

Canewdon High Street**1 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS****Public Realm Improvements**

1.1 The conservation area would benefit from a street improvement scheme to replace old and inappropriate street furniture and enhance the public realm. There is evidence that past management of the public realm has not always respected the special character of the area, with the introduction of features more suited to an urban setting. As well as visually enhancing the environment, an improvement scheme would help to provide some cohesion to the conservation area where modern intervention threatens to undermine its integrity. Improvements could include: -

- Replacement of the street lights with simple, well designed street lamps that reflect the semi-rural character of the village. Given the extent of modern development, pastiche 'heritage' lamps would not be appropriate.
- The railings around the village pond should be replaced with something more appropriate to the rural setting, such as traditional white post and rail fencing, and access to the green open space around it improved and signed. A bench could also be provided here.
- The concrete bus shelter outside Costcutter should be replaced. It is outside the conservation area boundary but appears to be of the same suite of street furniture as the existing street lamps and should be replaced as part of the general street improvements. It is currently defaced by graffiti adding to its unattractive appearance.
- The treatment of the new footpath to Canute Close should be improved if the opportunity arises. The replacement of the sign with a traditionally designed white finger post and general tidying of the area would make a big difference, but ideally a bound gravel surface treatment and brick wall or hedge boundary would be more suitable.
- The southern end of Gays Lane could be improved by general tidying, a new footpath sign and resurfacing in bound gravel, whilst generally retaining an un-made quality.
- The junction of Althorne Way could be improved by replacing the street lights and the road signs. The main road and footpaths are generally tarmac, but use of a different surface treatments, for

example at the Althorne Way junction where the footway has been built out, would add interest to the streetscape.

Boundary Changes

- 1.2 The conservation area broadly follows the historic settlement pattern as shown in the First Edition OS map, taking in older development principally along the south side of the street and large plots of older properties to the north. It rightly excludes the school complex and surrounding modern development including Costcutters, where the historic form and grain comprising small cottages and workshops built up to the street edge has been lost. However it is recommended that some small changes are made to the boundary of the conservation area. At the east end the boundary should take in the front garden of Beecroft with its important group of trees. It should also encompass the southern end of Althorne Way to include the wide verges and trees, and the verges outside Crouch View Villas up to their boundary hedges in order to protect the green open spaces within the public realm. Similarly on the north side of the High Street at the west end of the conservation area it is suggested that the long front gardens of the bungalows at Penty-Bryn, Kamari, Lucknow and Rachel, as well as the front gardens of Jose and The Robins be included, and also the corner plot of the Congregational Chapel in as far as it impacts on the conservation area at that point. The proposed changes would protect the more green and open character of the High Street on its north side up to the street edge.
- 1.3 An additional boundary change is proposed to take in the car park to the rear of the Anchor pub. This area impacts on the conservation area both in terms of the views down Anchor Lane and in its affect on the setting of the listed pub, and it would benefit greatly from improved landscaping. Backland areas such as this are vulnerable to development, and inclusion within the conservation area would strengthen control over inappropriate development.

Additional Planning Controls

- 1.4 In order to preserve and enhance the traditional features and appearance of conservation areas, local planning authorities are empowered to introduce directions under Article 4 of the Planning Act to remove permitted development rights in respect of such things as windows, doors, fences, walls and frontage areas. Generally, the older properties have so far survived surprisingly well without excessive alteration, although there has been some erosion of character, for example with replacement of timber windows with UPVC, loss of original doors, the rendering of exposed brick and the use of concrete roof tiles. Boundary treatments have been identified as a significant element in protecting the rural quality of the village and alteration or loss to these can undermine the special character. It is important to try to prevent further erosion of character and to actively promote the

restoration of original features such as windows, doors and front boundary treatments. Despite the number of modern properties within the Canewdon High Street conservation area, consideration should be given to the introduction of Article 4 (2) directions to strengthen the ability of the District Council to preserve its character by protecting alterations to important unlisted buildings such as Russell Row, Rest Cottages and Vine Cottage. Measures that would be relevant include:-

- Protection against alterations to a property affecting windows, doors and other openings to front elevations, including the insertion of new windows and doors.
- Painting of the exterior of any wall of a dwelling house in a different colour, or the application of render or cladding to external wall.
- Erection of any fences, walls, gates and other forms of enclosure if they adjoin the highway, and construction within the curtilage of a dwelling house of a vehicle hard standing.

Re-development

The extent of modern development in Canewdon is indicative of the demand for housing in the area and the relative affluence of the population. Late 20th century and 21st century developments have not taken due account of their surroundings particularly in terms of scale and use of appropriate materials, and have tended not to respect the historic grain or building line. Future development must take into account the importance of sympathetic design, in accordance with policies BC1-2 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan. There are no significant empty plots at present, and there is little scope for enhancing the area through redevelopment in the short term. Gardens are an important part of the character of the area particularly on the north side of the High Street and infill in these areas should be avoided. A small plot has been created by the relocation of the footpath at the junction with Anchor Lane although it is unlikely to be developed due to its small size. However as opportunities arise it will be vital to consider developments in terms of scale, massing, materials and detailing to ensure that new development reinforces the special qualities of the area.