



# Southend Borough-wide Character Study

January 2011



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# INTRODUCTION

This study has been commissioned by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, where it will inform and support the development of planning policy and development management decisions. It is intended to provide a description of the physical form of the Borough, its origins, places, streets and buildings to provide an understanding of the particular attributes which make Southend what it is today. As well as fulfilling the role of a formal planning document it is intended that it will become a general reference document for the council and local professionals working in the area. It is also hoped that it will be more widely read by local interest groups and the general public to develop a widespread appreciation of what it is that makes Southend special.

## Aims and objectives

The key aim of the urban characterisation study is to describe the form, character and special attributes of Southend-on-Sea Borough. Within this overall aim there are a number of key objectives:

- To identify and describe the key urban features which characterise development in the Borough and demonstrate how aspects of this character might inform the design of any future development, making it feel more closely ‘of the place’;
- To review the impact of piecemeal redevelopment of existing established neighbourhoods, particularly where this has an impact on bungalows;

- To consider the nature of bungalow development to the character of Southend, particularly in recognition of the fact that some areas of bungalow development are under threat from redevelopment in more intensive forms of development;
- To consider the nature of the seafront in light of the continuing pressure to build taller and bulkier buildings in prominent locations at the loss of historic character and grain;
- To identify areas where there is any close correlation between key indicators of social deprivation and urban typology, providing evidence for future policy considerations; and
- To consider ways in which the existing character of the Borough’s streets and spaces can inform an approach to climate change adaptation in the future, including the enhancement or introduction of greater levels of street tree planting and reinstatement of grass verges to improve sustainable drainage.

## Methodology

This study has been produced by a team of consultants from Urban Practitioners and The Landscape Partnership including the following stages of work:

- Detailed desk-top analysis of the Borough including analysis of digital mapping, historic mapping, socio-economic data and planning policy;
- Extensive site visits to the Borough including an initial tour of the Borough with council officers;

- An extensive photographic analysis of the Borough with over 2000 new images taken as part of the study;
- Use of site visits, aerial photography and web resources to build a comprehensive picture of the structure of the Borough and the arrangement of different urban typologies;
- An interim test and review workshop with the council team to agree the working method and emerging outcomes;
- Consultation with a group of over 40 stakeholders representing key local groups such as conservation area and residents associations; and
- Consultation with Southend Borough Council’s councillors.

## Report structure

**Southend today** - this section sets out an introduction the Borough, its location and context. It then provides a description of the key physical and social characteristics of the Borough including:

- Topography, geology and flooding;
- Patterns of land use and green space;
- Planning and conservation designations; and
- Socioeconomic indicators.

**Urban growth** - this section provides an historical appreciation of the growth of the Borough over time, detailing the key events, architectural periods and population growth. Maps of the Borough have also been prepared from available historic mapping to show the process of growth over time.

**Urban typology** - the next section of the report details an approach to the classification of the various urban forms in the Borough. This defines a series of residential and mixed use urban forms to create a bespoke classification system that responds to the unique character and attributes of Southend. These types are described and illustrated in detail and accompanied by mapping to show how they are distributed across the Borough.

**Southend’s places** - this follows on from the mapping of the urban typologies and explains the structure of the Borough as a series of settlements and neighbourhoods and notes key features which act as landmarks, barrier, edges and so forth. This work draws on the consultation undertaken with local stakeholders.

**Conclusions** - the final section of the report identifies key features which characterise Southend, including elements such as the relationship between the urban areas and the estuary, the way in which historical development has influenced the urban and architectural style and the nature of key specific building types such as bungalows and tall buildings. For each of these concluding elements the report provides an assessment of how the character is relevant to planning and development today, the pressures that may be experienced and key lessons which might inform future thinking.

**Consultation** - an appendix to the document provides a detailed report from the consultation workshop which was conducted with local stakeholders to review the approach to the project and discuss the structure and character of the Borough.









**SOUTHEND TODAY**



# THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND

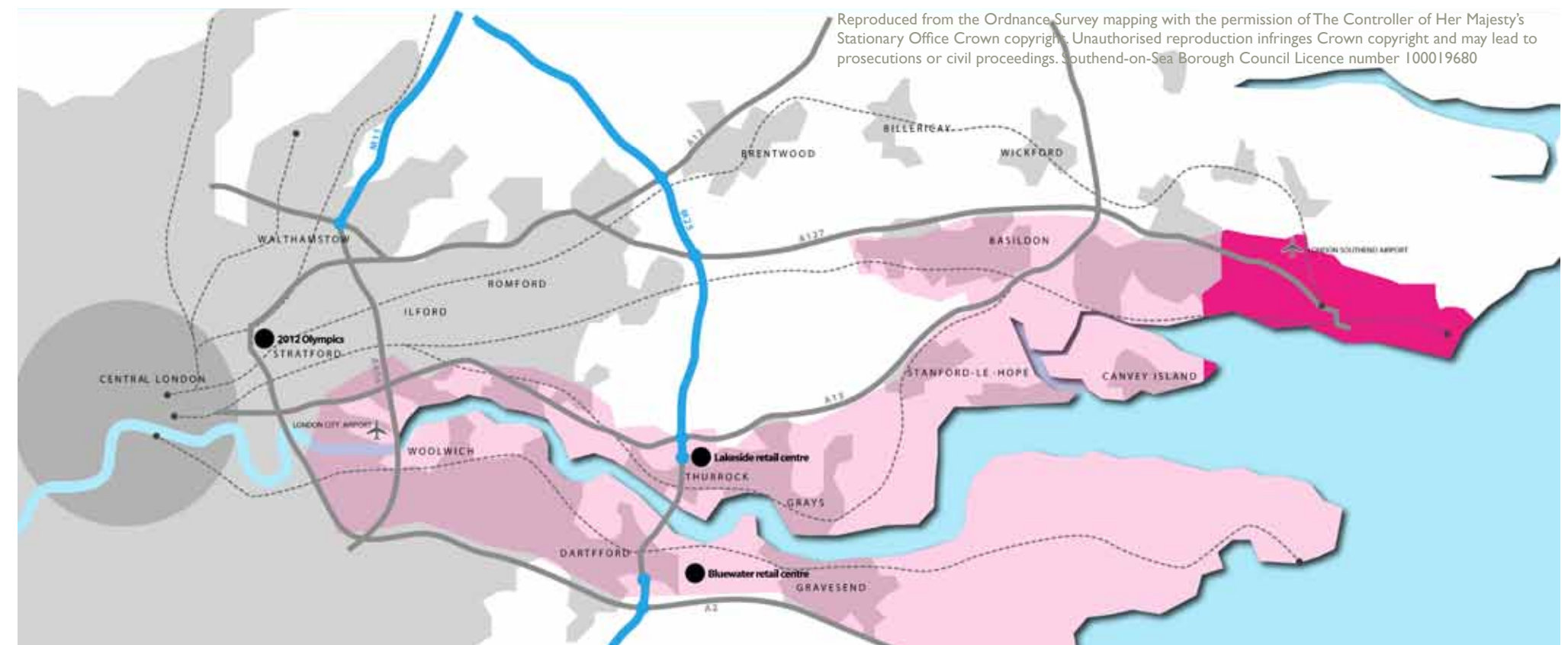
The Borough of Southend-on-Sea is the eastern-most extremity of the Thames Gateway, lying on the northern side of the Thames Estuary at the point where it meets the North Sea. It has a linear form lying along the coast and at roughly 13km by 4km is over three times as wide as it is deep. The Borough is bordered to the north by Rochford and to the west by Castle Point.

The central part of the modern Borough was originally designated a municipal Borough in 1892 and gradually increased by absorbing first Leigh in 1913 and then Shoeburyness and part of Rochford in 1933. Over time the Borough has varied between being under the sole control of the local council and under the control of Essex County Council. However, in 1998 it became a unitary authority once more and now controls all aspects of local administration.

Southend has its origins as the literal south end of Prittlewell and its rapid growth was largely stimulated by the railway line, which linked the Borough to London, and the access to the coast which this afforded, making Southend a convivial seaside destination for large parts of East London and beyond.

The fact that Southend sits on a shallow estuary effectively ruled out a viable existence as a shipping or fishing port. However, it did lead to one of the most noted features of Southend – the longest pleasure pier in the world, designed to provide access for boats regardless of the tides. This relationship between the town and the estuary has inevitably had a significant impact on its form, both in the way that important town centre uses are effectively

## Regional context (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



clustered at the edge of the urban area on the waterfront, but also in the urban design of the streets, spaces and buildings close to the water. By contrast, Old Leigh, with its access for shallow-draft vessels along Leigh Creek owes its existence to a working waterfront.

The topography may also have played a crucial role in influencing the social morphology of Southend. Westcliff, with its elevated position and views over the estuary attracted higher quality development than land to the east of the pier. The bold sea front buildings and the attractive terraces behind them retain a strong

prestige, making it one of the more expensive neighbourhoods in the Borough.

Later development continued to place a premium on proximity or views to the estuary, influencing the patterns of growth through the twentieth century.

The advent of the railway and later widespread car ownership gave rise to modern suburban development with housing separate from workplaces, where the quality of the environment was prized alongside the quality of each home. Prefigured in the Edwardian period

but pursued with genuine vigour in the interwar period, suburban development in Southend traces the gradual shift from regular Victorian gridded blocks to gentle curving forms and more irregular patterns of later development. Whilst some elements of postwar development continued along similar lines the sixties and seventies in particular saw the emergence of newer alternatives to the traditional block structures including Radburn-style public sector housing and cul-de-sac developments. In more recent years the focus has once again been on town centres, with greater exploration of the potential for higher density, sustainable models of living.



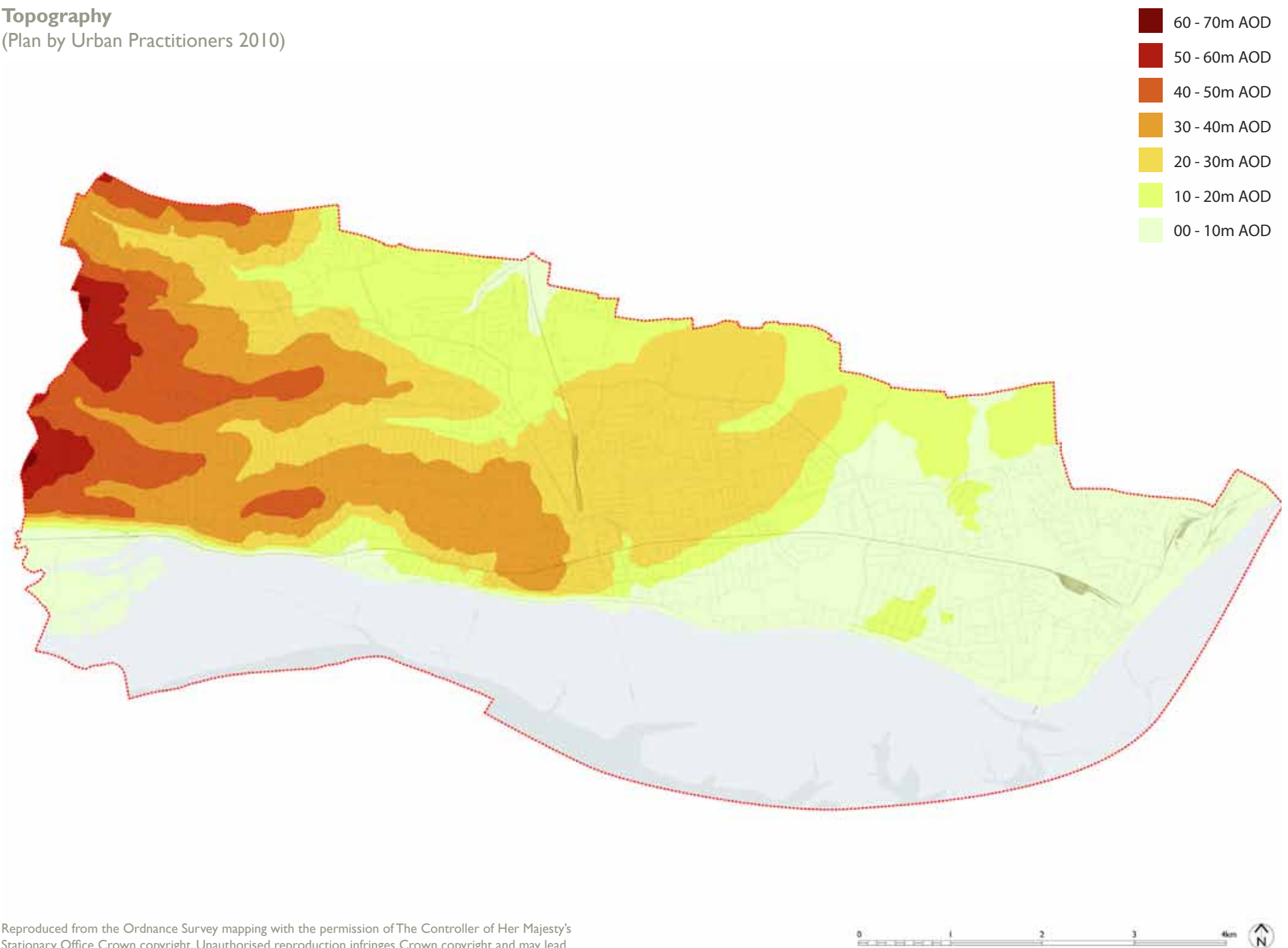
# TOPOGRAPHY

The eastern part of Southend-on-Sea Borough is generally very flat and lies at less than ten metres above sea level. The land rises gradually to the west, defined by three gentle ridges shaped by small watercourses, including Prittle Brook, which run east west before shedding north towards the Paglesham Reach. At the western end of the Borough the land rises to over 60m above sea level, affording wide open views across the Thames Estuary and out to sea.

