Britain's Heritage* and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building's (SPAB) *National Gutters Day*, both of which can be harnessed to good effect in Frinton.

Key Projects

- 8.8 Nonetheless, capital projects are vital for raising confidence. Perhaps the most important is to revitalise Connaught Avenue with a programme for better paving, planting, pedestrian crossing facilities, parking and servicing regimes, and shopfront improvements. Second to this would be urban design improvements to the 'gateways' to the town – the railway station and the Connaught Avenue/Old Road junction.



The Railway Station is a particularly fine building that would benefit from an improved setting.

Implementation

- 8.9 While much of the scope for action inevitably rests with Tendring District Council, there is no reason why the community should remain entirely passive. The effectiveness of any scheme for Connaught Avenue will be considerably enhanced by the cooperation of its constituent businesses and the Business Improvement District (BID) concept might provide an appropriate model. On a wider basis, there is scope for a public/private partnership which would not only place community interests in a driving position, but could also improve access to external funding.

Commitment to the Vision and Delivery

- 8.10 For the management plan to succeed, it is vital that it should be adopted not only by the District and Town Councils but also by other stakeholder organisations. It is proposed that this should be promoted through a Partnership Statement or Charter from which management structures can be developed.

Periodic review

- 8.11 While the Action Plan assigns responsibilities and timescales to the projected tasks, the management aspect will only be meaningful if the programme is subject to regular review in order to evaluate progress. To begin with, it is recommended that reviews should be undertaken on a quarterly basis, although the frequency of the cycle may relax when individual projects develop programmes of their own.
- 8.12 The review cycle for this management plan will be triggered by its adoption in autumn 2007. The next review will follow three months later in the early spring of 2008.
- 8.13 Responsibility for conducting the review is with Planning Services.



Maintaining the essential relationship of verge, pavement, boundary, garden and trees is fundamental to the character of the Frinton Conservation Area.

Appendix I. The questionnaire

Frinton Conservation Area Management Plan

The exhibition summarises the issues and proposals for the Management Plan.

An initial draft of the management plan for Frinton is available at:

- Frinton Library
 - Frinton & Walton Town Council Offices
 - Tendring District Council Offices, Weeley
- ...and on the District Council's website at www.tendringdc.gov.uk

Questionnaire:

1. Do you agree with the assessment of Frinton and the challenges it faces?

YES / NO / COMMENT:

2. Do you have further points to add?

YES / NO / COMMENT:

3. Do you agree with the opportunities for improvement?

YES / NO / COMMENT:

4. Do you see any further scope for action?

YES / NO / COMMENT:

5. What do you see as the main priority?

YES / NO / COMMENT:

Please continue overleaf, if necessary, or write separately.

Comments should be returned by 21 June 2007 to:
The Conservation Studio, 1 Querns Lane, Cirencester, GL7 1RL
...or... info@theconservationstudio.co.uk

If you prefer, you may leave comments with the Town or District Councils and they will be forwarded.

Appendix 2. Report of consultation

	Name:	Comment:	Response:	Accept/ reject:
1	Anon	Resist demolition of old houses to build flats. Hold more public meetings. Maintain streets. Demolish former Masons' lodge. <u>Priority:</u> Repair sea walls.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
2	Y S Brockman	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Concern for station and gates. <u>Priority:</u> Connaught Avenue	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
3	D R Skinner	Agrees assessment. Maintain special character. Improve road surfaces. Noise pollution from jet skis. <u>Priority:</u> Prevent sub-division of houses in the Avenues.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Noted. Noise issues will be referred to Environmental Health.	Accept
4	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Maintain character of the Avenues. Improve road surfaces. <u>Priority:</u> Maintain the ethos of Frinton by resisting redevelopment for flats.	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
5	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Would like to see action to support green initiatives such as renewable energy. <u>Priority:</u> Protecting important buildings and curtailing the erection of flats.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Green initiatives can be supported provided they do not conflict with the character of the conservation area.	Accept with reservation
6	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Concern for maintenance of grass areas. <u>Priority:</u> Prevent demolition of large houses and replacement with blocks of flats.	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
7	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Concern for stronger planning, in relation to replacement of houses with flats, and enforcement. Values individuality of shops on Connaught Avenue. <u>Priority:</u> Preservation of green spaces and individual houses.	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
8	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. <u>Priority:</u> Pavements in Connaught	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept

Avenue.

9	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. <u>Priority:</u> Pavements in Connaught Avenue and full use of property above shops. 'Return Connaught Avenue to its former glory'.	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
10	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Pavements and trees outside the conservation area also need attention. Encourage people 'to respect and maintain this lovely town'. <u>Priority:</u> Litter, vandalism and development control.	Views generally consistent with the proposals although some are outside the scope of conservation area management.	Generally accept
11	N W Field?	Agrees assessment and some of the opportunities. The whole of Frinton should be a conservation area. Keep to the brief set by Powell Cooper: spacious houses at one end and well-designed smaller houses at the other. 'That way we are a healthy community'. <u>Priority:</u> Maintain what we have, then enhance it by looking forwards not backwards.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Concern that too wide a designation would dilute the 'special architectural or historic interest'.	Generally accept
12	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Need to promote civic pride. Enhancements could include the approaches to the golf and tennis clubs. Install cctv to combat vandalism (eg to beach huts) and antisocial behavior, paid for by a Greensward parking levy. <u>Priority:</u> Programme of improvements will need a 'full and regular maintenance programme to avoid any future decline in environmental standards'. Include a 20mph speed limit throughout the area.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
13	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Pedestrianise Connaught Street with furniture allowed outside restaurants. <u>Priority:</u> Maintain retail shops by discounting rates in order to save them. 'A vital shop precinct is essential'.	Views generally consistent with proposals to improve Connaught Avenue and promote local shops. While pedestrian priority is desirable, full pedestrianisation can detract from vitality.	Mostly accept

