

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Agenda
Item**

**Report of Director of Technical & Environmental Services
to
The Conservation Working Party
on
12th November 2002**

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Canvey Road Character Appraisal

Part I Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the draft Canvey Road Character Appraisal which proposes the designation of part of Canvey Road as a Conservation Area, as the basis for public consultation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **Recommend to Cabinet the draft Canvey Road Character Appraisal which proposes designation of the area as a conservation area, as the basis for public consultation**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Report '*Criteria for Conservation Area Character Appraisals*' submitted to this meeting of the Working Party sets out the background to this Character Appraisal.
- 3.2 A local resident, Mrs. J. Lamb, has requested that the section of Canvey Road between Western Road and Marine Parade, including Ray Walk and Ray Close be designated a conservation area. She has provided a substantial amount of supporting information on the history of the area's development.
- 3.3 The request is understood to be supported by other local residents and has been made in the context of alterations and proposed alterations to properties in the area which were considered to be eroding the area's intrinsic interest.
- 3.4 The area was developed as part of the Chapmanslord Estate which also includes frontages to Marine Parade. Although these have been substantially altered with front additions and balcony enclosures they have been included in the appraisal but are not recommended for inclusion in a conservation area. The appraisal area is shown on the site plan in **Appendix 1**.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 The text of the draft Character Appraisal is in **Appendix 2**. Attention is drawn in particular to the Summary of Special Interest in the appraisal.
- 4.2 It is clear that the appraisal area has special architectural or historic interest, and meets some of the criteria for conservation area designation as defined in Table 1 of Report '*Criteria for Conservation Area Character Appraisals*' submitted to this meeting of the Working Party.
- 4.3 As well as possessing special interest, it must also be desirable to preserve or enhance the area. The area's architecture and townscape are valuable assets for the Borough's environment, albeit on a small scale, and it is considered desirable to protect them from unsympathetic change, as far

as possible. The need for an Article 4 Direction is considered below in section 5.

- 4.4 Designation would also enable conservation policies to be applied to the area and guidance in PPG 15, which generally enable stricter design control where planning permission is needed from the Council.
- 4.5 Designation would make the repair and restoration of windows on front elevations eligible for Window Grants. The present Grants scheme is small and has very limited funding (£5,500 pa) but the possibility of a grant may encourage suitable repairs rather than unsympathetic alterations.
- 4.6 Designation has other resource implications in terms of additional staff time required for development control and monitoring, particularly if an Article 4 Direction is made. But in view of the relatively small number of properties included, this is not considered significant.
- 4.7 Designation is, therefore, considered desirable as a means of preserving the area's special interest. The boundary of the proposed conservation area is shown in **Appendix 1**. It includes the following properties:
 - 1-31 (odd) Canvey Road
 - 2-44 (even) Canvey Road
 - 81-82 Marine Parade
 - 1-5 (consec.) Ray Close
 - 1-10 (consec.) Ray Walk

5. Article 4 Direction

- 5.1 All the buildings in the appraisal area are believed to be houses and as such are subject to extensive permitted development rights. These would enable significant alterations to windows, roofs and chimney stacks, the construction of porches and additions, the demolition of front boundary walls and the formation of hardstandings in gardens without the need for planning permission. Much of the area's interest depends on these architectural details. Although some additional planning control would be imposed by designation (notably on the size of additions and some roof alterations), in view of past alterations there would be a need to make an Article 4 Direction, to enable the control of features such as windows, porches and boundary enclosures.
- 5.2 Such a Direction would remove the automatic right to carry out specified classes of permitted development without planning permission. It would enable permitted development to be controlled in such a way that it does not harm the area's character.
- 5.3 Directions have in the past been made to control permitted development in several of the Borough's conservation areas but not in conjunction with designation of the area. Advice in PPG 15 is that the Secretary of State *'does not consider that the designation of a conservation area in itself automatically justifies making an Article 4 Direction. Such Directions may, however, have a role to play if they would help protect the features that are the key elements of particular conservation areas'* And where his approval is necessary for a Direction, he will generally be in favour of them where they are *'backed by a clear assessment of an area's special architectural or historic interest, where the importance to that special interest of the features in question is established, where the local authority can demonstrate local support for the direction, and where the direction involves the minimum withdrawal of permitted development rights necessary to achieve its objective.'* (para 4.23)
- 5.4 No specific proposals are made at this stage. Consultation on the need for a Direction would be undertaken as part of the consultation on the appraisal. Following the consultation, a further report will be submitted with detailed recommendations.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Report to Borough Local Plan Review Working Party, '*Criteria for Conservation Area Character Appraisals*'

7. Appendices

- 7.1 The following appendices are attached to this report.