Perhaps the most striking topographical feature is the strong escarpment found along large stretches of the sea-front in the western half of the Borough. These include the landscaped pleasure gardens between Southend and Westcliff but then also provide the dramatic setting for the hill-top church at Leigh-on-Sea, standing over the cluster of old cottages leading down to the historic fishing town of Old Leigh.

One notable feature of the east-west orientation of the landscape is that although it is impossible to be more than four kilometres from the water front it is very easy for the topography to deprive one of a view of the sea, making some areas such as Eastwood feel far more in-land than they might otherwise be.

**Topography**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



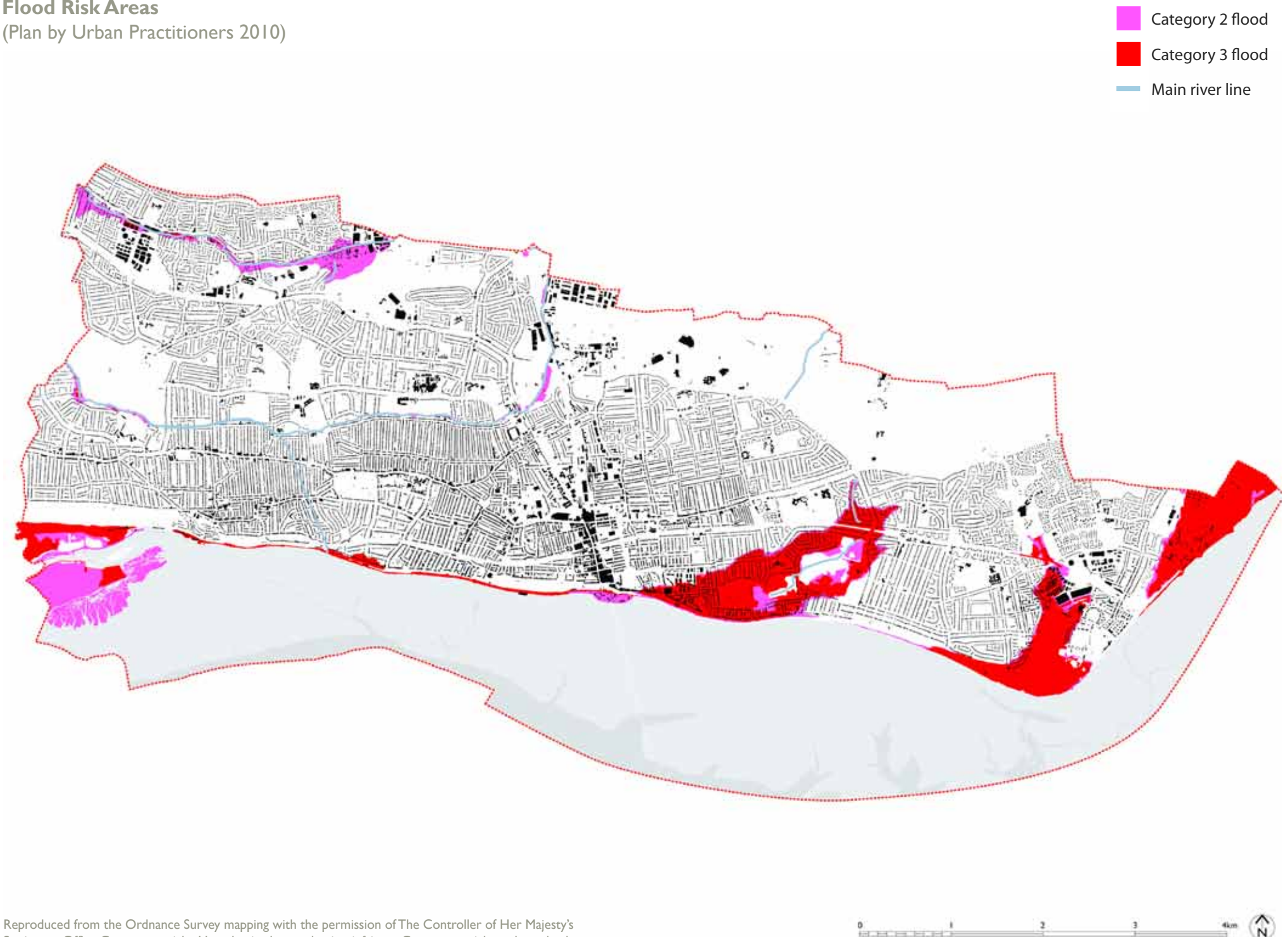
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# FLOOD RISK

As might be expected of a coastal area, flood risk in the Borough largely relates to those low-lying areas which are at risk of inundation from the sea, particularly found towards the eastern end of the Borough. This includes the area between Shoebury Garrison and Cambridge Town and the New Ranges area to the very eastern end. Also of note is the category two flood risk area to the north in Eastwood which arises from proximity to Prittle Brook. A number of very small flood risk areas also lie along the Prittle Brook corridor.

**Flood Risk Areas**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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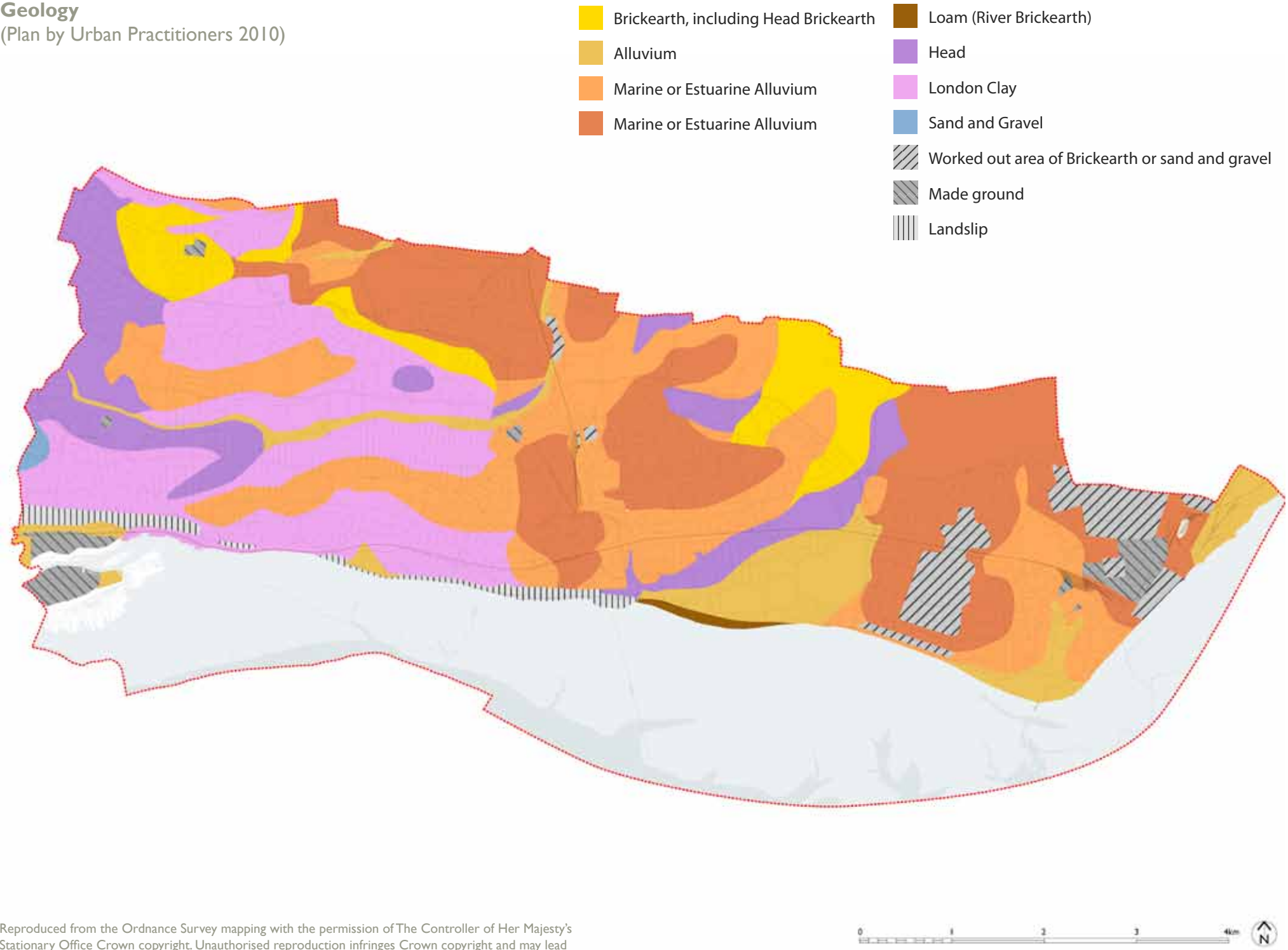


# GEOLOGY

This plan shows the varied geological layers found within Southend, ranging from London Clay in the higher ground to the west of the Borough through to marine and estuary deposits of silty alluvium in the east. Of particular note is the presence of Brickearth, as this can be used with little or no other materials required to make stock bricks, which are an important element of the Borough's built character.

The geological plan illustrates that significant areas of the eastern part of the Borough were worked to provide brickearth, sand and gravel as well as identifying the fragile condition of the seaward facing cliffs in the western part of the borough.