14	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. <u>Priority</u> : Maintain existing shops.	Views consistent with the proposals. Noted.	Accept
15	Anon	Agrees assessment and opportunities. Why include only Upper Fourth Avenue? Concern about unlawful and dangerous parking in summer peak times. <u>Priority</u> : Over-development of flats. 'In particular, the destruction of decent houses to build flats and infilling of gardens'.	Views generally consistent with the proposals. Noted. The inclusion of Upper Fourth Avenue removes an anomalous hole in the existing designation.	Accept
16	Frinton Residents' Association	Full support for the assessment and opportunities including replacement of missing trees.	Views generally consistent with the proposals.	Accept
		Priorities:		
		a. Not to lose spacious gardens to infilling development	Consistent with the proposals - Noted	Accept
		b. Not to permit erection of fences over 1 metre high on front boundaries	Consistent with planning principles, but each case considered on its merits	Generally accept
		c. Ensure compliance with agreed planning policies for all applications	Consistent with the proposals - Noted	Accept
		d. Ensure that Development Committee members have indepth knowledge of planning policy, access to training and reference material, and briefing on the management proposals	Consistent with the proposals - Noted	Accept
		e. Ensure the Council uses its powers to prevent properties falling into disrepair	Consistent with the proposals - Noted	Accept
		f. Inform community of planning decisions through the local press including reasons.	The Council will consider how best to feed back information to communities	Generally accept
		g. The District Council should not allow new buildings where modern designs clash with their neighbours	Consistent with the proposals - Noted	Accept
		Question a. Who would set up a Conservation Area Advisory Committee and what standards of knowledge would be expected of its members?	It would be for the District Council to establish such a committee. Members would be chosen for their relevance including local and planning knowledge	
		Question b. Who was consulted on the appraisals and why was FRA not included?	The Council will respond to explain this point	

Comments:

1. Maintain non-commercialisation of Greensward

Points 1-6 are consistent with the proposals and have been noted

Accept

2. Produce SPG for Frinton as soon as possible to cover essential items such as shopfronts

3. Control colour of beach huts

4. Propose local listing for outstanding buildings

5. Support for Article 4 Directions

6. Ensure adequate trained staff to implement the Management Plan proposals

Appendix 3. The Action Plan

SHORT TERM

Action:	Achieved by:	Responsibility:
Designations	Redesignation as two conservation areas with the suggested extensions	Planning Services
	Establish local list	Planning Services
Conservation policy	Identify place of conservation in LDF	Planning Services
Coordination across Council services	Establish inter-service forum	All District and County service departments with property-holding interests
Development control	Review approach to materiality, replacement buildings, promoting quality, advertising ('A' boards)	Planning Services
	Implement three Article 4 directions	Planning Services
Enforcement	Review Priorities and procedures in a new strategy	Planning Services
	Establish photographic baseline survey	Planning Services
Education	Publish information about the conservation area including a statement of character	Planning Services
	Heritage training for Councillors	Historic Environment Champion
Enhancement	Design scheme for Connaught Avenue	Tendring DC and Essex County Highways
	Plant further trees	Leisure Services
Promote vitality	Establish shopping loyalty scheme	Town Council and Chamber of Trade and Commerce

MEDIUM TERM

Action:	Achieved by:	Responsibility:
Policy	Publish and adopt Supplementary Planning Documents for: Conservation, Shopfront design, New development in historic areas, Traditional doors and windows	Planning Services
	Publish street design guide	Essex County Highways, Planning Services, and Leisure Services
Promotion	Establish a Conservation Area Advisory Committee	Planning Services
	Establish regular programmes of conservation and history seminars	Local societies
	Promote Heritage Open Days	Town and District Councils
	Promote maintenance	Planning Services
	Promote conservation skills training	Essex CC
Enhancement	Implement Connought Avenue scheme	Tendring DC and Essex County Highways
	Promote railway crossing scheme	Essex County Highways and Railtrack
	Improve signage	Essex County Highways
	Further planting	Leisure Services
	Beach huts colour scheme	Frinton Beach Huts Association

LONG TERM

Action:	Achieved by:	Responsibility:
Celebration	Heritage awards scheme	Town Council

Enhancement	Further improvement schemes especially to road junctions	Essex County Highways
	Improvement scheme for pedestrian walkways	Essex County Highways and Tendring DC
	Improved street lighting	Essex County Highways

Appendix 4. References

The Cabinet Office – *Enforcement Concordat* – 1998

Dept. of Culture, Media and Sport – *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* – 2007

English Heritage – *Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals* – 2005

English Heritage – *Guidance on Management Proposals for Conservation Areas* – 2005

English Heritage – *Streets for All: East of England* – 2005

Essex County Council – *Shopfront Design* and other conservation guidance

Hitchmough, Wendy – *The Homestead, C F A Voysey* – 1994

HMSO – Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

HMSO – PPG15 – *Planning and the Historic Environment* – 1994

Jacobs, N – *Frinton and Walton, a pictorial history* – 1995

Pevsner, Nikolaus – *The Buildings of England: Essex* – 2nd ed, 1965

Tendring District Council – *Conservation Area Character Appraisals* – March 2006

Tendring District Council – *Tendring Local Plan* – Adopted 1998

Tendring District Council – *Re-deposit draft Local Plan* – 2006

Websites:

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.essexcc.gov.uk

www.maintainourheritage.co.uk

www.spab.org.uk

www.tendringdc.gov.uk