- 7.1.1 **Appendix 1:** Plan of the Appraisal Area and the Proposed Conservation Area

- 7.1.2 **Appendix 2:** text of the draft Canvey Road Character Appraisal

DRAFT CANVEY ROAD CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).

Policies and guidance for Conservation Areas are given by the Government in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning & the Historic Environment)* 1994, by English Heritage, notably in *Conservation Area Practice*, 1995 and by Southend on Sea Borough Council in the *Essex & Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan*, 2001, the *Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan*, 1994, and the *Conservation Guide*, 2001. A Replacement Borough Local Plan with revised policies is in preparation.

Councils are advised to review their Conservation Areas from time to time and to ensure that they have up to date character appraisals which set out their special interest and provide the basis for development control and enhancement proposals.

All the Borough's thirteen Conservation Areas, including Shoebury Garrison, are being reviewed in order to produce up to date character appraisals. Other areas which might be suitable for designation are also being assessed. In each case the character appraisal will:

- identify the area's special interest
- review existing conservation area boundaries
- assess the need for enhancement proposals
- review the need for Article 4 Direction controls
- assist preparation of the Replacement Borough Local Plan
- provide a basis for implementing policies and making informed development control decisions
- guide any future highway proposals in the area

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The area under consideration extends between Marine Parade southwards along Canvey Road to Western Road, (excluding properties along Western Road) and includes Ray Walk and Ray Close leading off Canvey Road to the West. There are 55 properties within the proposed conservation area. The area forms a small part a larger residential area on the cliff top to the west of Leigh Broadway, overlooking the Thames Estuary

The original 'Canvey Road' development also included nine additional properties along Marine Parade to the west. Over the years the front elevations in particular have been substantially altered and consequently they no longer form a coherent part of this estate. For this reason these properties will not be considered for conservation area status and will not form part of this appraisal.

DESIGNATIONS

Canvey Road contains no buildings that are either Listed or on the Council's Local List of Historic Buildings. Its special interest is in the group value of the estate.

HISTORY OF AREA

The name Chapmanslord arose when three parcels of land, Andrew Chapmans, Lords Land and the land of Jeremy Sylvester combined to form one larger farm, Chapmanslord farm in the mid 18th century. Records of these farms date from 1385. This land remained largely undeveloped until the early twentieth century.

Throughout Britain after the First World War the rise in the cost of building brought construction almost to a stand still. This led to nationwide overcrowding and associated health problems. In response to the

housing shortage, the Governments Housing Committee suggested that Public Utility Societies be set up by to work with Local Authorities and subsidised by the Government, to assist their task of building new houses. New Government legislation, the Housing & Town Planning Act etc.1919, incorporated the recommendations of the Tudor Walters Report, 1918. The Report proposed a rationalised moderate version of garden-city-type cottage housing built at a density of 12 per acre (30/ha) using traditional technologies and with defined space standards for each room. In an attempt to improve living conditions the Ministry of Health approved all designs and layouts built under this scheme. This nationwide house building drive was nicknamed the 'Homes fit for Hero's' campaign by the then Prime Minister Lloyd George.

In the first 3 years of the campaign the Government subsidised over 200,000 houses across the country, many of which were built by the Public Utility Societies and let or sold to means tested tenants at reduced rates.

Canvey Road was one of many housing schemes developed under the then Government's Utility Housing Scheme. In 1920 the Chapmanslord Housing Society Ltd submitted plans for 64 houses on 7.5 acres of the farmland. They included a variety of different house types that comprised of mainly modestly dimensioned semi-detached properties. A mortgage loan for £59,710 was agreed from the Public Works Commissioners for the development of Canvey Road, one of the first phases of the Chapmanslord Estate to be built. The loan covered 75% of the total cost of the scheme and was paid back over 50 years.

Building work began in 1920 and the finished properties were sold for between £600 and £1639 depending on size and position. The scheme was completed within a few years and the Chapmanslord Housing Society was finally dissolved in 1925.

ARCHITECTURE OF AREA

With its hips and gables, small square paned bay windows and half timbering Canvey Road, Ray Walk and Ray Close are characterised by traditional 1920's domestic Arts and Crafts architecture. Whilst this type of housing is not unique within Southend Borough, its special interest lies more in its detailed layout design and apparent use of 'historic planning principles', rather than any unique architectural quality.