**Geology**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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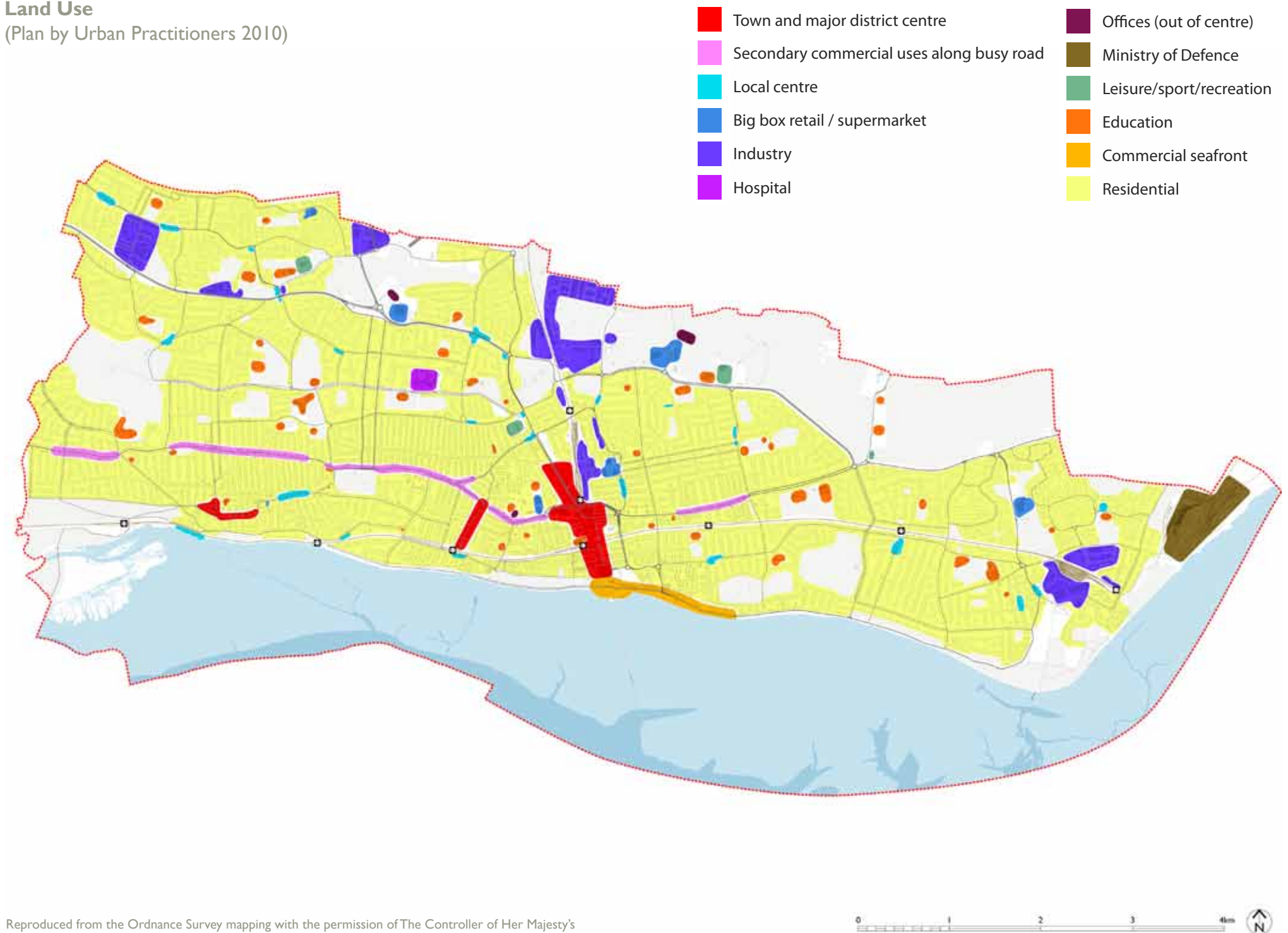
# LAND USE

The predominant land use in Southend-on-Sea is residential development (by a substantial proportion). It dominates every quarter of the Borough and it is notable for the way in which it has expanded as far as possible until constrained by physical barriers such as the seafront or other constraints such as the greenbelt or Borough boundary.

Beyond this, there are a number of other significant factors to note:

- The main retail and civic functions are focussed towards the seaward edge of the Borough, principally around Southend and Leigh-on-Sea but with the linking element of the London Road forming an almost continuous spine to the area;
- A significant area of industrial development is located at Shoeburyness where easy access by rail, and the availability of larger sites, presumably made it a logical location. Later business and industrial areas are located to the north of the Borough with access from the A127 (Arterial Road/Prince Avenue) which now provides the main route in and out of the area;
- Southend is rightly known for its leisure area along the seafront, a key feature of the town for over a century; and
- Although the forms of development found in the Borough are relatively low density when taken as an average, they cover a large proportion of the Borough's available land.

**Land Use**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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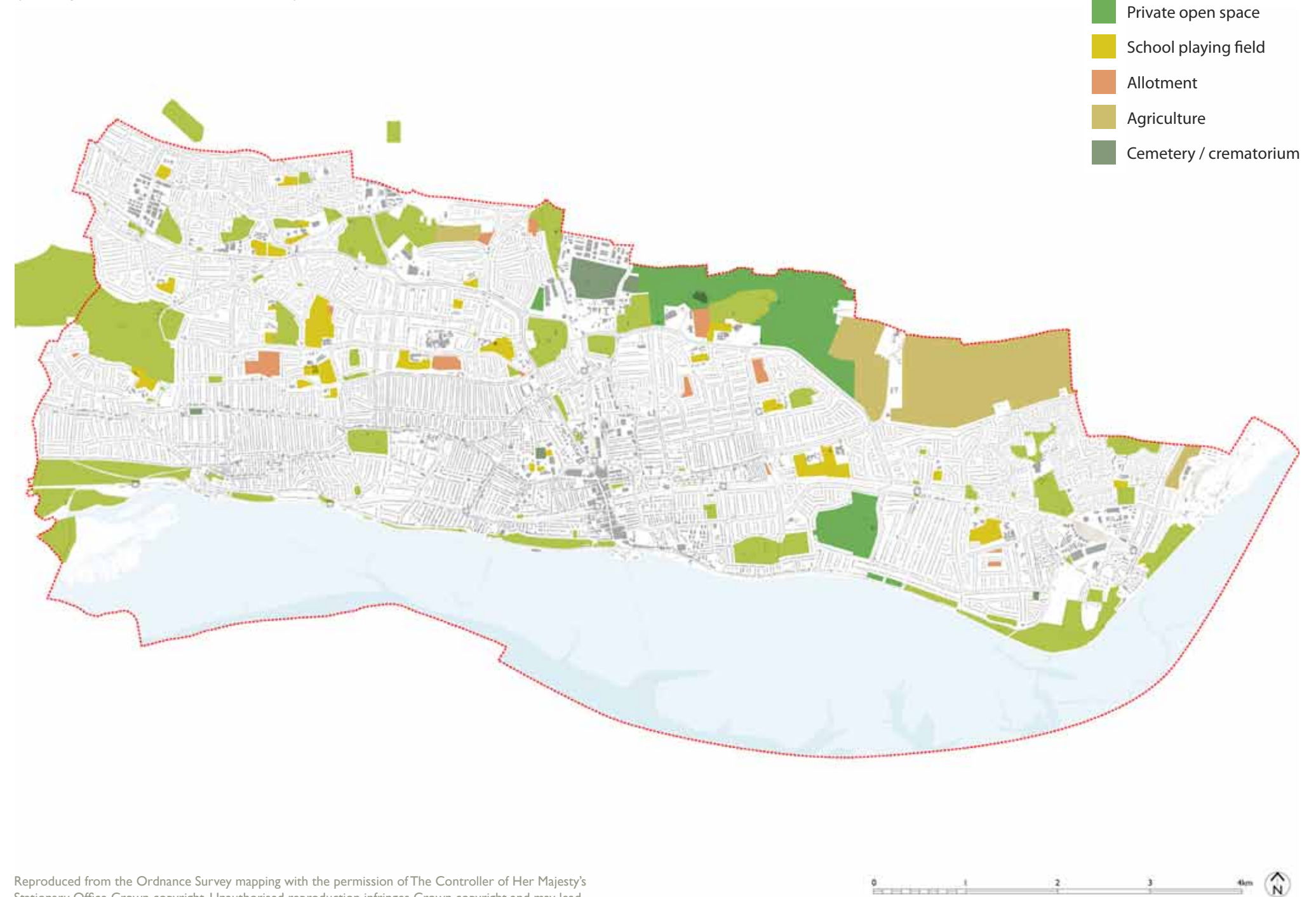
# TREES AND OPEN SPACE

As noted in the description of land uses in the Borough, relatively little of the available land remains undeveloped. This is partly due to the low density nature of much of the development which is spread across the Borough. However, despite this, the Borough's open spaces and trees play a key role in its character and identity and the general quality of the environment. The Thames Estuary and seafront form the dominant open space in the Borough providing a landscape which changes continually with the ebb and flow of the tide and providing an uplifting expanse of openness. Coupled with this, the Borough boasts an impressive wealth of high quality and well-maintained public open spaces including four parks with a Green Flag Award (2010): Priory Park and Southchurch Park in Southend, Belfairs Park and Nature Reserve in Leigh and Chalkwell Park in Westcliff-on-Sea.

Whilst the north and west of the Borough retain relatively large areas of green space, it is very noticeable how little green space is available in the very centre of the Borough. This accounts for many of the oldest areas of urban layout which feature relatively tightly planned streets of terraced housing. Although a similar lack of communal green space is also noted in the Edwardian and Interwar areas which followed, this is partly compensated for by being planned to layouts which feature significantly more private amenity space and with generous provision of street verges and trees.

The seafront areas provide a particularly unique form of open space which varies considerably from east to west as the local topography changes and creates differing relationships between the land and sea. At the western end of the Borough, striking cliffs provide

**Green Space**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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elevated views across the estuary. Linear parks have been created to allow this to be enjoyed with formal pleasure gardens on the clifftops changing to more informal spaces with scrub vegetation and meandering footpaths in some parts of the cliff sides. In the centre, Southend Cliff Gardens incorporate a blend of ornamental gardens and woodlands and a funicular railway on the cliffs which slope down to the Western Esplanade and the formal promenade along the seafront. At the eastern end of the Borough, the land is lower and in places the residential areas face directly onto the beach separated only by the Eastern Esplanade. Further east still, Thorpe Esplanade is the setting for formal gardens between the beachhead and the housing behind and includes a range of leisure facilities such as tennis courts and bowling greens. From all along the seafront, the famous pier provides a focal point, drawing the eye out towards the sea and to the Isle of Sheppey and Isle of Grain beyond.

In the north eastern corner of the Borough there is an area of open agricultural land which is designated as Green Belt. This forms part of a wider agricultural area extending either side of the Roach estuary across the District of Rochford. It is the only substantial area of open countryside in the Borough and plays an important role in separating the small villages to the north of Great Wakering, Little Wakering and Stonebridge from the urban areas of Southend. The area is gently undulating and comprises small rectilinear arable fields with scattered fragments of hedgerows.

Within the built up areas of the Borough, trees play a key role in the character of the streetscapes. The density of tree cover varies substantially across the Borough with some

areas such as the Clifftown Conservation Area having a dense framework of mature trees both along the streets and in private gardens. In many areas however, the density of tree cover is low with either few trees or, more commonly, a reasonable density of trees but a predominance of small varieties of trees such as cherries, flowering pears and ornamental hawthorns. These bring limited benefits in terms of biodiversity value, visual impact and the potential to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Council should continue to look for opportunities to plant larger varieties of trees (particularly native species and those suited to coastal areas).

The Borough has many attractive streetscapes and has particularly good examples of mature hedge verges comprising a wide band of ornamental shrub planting (mainly evergreen varieties) and mature trees which separates the road and pedestrian footway. These are mainly found in the Edwardian and early twentieth century areas such as Thorpe Bay and Chalkwell. They are generally well maintained and provide attractive green edges to the streets whilst also providing valuable cover and food sources for wildlife. Significant green corridors have also developed on Thorpe Hall Avenue and Southchurch Boulevard where the roads were originally designed as dual carriageways with a wide central reservation accommodating a tree-lined tram route. The tram lines have disappeared but a broad grassed central reservation with mixed trees remains and is a key landscape feature of the area.

The key areas and main features of the different types of open space within the Borough are briefly described below:



## Parks and open spaces

The Borough's main parks are popular with both residents and tourists/visitors alike. They help to define the character of Southend and contribute to its position as a leading and popular seaside resort. The largest parks in the Borough, (ie larger than approximately 20 hectares) are:

- Southend Cliffs;
- Belfairs Park, including Belfairs Golf Course;
- Chalkwell Park;
- Priory Park;
- Southchurch Park;
- Belton Hills/Marine Parade Gardens; and
- Gunners Park (which is being reshaped as part of the Garrison development).

Many of these are fine parks which are well maintained and with good quality facilities. They often have traditional style displays of annual bedding plants with seating areas and park cafes. Most also have children's play areas and other facilities for young people such as skate parks or ball courts. These have undergone significant investment in recent years and are seen as an important function of the parks. These large parks are well-used and act as popular meeting places for residents in the Borough and also as an attraction for tourists and other visitors.

Although these large parks are good quality and distributed across the Borough, there are several parts of the Borough which are poorly served in terms of not having a good-sized park within easy walking distance (eg St. Lukes, Prittlewell, St. Laurence, and Blenheim wards). Overall provision in terms of ha/1000 people is highest in the wards of Shoeburyness, West

Leigh and Belfairs wards and lowest in the wards of Westborough, Victoria and Kursaal.

As well as these main parks, the Borough also has many small local and neighbourhood parks. Some of these are hidden gems such as Churchill Gardens - a secluded park in a former quarry providing an oasis of peaceful greenspace just a minute away from the busy Victoria Avenue. Others are well known such as the formal ornamental gardens of Prittlewell Square at the centre of the Prittlewell Conservation Area. Most however are low key open spaces which perform an important role in providing easily accessible local green space and play facilities and forming a valuable element of the Boroughs green infrastructure.





### Private open spaces

Much of the open space in the Borough is privately owned either in the form of private gardens or in the large private golf courses at Thorpe Hall golf club and the Essex Golf Complex at Garons Park. Although this open space is not publicly accessible it still has an important influence on the character of the Borough in terms of the contribution it makes to the overall tree cover in the Borough and in maintaining the biodiversity of the Borough. The Essex Golf Course is located in the greenbelt on the northern fringe of Southend providing a transition between the urban edge of the Borough and the open agricultural land to the north. Contrasting with this is The Thorpe Hall Golf Club which is one of the largest greenspaces in the Borough and set within the developed area of Thorpe Bay. Founded in 1907,

the golf course now contains a framework of established mature vegetation with an 18 hole course. It has been under threat of development but makes a valuable contribution to the green character and biodiversity of the area and so is important to protect. A substantial proportion of the Borough's trees are located on this private land, the most important of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.



### Churchyards and cemeteries

Churchyards and cemeteries are distributed across the Borough and are important both as areas for burials and cremations but also as areas of open space for informal recreation and as wildlife habitat in the Borough. Many of the historic parish churches such as St John the Baptist Church and Holy Trinity Church in Southend and St Mary's Church in Prittlewell have attractive churchyards with mature vegetation providing a focus for local communities. The Borough also has four cemeteries which are managed by Southend Council: Sutton Road Cemetery, North Road burial ground, Leigh Cemetery and a Jewish cemetery in Stock Road.



### Playing fields

The Borough contains many playing fields most of which are either owned and managed by the Council as a public open space facility or as part of a school. A few however are privately owned and managed by a sports club. The 2004 Southend-on-Sea Playing Pitch Strategy estimated that at that time there were 123 pitches in the Borough. Provision per head of population was identified as being much better on the eastern, western and northern edges of the Borough, and worst in the very densely developed central and southern wards.





## Allotments

Allotment sites are well distributed throughout the Borough other than in the central area around Southend town centre and to the south of the A13 in Leigh and Westcliff-on-Sea where there is no provision. The allotment sites provide a valuable recreational resource for the Borough providing opportunities for residents to grow their own produce. The 2004 Open Spaces Study identified an average occupancy rate of 50%. However, this has increased significantly in recent years in line with a national trend of increased popularity of allotment sites and is now understood to be close to 100%.



## Natural and semi-natural greenspace

Although the Borough is relatively densely developed, it also contains areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace including areas of national and international importance such as the Leigh Marsh National Nature Reserve and the Benfleet and Southend Marshes Special Protection Area (which includes Two Tree Island). Designations include SSSI and Ramsar.

These are prominent areas which are popular with both visitors and residents alike and strongly influence the feel of the Borough. Other natural areas of local importance include the Belton Hills Local Nature Reserve on the cliff escarpment in Leigh and Shoebury 'Old Ranges' nature reserve in the south west corner of Gunners Park in Shoeburyness. These natural sites play an important role in



maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in the Borough and also in providing opportunities for education and informal recreation, although the SSSI in Gunners Park is not accessible to the public.

## Woodlands

The Borough contains few areas of woodland although formerly much of the local area was extensively wooded. The place names Leigh and Hadleigh for example are derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'leah' meaning a clearing or settlement in woodland indicating that the original settlements were established in a woodland area. The main area of woodland in the Borough is Great Wood in Belfairs Park which extends across the Borough boundary into Castle Point Borough. It is classified as Ancient Semi-natural woodland and parts date back to the twelfth century. A small area of mature woodland also exists in Oak Wood Park in Eastwood.





# CONSERVATION AREAS

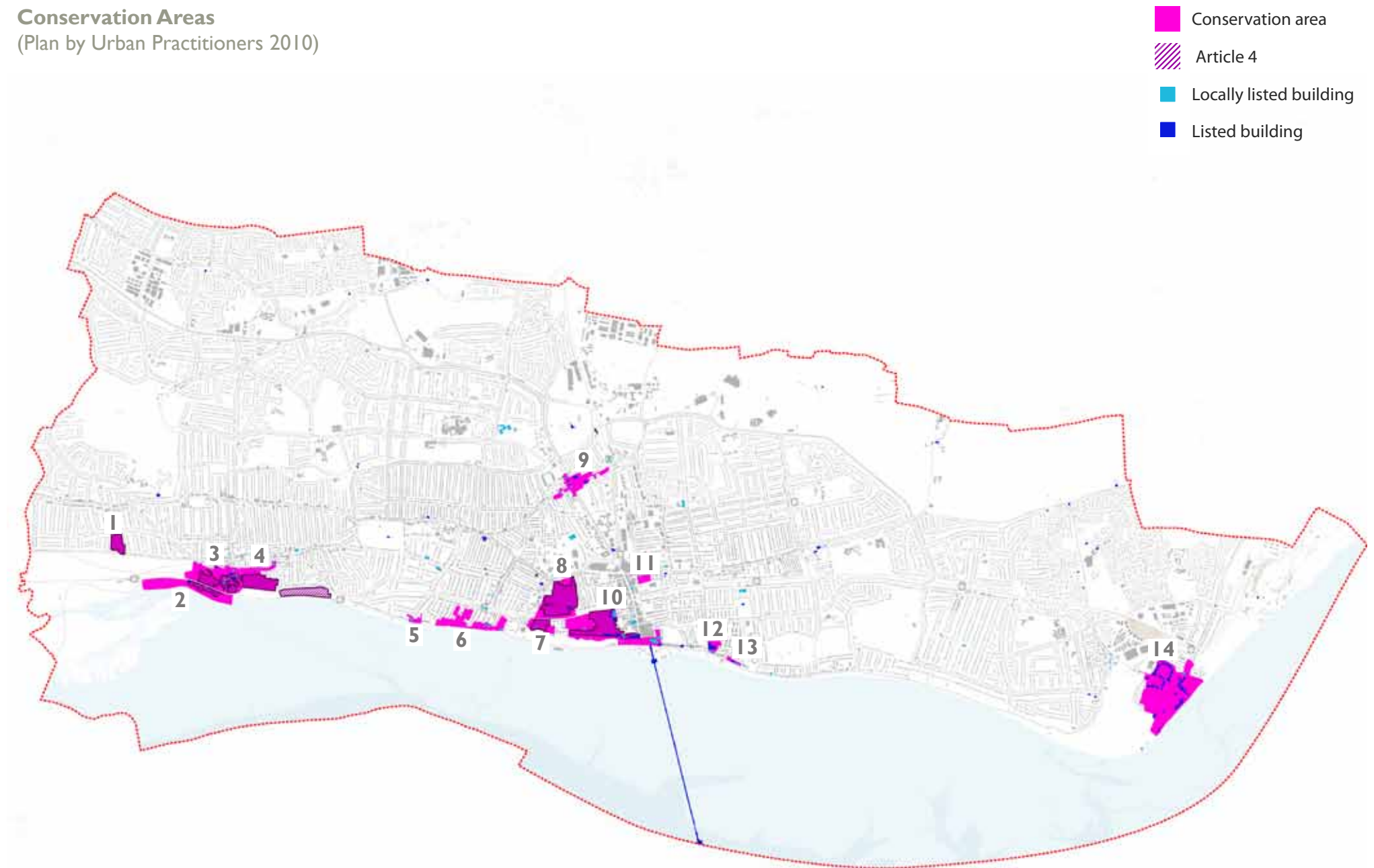
...‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’

Southend Borough Council currently identifies 14 conservation areas within the Borough. With the exception of the centrally placed Prittlewell these are all located along the southern fringe of the Borough and include a fine range of character types from the former garrison buildings of Shoeburyness to the Homes for Heroes development of the Chapmanslord Estate.

Some conservation areas are designated to note and protect the character of unusual or special areas, such as the Kursaal, for example. However, some conservation areas are so defined because they are the best examples of their type, and in this they can provide particularly useful specimens which help us to understand the historical development of an area. This could relate to the particular building typology, but might also deal with particularly fine examples of materials and workmanship within the type. By their nature, conservation areas also tend to be those areas which have a higher retention and protection of original detailing and so provide a useful demonstration of a more cohesive approach to the overall street composition than is seen elsewhere.

The conservation areas are briefly described as follows:

**Conservation Areas**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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**1. Chapmanslord Conservation Area** of Canvey Road is the most recent conservation area in Southend, having been designated in September 2004.

A character appraisal of the area identified its special architectural and historic interest. It was an estate developed by the Chapmanslord Housing Society during the early 1920s as part of the Government's 'Homes for Heroes' campaign and has a distinctive and attractive character. Its special interest is:

- It was part of the 'Homes For Heroes' campaign after World War I;
- It is an example of early 20th century Garden City planning with a distinctive housing layout and street design;

- It has a distinctive townscape stemming from its planned layout - most of the area has an enclosed 'Arcadian' character with abundant informal and semi-informal landscaping (public & private);
- The estate combines Arts and Crafts architecture with a variety of house types having a cottage character; and
- The estate has design unity with a common palette of materials and features.

The loss of original features, such as windows, has eroded some of the character of the Champmanslord Conservation Area. However, the article four direction should help to protect and enhance the historic character in the future.



**2. Leigh Old Town Conservation Area** consists largely of one main street, constrained on one side by Leigh Creek and on the other by the railway. Despite its small size its townscape is diverse and with its variety of marine activities and industries squeezed almost at random into its small area - boat building and repair, sailing, fishing, cockle processing and retailing, together with pubs and houses - it has its own unique character as a vibrant working marine village and port.

Historically, the Old Town was densely developed with mostly small buildings packed close together in an informal layout. Despite some 20th century demolition and redevelopment, it has generally kept this close urban "texture" with buildings on the edge of the narrow High Street and narrow gaps providing glimpses of the Creek. With the

curved alignment of the High Street and varied building designs, this close texture has produced an attractive and lively townscape.

Its position overlooking Leigh Creek and the marshes to the south and backed by Leigh Hill to the north enables extensive views into and out of the area which adds to its townscape interest.





**3. Leigh Conservation Area** relates to that part of the settlement north of the railway rising up Leigh Hill to the parish church. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1971, and later extended.

The Conservation Area's special interest comes from its history as part of the working marine village, its varied traditional architecture and its fine position on the hillside overlooking the Estuary.

Historically, the village was centred on the waterfront at the foot of the hillside. Horse Hill (now Leigh Hill) was the main road from the village. The Parish Church in its prominent position at the top of the hill overlooking the Estuary was separate from the main settlement. Until the mid-nineteenth century, only a few higher status buildings were close to the

Church with sporadic buildings close to the road into the main village.

From the mid 19th century, the village spread up the hillside towards the Church with modest vernacular housing, schools, and a new lane to the Church (Church Hill). New houses in the Broadway were gradually converted to shops to supersede the Old Town as Leigh's shopping centre.

The Conservation Area contains a variety of architecture. Buildings are mostly on a small domestic scale with simple designs in uniform terraces and more loosely connected groups. Traditional buildings and materials predominate and help establish the area's character. Features include:

- Feather-edged weatherboarding - terraces on Church Hill and individual buildings on Leigh Hill are particularly important;
- Yellow stock brick; red brick detailing and frontages are evident in buildings from the late 19th century;
- Slate roofs - views over the Area from the hillside give roofs greater prominence; and
- Timber sliding sash windows.





**4. Leigh Cliff Conservation Area** is to the east of Leigh's historic centre. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1981. It marks the start of Leigh's transition from a village to a larger urban area in the late 19th century. Its special interest comes from its association with Leigh's expansion and changing role, its typical late Victorian and Edwardian architecture and its fine position on the hillside overlooking the Estuary.

Leigh Broadway is a thriving linear shopping centre which runs parallel with the coast. The perpendicular residential streets provide frequent views of the Estuary and there is a mix of converted late Victorian houses and more substantial purpose-built shops and flats dating from the early 20th century. Traditional shop fronts and upper floors in the Broadway

contribute to the area's character and are important to retain.

The Grand Hotel is the most notable building in the townscape on a prominent corner site. It is a richly decorated four storey red brick Edwardian style building, with distinctive shaped gables and chimney stacks.