The early twentieth century was an important period in town planning evolution. At this time there was growing concern over the detrimental effect that increasing urbanisation and the harshness that Victorian poorer housing was having on the health of the British people. In response to these fears Ebenezer Howard founded the 'Garden City Movement' which advocated a move away from urban concentrations in favour of spacious leafy satellite towns. Welwyn and Letchworth Garden Cities and Hampstead Garden Suburb are the best known of these 'new towns' that were built. In designing these settlements, the architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, members of the 'Garden City Movement', set out to improve living conditions by revolutionising house building. They suggested a completely new approach to housing estate layout and design, in an attempt to solve the social problems of the Victorian terraces. Their principle ideas included:

- using a greater variety of house types to bring a mix of social classes, and to add interest to the townscape;
- lower densities (8-12 dwellings per acre)
- using shorter terraces and semi detached housing to increase the amount of light, space and fresh air to each dwelling;
- designing more varied housing layouts which were adapted to each individual site; and
- creating a more pleasant and more healthy outlook for residents through enhanced landscaping, orientation and building layouts.

In the wake of the 'Garden City Movement' speculative builders and Local Authorities adopted the Arts & Crafts forms, and around many sizeable towns in England there is a ring of Arts and Crafts suburbs which follow the planning principles advocated by Unwin and his contemporaries.

Canvey Road is one such scheme from this era. Its semi detached properties and small terraces, set back from the road behind hedges and landscaped street verges, were the basic building blocks for new developments during this period. In this case in particular, the relationship of the buildings to the road junctions and vistas, and the creation of landscaping features and open spaces were in accordance with the emerging garden city philosophy. For example the corner treatment of the junction of Canvey Road and Ray Walk, where the properties on the west side are splayed to address the corner and to open up the space, is typical of the town planning in the new towns and garden cities of this period. In fact this layout is very similar to those suggested in Raymond Unwin's book 'Town Planning in Practice' (first published in 1909, p336) as a suitable junction treatment. The intersection between Canvey Road and

Marine Parade has also been purposely designed, opening up the corners of the junction and orientating the houses to give unobstructed views of the public gardens and the Thames Estuary.

The deliberate mixture of house types used in this development follows another fundamental principle of the 'Garden Cities Movement'. Not only did a variety of designs avoid the monotony of the terrace, but it also aimed to achieve a good social mix of families and therefore reduce the class divisions, the two major problems often encountered with the earlier Victorian housing developments. Original plans of Canvey Road, Ray Walk and Ray Close show that there are 15 different house types (including 6 different bungalows), of varying sizes and aspects. Most of the houses are semidetached, although only half of the pairs are symmetrical. In townscape terms this variety has provided a diverse and interesting streetscene whilst still maintaining a coherent character.

The landscaping of this residential development is another aspect that conforms to the 'Garden Cities Movement' of the early twentieth century. The aim was to form a physical barrier between the houses and dust from the roads, and to create a pleasant outlook for the residents. Therefore they advocated increased tree planting and landscaped verges along residential roads, which is clearly evident in this area. The extensive street landscaping of the verges along Canvey Road and Ray Walk still makes a considerable positive contribution to the character of this area.

The consistency in building style and materials within this area is of significant importance to its overall character. Although there are several different house designs, they all conform to the same basic style and design principles. Typically the buildings are white rendered semi detached houses which have small pane metal Georgian windows and plain clay tiled roofs with hipped ends, red brick chimneys and no dormers or rooflights. Many have double height splayed flat roofed bays and corner window detailing. Exposed rafters on the bay windows are also evident on some properties, and several of the original stained glass front doors still remain.

Whilst most buildings are fairly simple in design, special attention has been given to the detailing of buildings in particularly prominent positions. For example the four properties at the junction of Canvey Road and Marine Parade have bay windows on their corners facing the estuary, to take advantage of the panorama. The three terraced properties each side of Ray Walk that are orientated to address the junction on Canvey are also of particular interest. In addition to being the only terraces in this development, the materials and detailing on these properties are slightly different to the rest of the estate. Most noticeably the ground floors are exposed red brickwork, however, the white render used on the rest of the estate continues on the first floor. These properties have also been singled out for additional architectural features such as oriel windows, curved and flat brick arches, corner brick quoin details and tiled sills with projecting brick details.

Two different types of original boundary treatments are evident on many properties within this development. The most common is a scalloped burr boundary wall with occasional brick detailing. This type of enclosure is most evident in the southern end of the development. In contrast at the northern end of the estate the original low oak paling fencing is still remains on some properties. The fence design consists of simple vertical slats with tapered oak posts at either side of the gates and at the boundaries.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There is no known archaeological significance in this area, however the Sites and Monuments Record shows that on the cliff top directly south of Canvey Road there were finds of Roman coins and pottery in 1960.

SMR 9721, Roman coin hoard (Allectus and Carausius) found in 1960
SMR 9722, Roman pottery, continental import

TOWNSCAPE

The layout of the Canvey Road estate is a significant departure from the traditional long straight uniform terraces with small front gardens and little planting of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. In this case the layout of the roads is shaped by the topography of the land, the creation of openings at junctions and cul-de-sacs. However, although no single style is repeated in a uniform row, there is a common scale and a common simplicity in materials and decorative detailing that gives the streetscene both originality and unity.