**5. Crowstone Conservation Area**, designated in 1990, is focused on a striking corner property, Crowstone House, built in 1905. It has a significant role as a local landmark along the seafront in part due to the very strong corner tower which is topped by a copper dome.

It is a significant example of the grand properties of the era during Westcliff's heyday as a residential resort and shares much in common with the the Leas Conservation Area which is nearby but separated by modern developments.

30-35 The Leas are also included within this small conservation area. They are typical of the Edwardian seafront houses and represent the kind of fine-grain development which is at risk from the continuing pressure for intensification.

They are bracketed on either side by modern developments which clearly illustrate the threat posed to the seafront character.





**6. The Leas Conservation Area** includes the most prominent part of the Westcliff-on-Sea area, facing and close to the seafront. Despite some subsequent redevelopment and alterations, the area retains much of the character of the original residential resort. First designated as a Conservation Area in 1981, it has since been extended.

The area is largely residential in character, but with a strong emphasis towards the seafront. Indeed the buildings along the main front are angled to face south-by-south-west to make best use of the sun and views rather than sitting square on. This, as seen in other seafront conservation areas in the borough, creates a saw-tooth terrace and gives many more opportunities for flamboyant external decoration including balconies and bay windows. They represent one of the most decorative

groups of Edwardian buildings in the borough. Features contributing to this architectural interest include:

- Corner turrets;
- Bays and gables;
- Balconies with varied balustrade designs;
- Period windows ranging from timber sliding sashes to “Georgian” style timber casement windows; and
- Individual detailing to buildings such as terracotta panels, stained glass fanlights and decorative timber to balconies, bays and porches.

The overall effect of the conservation area is slightly marred by the introduction of later developments, not all of which are successful. The newer buildings on the site of the Overcliff

Hotel (now outside of the Conservation Area) do not relate well to their context. However, other example such as the flats at Homecove House provide a reasonable example of scale, massing and detailing.

Argyll House is another interesting element of the conservation area which, although not adhering to the prevailing Edwardian style, manages to secure landmark status through the quality of its design and detailing, including curved windows and corner balconies.

Palmeira Avenue also merits attention, featuring a particular ebullient variation on the Edwardian town house. The bay windows, porches and dormer windows are large in scale with bold detailing. The properties are wide, and feature an asymmetric arrangement of rooms on both sides of the front door and hallway. The

porches between the bays also provide a small balcony, making the most of the oblique sea views.





**7. Shorefields Conservation Area,** designated in 1981, is associated with the start of Southend's rapid growth as a seaside resort and residential centre between 1870 and 1900. During these decades, the national rise of holidays and day trip excursions and Southend's easy access from London by rail, and later by boat, made it increasingly popular as a resort and a residential centre.

The Shorefields estate was sold for piecemeal development as the resort expanded westwards from the earlier Cliff Town estate, along the top of the West Cliff. Architectural features which contribute to the area's interest include the various balcony designs exploiting sea views, the variety of porch and doorway design and decorative detailing to individual frontages, it also has a special relationship with the public gardens along the Cliff, which enhance its

setting, with the clifftop position providing it with prominent views across the estuary. There are mature street trees on Trinity Avenue and Marine Avenue. However, some appear to have been lost over time, and the remaining trees are no longer evenly spaced, leaving some areas of the streets feeling more open.

The Conservation Area contains the resort's oldest surviving hotel - the Westcliff Hotel built in 1890 which makes a significant contribution to the streetscene thanks to its prominent location and strong presence. Demand for accommodation also encouraged residents to open their homes to visitors. Some of the housing development in Shorefields was designed for this dual purpose. The west side of Trinity Avenue is a notable example and still retains Guest House uses.





**8. The Milton Conservation Area** covers a large area of Westcliff. It contains a range of architectural styles which illustrate the transition in Southend from formal gridded streets and restrained architecture of the mid-Victorian period to freer late Victorian and Edwardian development, from small terraces to large semi-detached houses with gardens, and from yellow London stock brick and slate to red brick and clay tiles as the predominant local building materials. The architectural and urban hierarchy is further reinforced by the pattern of street tree planting in the area.

Mid -Victorian properties built between 1870 and 1880 are generally yellow stock brick frontages and slate roofs. Most have bays of either one or two storeys and traditional sliding sash windows. Various architectural details such as curved window heads, arched porches and

decorative window and door surrounds are also evident on many of these buildings.

Late Victorian properties, built in the 1880's and 90's are also mainly stock brick, although some have red brick detailing, and the roofs are traditionally slate, often with patterned ridge tiles. Either sliding sash or casement windows are evident in buildings of this period, many with heavy looking surrounds. Two-storey bay windows with gable ends and restrained decorative details were also common feature in late Victorian houses in this area.

Edwardian properties supersede the earlier styles. These are mainly red brick, occasionally with stock brick flanks. They usually have one or two-storey bays with prominent gables or Dutch gables. The roofs of these properties are usually clay tiles, and some properties have

distinctive corner turrets. Windows are either timber sliding sash or casement, usually with heavy surrounds.

Whilst most of the architectural styles can be found elsewhere in different parts of the town, the Park and Vincent Estate's stand out in that they embody within a small area a cross-section of Southend's typical architecture at the time of its early growth. This helped give the area an attractive and unique character. Most of these estates now form the Milton Conservation Area.





**9. Prittlewell Conservation Area** was first designated in 1995. The former medieval village on the south slope of the gentle valley formed by Prittle Brook, is centred on St. Mary's Church at the 'T' junction of the ancient roads of East Street, West Street and North Street (now the north section of Victoria Avenue) which once formed the village's medieval market place.

Prittlewell's special interest remains, including St Mary's Church which, although predominantly 12th Century, is mentioned in the Domesday Book and contains elements of 7th Century masonry.

Prittlewell's buildings today display a wide variety of design and materials and have no dominant architectural character. But this variety illustrates to a limited extent the

evolution of the village from its Saxon origins, through medieval times to the rapid expansion of Southend in the late 19th century, to present, and shows typical materials and designs.





**10. Clifftown Conservation Area,** Southend's oldest Conservation Area, was designated in 1968 (and later extended twice to its present boundaries).

It has an important place in the area's history - the Georgian Royal Terrace and the Victorian Cliff Town Estate mark the first major attempts to develop Southend as a seaside resort and as a residential town. Its building styles and planned layout overlooking the estuary give the area its own charm and character.

1-15 Royal Terrace and the Royal Hotel were built in the 1790's to be the nucleus of New South End, a fashionable seaside resort to rival Margate, Brighton and Weymouth. The Shrubbery fronting the houses was laid out as a private garden for residents and Royal Mews

to the rear provided their stables. The Terrace was named "Royal" following visits by Princess Caroline and for a short time attracted some of the fashionable society. But difficult access from London by road and river and other factors discouraged further development until construction of the railway in 1856. It was, therefore, the only Georgian terrace to be built in Southend. The London-Tilbury-Southend railway was completed in 1856 and provided the impetus for the next major step in the town's development. The railway developer leased 40 acres from Daniel Scratton for housing development between the new railway and the cliff top to be known as Cliff Town. This area extended from Royal Terrace westwards to Wilson Road and forms the remainder of the Conservation Area.

Scratton imposed strict design controls on the first phase of development which resulted in a unique example of mid-Victorian estate planning. Designed by Banks and Barry and built between 1859-1861, the estate provided five classes of terraced housing, including shops, with unified designs and materials. Its layout around open spaces, gardens and carefully aligned streets enabled estuary views from every house and many public parts of the estate. Despite later infill development and tree planting, these views remain an important component of the estate's character. The mature trees in streets away from the waterfront play a significant part in the character of the area and create a notable sense of scale.

The second phase of the Cliff Town Estate to the west of Prittlewell Square lacked the previous design control. The area was subdivided for piecemeal development on a grid street layout. A variety of Victorian and Edwardian residential architecture resulted which contrasts with the coherence of the planned estate.





## 11. Warrior Square Conservation Area

was designated a Conservation Area in 1990 and is associated with the period of Southend's rapid growth towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is one of only two Victorian residential squares built in Southend (the other being Prittlewell Square).

The south and west sides of the original Square have been largely redeveloped and the houses on the east side are of a later period. The Conservation Area, therefore, is confined to the surviving Victorian terrace on the north side and the central gardens which are now in public use.

Speculative housing around a central private garden was a common form of development in many urban areas in the 18th and 19th centuries, but not Southend. Warrior Square

is a very late example and its failure may have discouraged any further attempt in Southend.

The north side of the Square has not been greatly altered and presents an attractive façade of typical late Victorian terraced housing with appropriate detailing and materials. The houses were built in pairs with mirrored designs - central entrance doors, recessed porches and balconies over, on either side of which are two-storey bays. Consequently, the terrace has a good degree of design unity. But note the subtle variations in design.

Houses in the older part of the terrace are grouped in fours with square or canted bays, gables or hipped roofs to the bays and with different window designs typical of this period. Detailing such as panelled entrance doors with tiled and leaded lights surrounds, decorative

ridge tiles, fish scale slates to some of the bay roofs and balcony ironwork, also provide attractive features.

The setting of the conservation area is greatly enhanced by the mature trees in the square itself, which is presently undergoing a significant re-modeling to improve its accessibility and increase usage.





## 12. The Kursaal Conservation Area

was designated in 1989. It is a compact area associated both with Southend's origins and its later growth into a major resort. The most notable building is the Grade II listed Kursaal itself. This has a strong architectural character with soft red brick combining with stone detailing. A cast iron colonnade with glazed roof runs along the western elevation of the building which adds to the festive character. However, the most striking feature is the large glazed roof lantern topped with a lead dome. This gives the building its distinctive silhouette and makes it such a significant landmark.

Originating as the 'Marine Park', the first pleasure park in the world, laid out in 1894, the 'Kursaal' was designed by George Sherrin in 1896 as the grand entrance to the Park. It was completed in 1901. The "Kursaal" itself included

a circus, ballroom, arcade with amusements, dining hall and billiard room. The Marine Park was soon taken over by amusements and rides, to become the resort's premier attraction. Although the amusement park has been redeveloped for housing, much of the Kursaal building has been restored following many years of dereliction and is one of the Borough's most notable landmarks, bookending the eastern end of what is today known as Southend's 'Golden Mile'.

Also of note within the conservation area is the white building adjacent to the Kursaal, presently occupied as Tiffin's Lounge and Restaurant. This dates from 1792 and was originally built as Minerva House, the home of Abraham Vandervord, the principal local barge owner. It was in the centre of the hamlet at the time of its early development as a small resort.



**13. Eastern Esplanade Conservation Area,** designated in 1989, is associated with the early period of Southend as a resort destination before the major expansion of the late 19th century.

The Conservation Area contains mainly domestic buildings and, in particular, a terrace of early to mid 19th century cottages reputed to have been built for local fishermen. Its main interest relates to the design and materials of this terrace. Important features include:

- Recessed raised porches in weatherboarding with some decorative timberwork;
- Timber weatherboarding or yellow stock brick for the front elevations;
- Weatherboarded rear elevations;
- Sliding sash timber windows; and

- Some original doors to the front entrances and side alleys.

The conservation area retains a particular appeal in the central part of Southend because it provides a clear sense of the ordinary domestic buildings which preceded the later Victorian development of the area. In this sense it shares key attributes with elements of Old Leigh, but has not been protected in the same way by the alignment of the railway. This means that it is potentially much more vulnerable to the impact of bulky or intrusive adjoining development.





**14. Shoebury Garrison Conservation Area**, designated in 1981, has two distinct sections. It is centred on the Garrison's barracks and associated accommodation. It also includes part of the High Street which provides a suitable Victorian setting for the entrance to the Garrison. Its history and archaeology give it national significance. Many of the Garrison's buildings are listed and have special architectural or historic interest in their own right.

The character of the Barracks is very special. Its architecture and layout remain largely as originally designed. Well spread out buildings, wide tree lined roads, open spaces and sea views give a feeling of space. Many mature trees within the Garrison enhance the setting of the buildings and positively contribute to the Conservation Area's character.

Most of the buildings date from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Their materials and common design elements give the area a unified appearance - yellow stock brick, slate roofs, timber sliding sash window. But distinct variations in building design, their position, size and decorative detailing, reflect the different status of the users. Compare Horseshoe Barracks, for instance, which have the simplest designs and provided accommodation for private soldiers, with the well-detailed married Officers quarters in The Terrace.

The buildings in Horseshoe Barracks are aligned in a horseshoe shape around a large parade ground. This is a unique example of the efforts during the nineteenth century to reform and improve barrack design. It also provides an important element of the townscape.

The High Street fronting the Garrison entrance was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the Garrison and the extension of the railway to Shoebury. The broad High Street was developed piecemeal with no overall design control. Originally a mix of houses and shops, it shows a variety of Victorian designs. Despite conversion of some of the shops to housing, buildings retain much of their Victorian character. Features of particular importance are the original timber sliding sash windows, slate roofs, parapet and cornice detailing and original shop fronts.



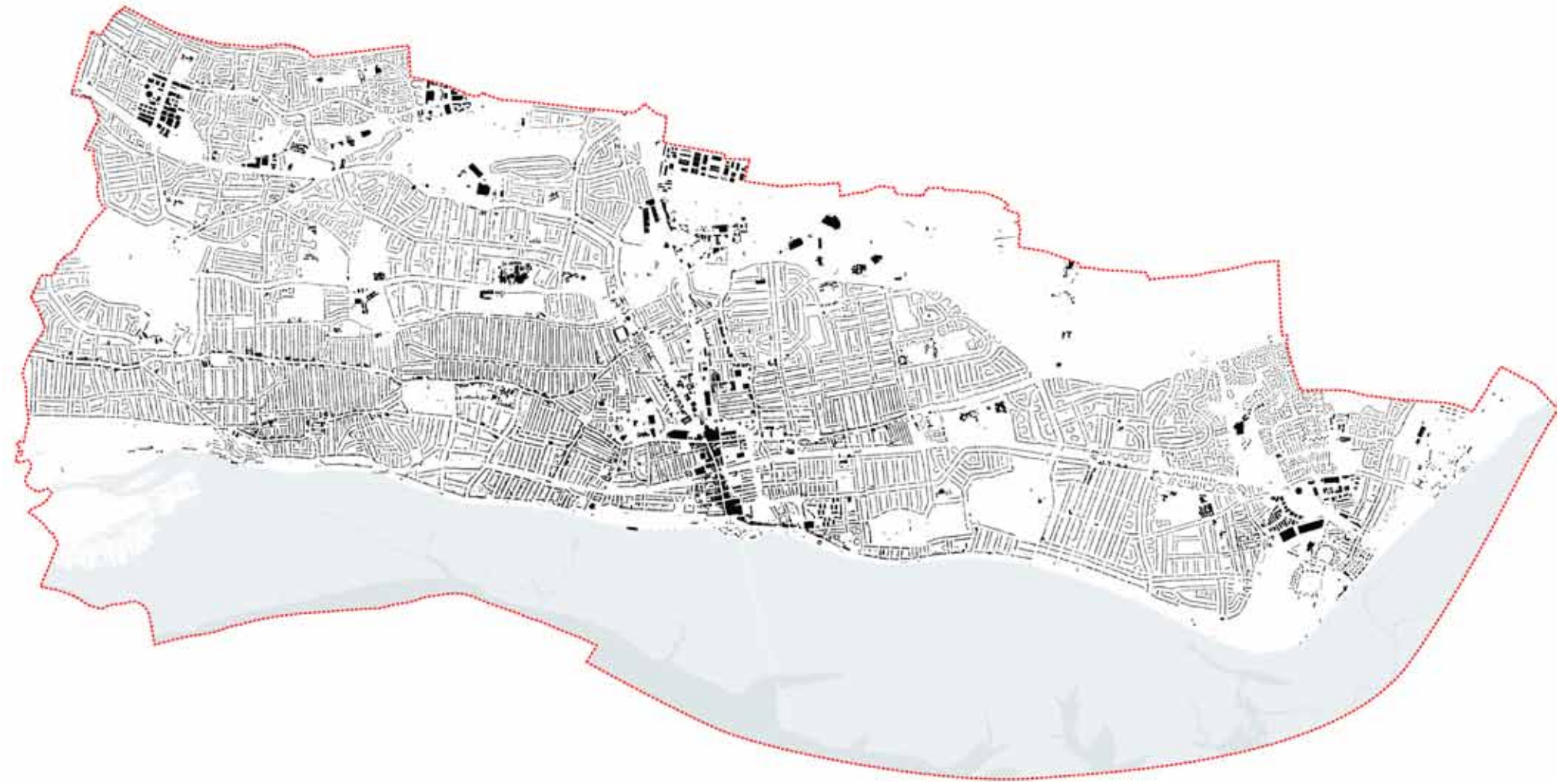


# URBAN MORPHOLOGY

The detailed character of the various urban forms found in the Borough is presented in greater detail later in this document. However, when considering the morphology of the Borough as a whole a number of key features become apparent:

- There is a strong presence of regular grids of streets, most typically running north-south, perpendicular between the key routes through the Borough;
- Inter-war areas of development feature perimeter block arrangements, but are more likely to be laid out in a looser grid or geometric arrangement than the rectilinear grids of the Victorian and Edwardian periods; and
- Several areas of post-war development including Eastwood and North Shoebury take a distinctly non-grid form, breaking with the predominant character of the Borough.

**Urban Morphology**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2009)



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# VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

Southend's location and geography means that the principal routes in the borough run east-west. Historically, the London Road (the A13) provided the most significant route through the Borough, and remains an important thoroughfare today for both local traffic and wider area connections. It continues to be an important focal point for local life, acting as a linear centre to much of the Borough, lined with a wide range of convenience and specialist shops and services. By contrast the A127, Southend's Arterial Road and main transport corridor, provides a more modern approach in to Southend in the form of a dual carriageway trunk road. However, despite the traffic-orientated design of the road, large portions of it still follow pre-existing historical routes.

Intermediate routes form a loose grid between these main roads, many of which also follow historic lanes. Of particular interest are Blenheim Chase/Kenilworth Gardens/Prittlewell Chase, Southchurch Boulevard and Thorpe Hall Avenue, all of which have a distinctive wide central reservation, planted with trees. These routes are the legacy of a former tram system that used to run along the central reservation but which was closed down around the time of the Second World War. They are a strong and distinctive element of Southend's street network.

**Vehicular Movement**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2009)



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# RAIL CONNECTIONS

Southend-on-Sea benefits from two mainline railway connections. The first is the line from London Fenchurch Street, which terminates at Shoeburyness, and the second is the line from London Liverpool Street, terminating at Southend Victoria. Both offer services which make it practicable to commute into London and surrounding towns on a daily basis.

Of the two lines, the Fenchurch Street line has probably had the greater impact on the growth and development of Southend, running through the width of the Borough west to east, with the introduction of intermediate stops in places such as Westcliff and Thorpe Bay designed to open up new areas of previously undeveloped land. The Liverpool Street line is presently undergoing development just outside the Borough boundary to introduce a new station that will serve London Southend Airport, connecting it to Southend, London and surrounding towns.

**Rail Lines**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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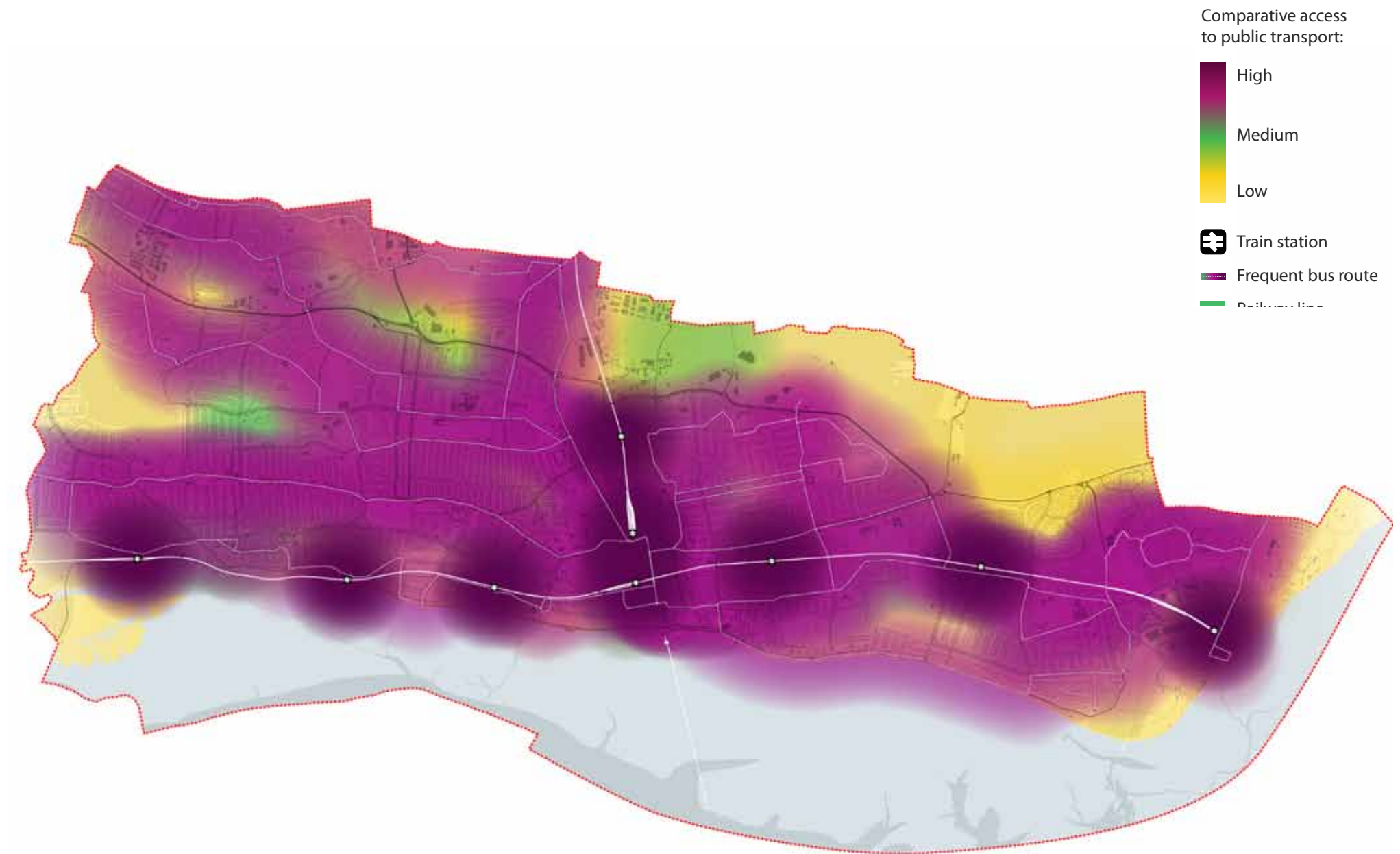


# ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The plan prepared here provides an assessment of the relative levels of access to public transport across the Borough. The most dense colours indicate those areas of the Borough which are within a short walking distance of a railway station, usually regarded as those locations which are most likely to enable public transport use as part of a daily commute. The paler purple colours show those areas which are within easy walking distance of a bus route which offers a relatively high frequency of service (shown as a white dotted line) whilst areas in green or yellow beyond this show areas of poor public transport penetration.

It is particularly noticeable in the western half of the Borough that the arrangement for both bus and rail is predominantly east-west. Whilst there are infrequent local buses which make north-south connections, this makes it relatively hard to travel north-south within the Borough to facilities such as schools or the hospital without making a connection in central Southend. This character generally prevails across the Borough.