With the exception of the 9-19 (odd) Canvey Road at the junction with Ray Walk and the north west corner of the estate (Ray Close, 29 and 31 Canvey Road) the buildings are two storey semi-detached houses set in modest plots along a consistent building line, approximately 4m from the back edge of the footpath. The uniform spacing and height of these buildings and their uninterrupted roofline are also important consistencies within the estate, which contribute to its character.

In the north west corner of the estate the scale of the development changes from 2 storey houses to single storey bungalows set in wider plots. Whilst this does materially affect the character of the area, the materials and style of the buildings remains constant and the coherence of the estate is maintained.

The informal landscaping along Canvey Road is another departure from the traditional avenue of trees that often accompanied earlier terraced developments. In this case a wide variety of species has been used in a seemingly random nature to create a leafy relaxed environment, which compliments the diverse housing layout and the romantic 'cottage style' architecture.

The abundance of landscaping in these streets gives the development an Arcadian atmosphere and contributes significantly to its character. The many trees along the roadside and within front gardens are interlaced with hedges that have been clipped to the verge. In line with the distinctive building layouts at the junctions of Canvey Road with Marine Parade and Ray Walk, special attention has also been given to the cultivation and landscaping of these areas. The planting on the splayed Marine Parade junction has been deliberately kept low to preserve the estuary views of the surrounding properties. In contrast, the landscaping at the junction with Ray Walk, where there are no views is more generous, providing relief from the surrounding properties and the road junction.

The prominent position of this development, on the cliff top overlooking the Thames Estuary, strongly influenced its layout and the design of some of the properties. As considered earlier, the properties at the southern most end of Canvey Road have been deliberately orientated to take advantage of this view, however this is now partially obscured by mature trees in the cliff top gardens.

STREET BY STREET DESCRIPTION

As a whole, Canvey Road, Ray Walk and Ray Close still maintain much of their original 'Garden City' character, however, unfortunately there have been a number of unsympathetic alterations. The most prolific modification is the change from traditional windows to UPVC windows. Other inappropriate alterations and additions include insensitive siting and construction of garages and extensions, enclosed porches, window shutters and several properties have been re-roofed with modern concrete pantiles. The table below indicates the extent of properties with unsympathetic alterations:

Windows	18	Balcony	1
Garage	7	Extension	1
Shutters	3	Porches	2
Roofs	5		

One other area of concern is the dominance of the telephone cables on the streetscene, especially in Ray Walk. It may be more appropriate if these could be placed underground out of sight.

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The special interest of Canvey Road, Ray Walk and Ray Close can be summarised as:

- Example of Garden City Planning and the Homes For Heroes Campaign
- Distinctive Housing Layout, Junction design and preservation of views
- Arcadian Atmosphere - abundant informal landscaping (public & private)
- Variety of house type
- Design unity of estate – palette of materials and features:
 - White render and red brick
 - Clay tiled hipped roofs
 - Square paned metal Windows
 - Single storey hipped front and corner bays
 - Double height flat topped bays
 - Corner windows
 - Oriel windows
 - Open Porches
- Enclosure of front gardens
 - Boundary treatments:

- Scalloped burr boundary walls
- low oak paling fencing

PROPOSALS

It is considered that this area is of sufficient quality to warrant designation as a Conservation Area.

The Council has a statutory requirement to pay special attention to the preservation and enhancement of all the Borough's Conservation Area's, and therefore the Council would seek to reinstate all the traditional features which have been lost, for example reinstatement of the original boundary treatment and windows. (A Conservation Area Window Grant scheme is currently operated by the Council to assist with the repair and reinstatement of traditional windows in all the Borough's Conservation Areas.) Conservation Area status is also a material consideration in planning applications and a higher standard of design and quality of materials would be sought.

Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995) in order to maintain their special character, properties within Conservation Areas are subject to tighter controls on permitted development. For example all roof extensions and satellite dishes on the front elevation or chimney-stack will require planning permission, and the size of extension permitted without the need for planning permission is significantly reduced. The Council also requires six weeks notice for works to all trees within conservation areas, as they are often an integral part of their special character.

In some cases an Article 4 Direction can be introduced to further restrict permitted development in Conservation Areas that is considered to cause harm to their character. For example the alterations on windows and the creation of hardstandings for vehicles could be also require planning permission. If Canvey Road is designated a Conservation Area it is considered necessary, in light of recent unsympathetic changes to the character of this area, to serve an Article 4. In particular window alterations, re-roofing with different materials, the construction of porches, alterations to boundary enclosures and the creation of hardstandings should be controlled, as these features are integral to the character of this area.

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