## Access to Public Transport



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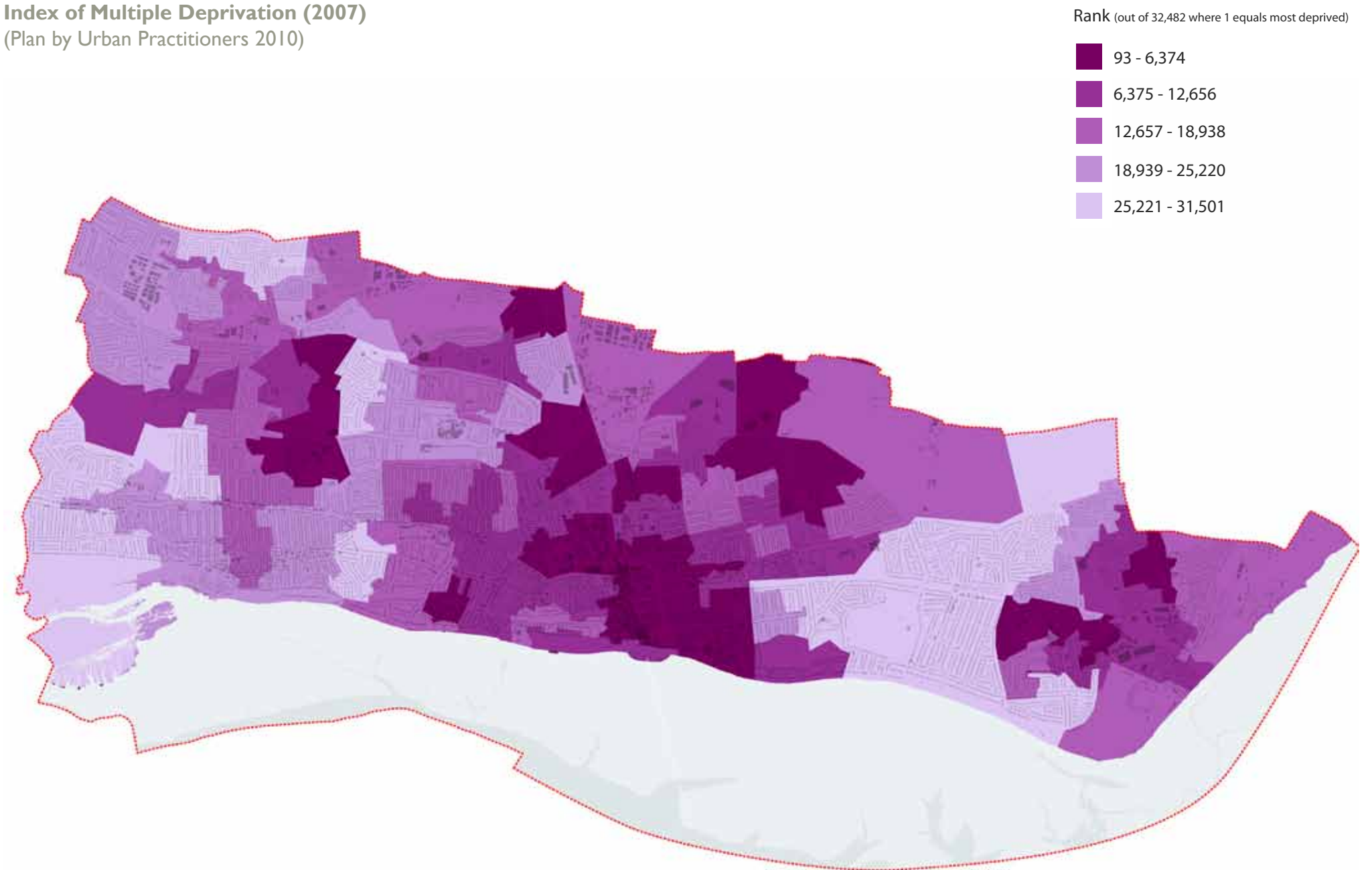


# SOCIETY

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a national government measure of the relative deprivation of areas, based on a number of factors including income, employment, health and disability, education/skills/training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. These are shown relative to the national range of deprivation, here divided into five bands for ease of analysis.

This plan shows that within the borough of Southend there is a spread across all five bands, with areas of Prittlewell, Central Southend, northern Southchurch, and Shoeburyness falling within the poorest fifth nationally. By contrast, western areas of Leigh, Chalkwell, Noble's Green and Thorpe Bay all fall within the top fifth, showing a high degree of affluence.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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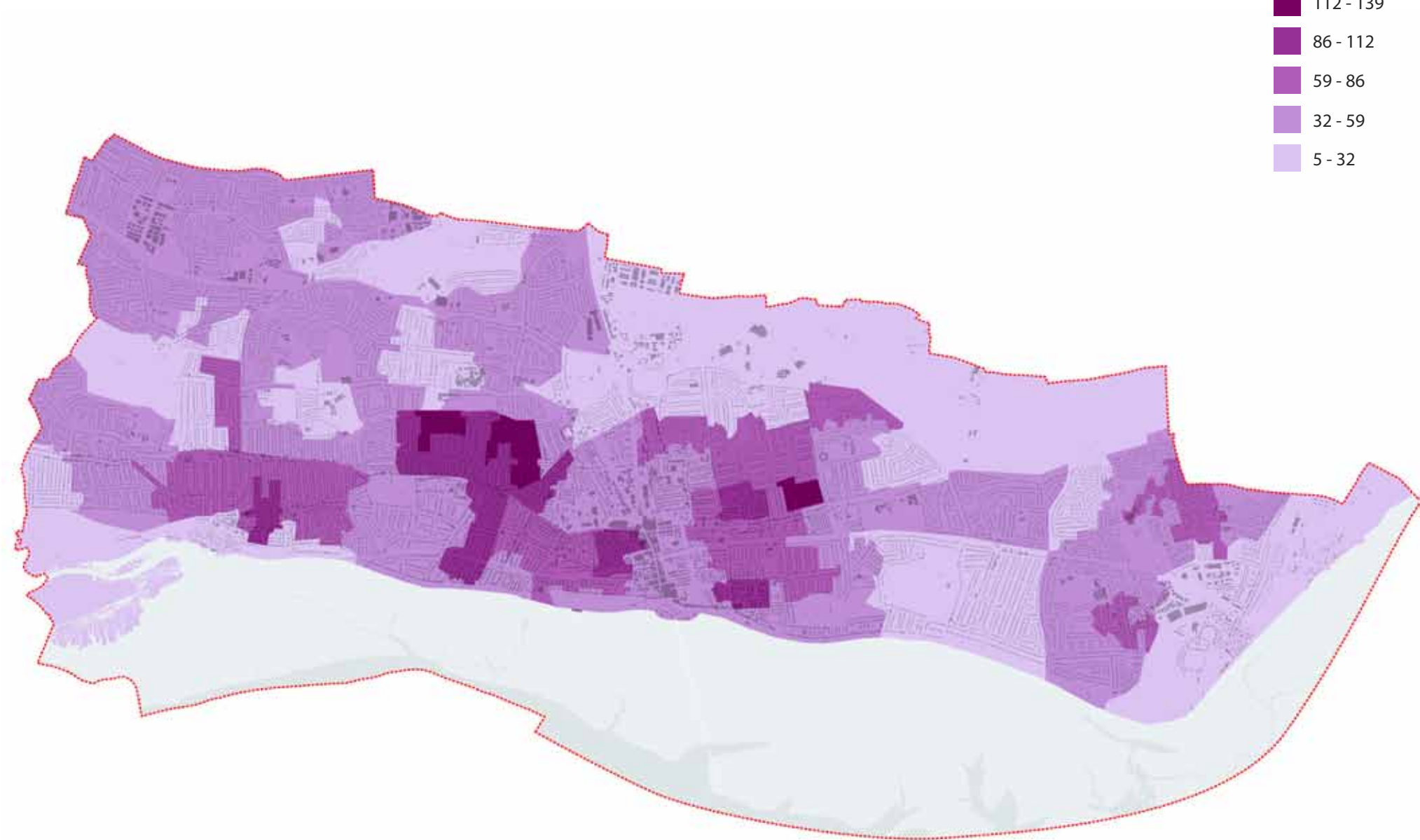


# SOCIETY

The plan showing population density helps to identify those areas of the Borough where housing is most densely arranged, taking account of the varied occupancy rates. This view notes that the most densely populated areas tend to be those with tightly arranged Victorian terraced streets such as the area around Brighton Avenue at the eastern side of Southchurch or certain areas of Westborough. These have in excess of 112 people per hectare. Areas with a high proportion of houses converted to flats are also likely to create high population densities.

By contrast, Thorpe Bay and areas of Leigh are the most sparsely populated of the developed areas, with the average density at less than a quarter of the most densely populated areas of the Borough. This is reflected in large individual building plots as well as in generous public realm.

**Population Density (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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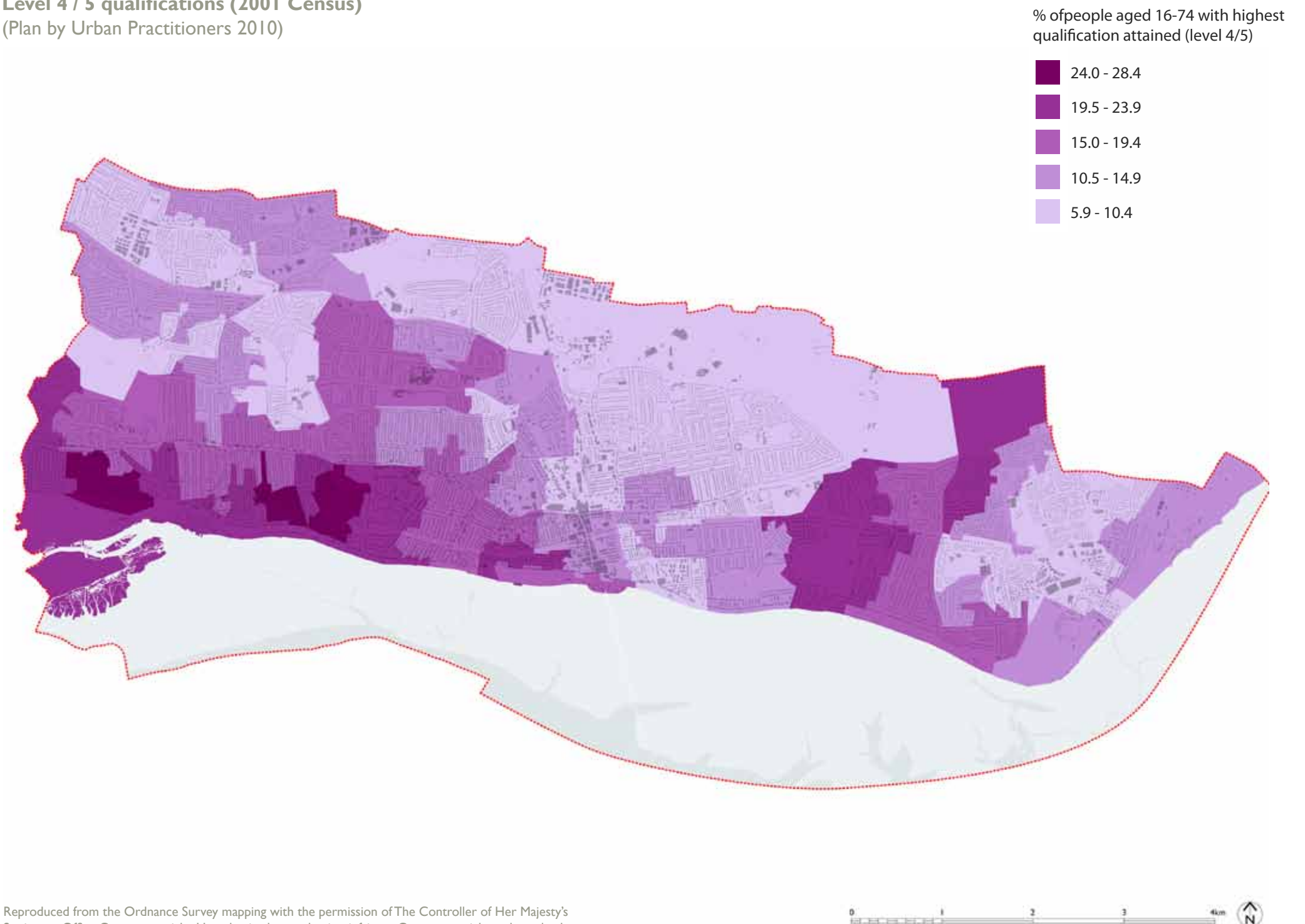




# SOCIETY

The plan showing the incidence of people with higher level qualifications (degree level or above) provides two interesting comparisons. Firstly, high levels of higher qualifications relate relatively closely to those areas on the IMD plan which are most likely to be in the upper levels of affluence generally. However, an even closer correlation shows in the comparison with the plan which shows the proportion of people who commute to work by train. The two plans here are shown side-by-side for ease of comparison.

**Level 4 / 5 qualifications (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



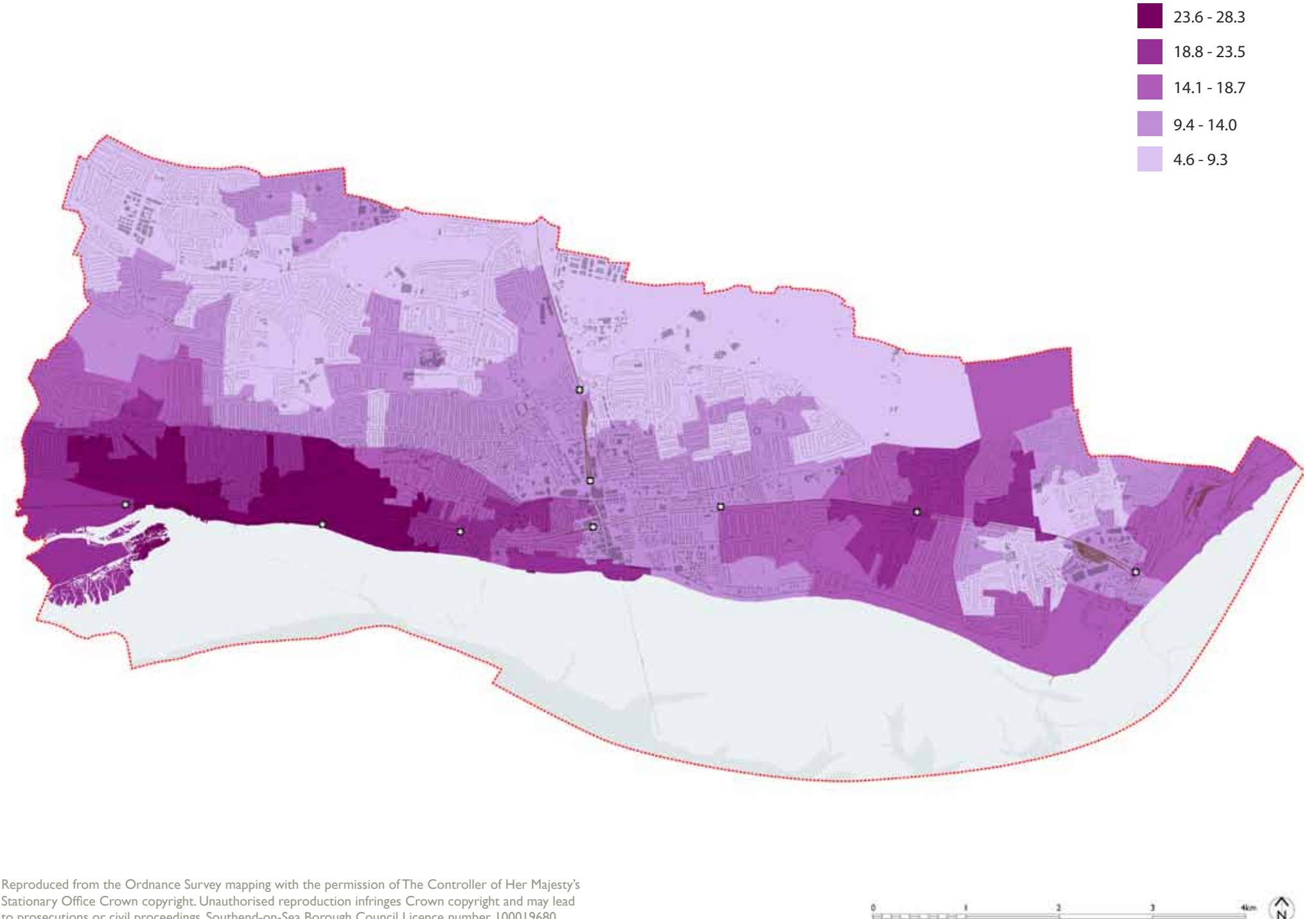


# SOCIETY

As has been noted, the incidence of people who travel to work by train closely correlates with those areas where there is the highest concentration of people with higher level qualifications. This can be rationalised in a number of ways, although these should not be read as direct proof of a causal relationship between the two strands.

- Firstly, people commuting by train from Southend are most likely to be commuting to London to higher value jobs which require a higher level of qualification;
- Secondly, people with higher earning power are more likely to be able to afford to live in the attractive older suburbs which lie close to the railway stations; and
- Thirdly, people who move to the area with the intention of commuting are most likely to try to locate somewhere close to a station which will enable a reasonably short connection from home.

**Travel to Work by Train (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



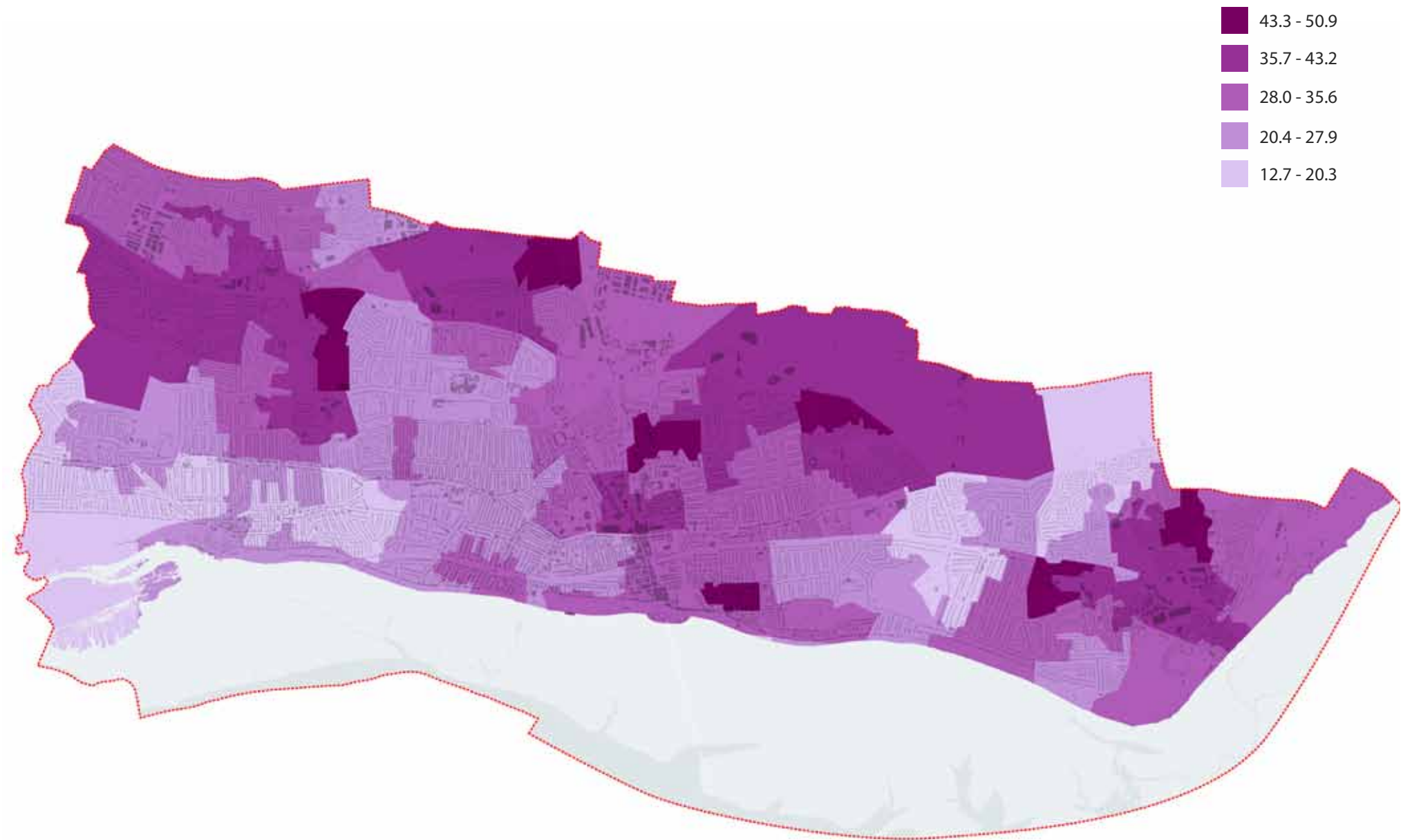


# SOCIETY

This plan shows the proportions of people living in each area who have no formal qualification, either academic or vocational. Given that this is often closely linked with access to employment this is a key issue in terms of improving the economic vitality of the Borough but it also makes individuals and families far more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty.

It is noted that there is an extremely close correlation between those areas where the lack of qualifications is highest and those areas where there is a high incidence of Council and Registered Social Landlord housing (see facing page).

**No qualifications (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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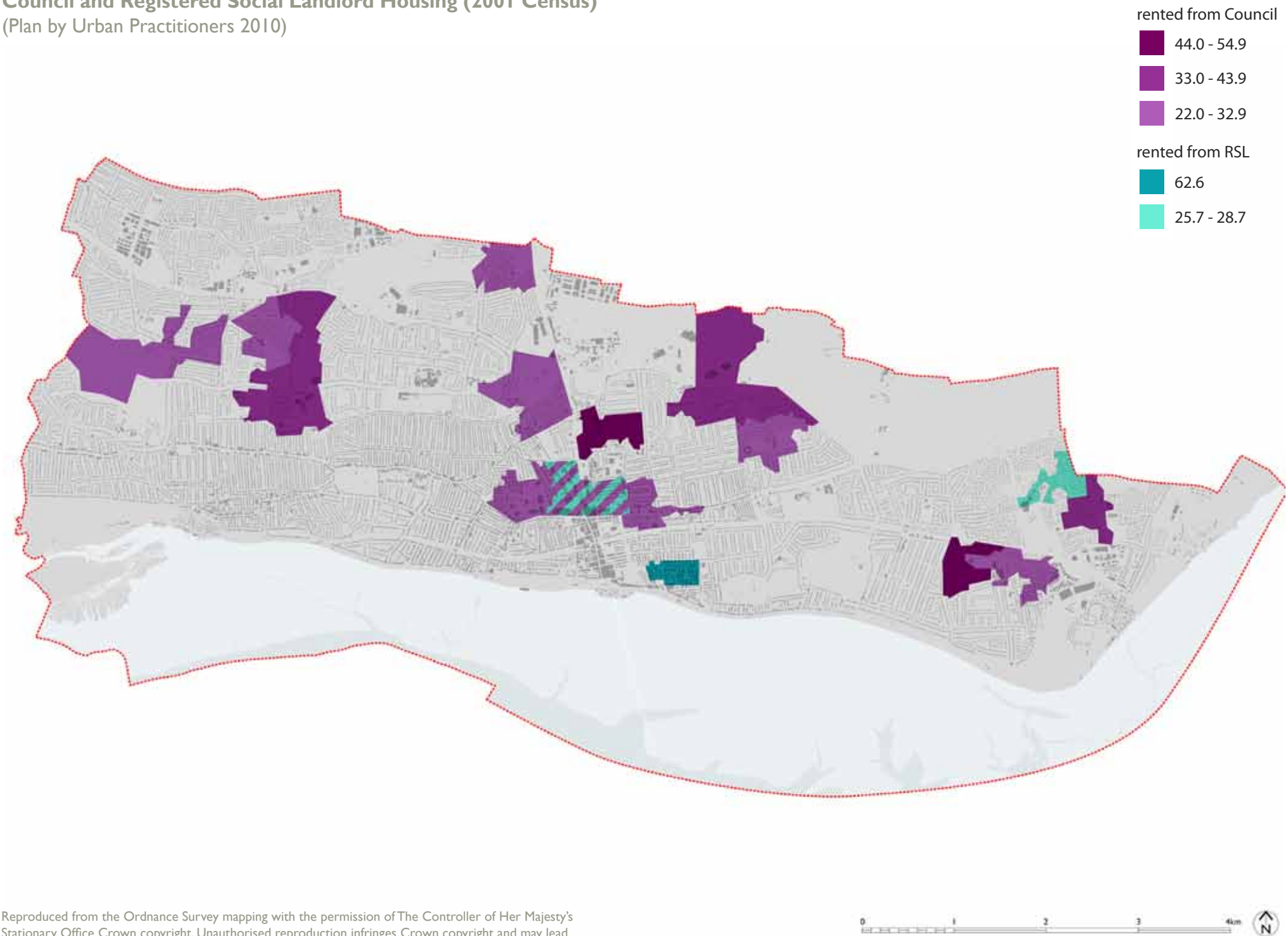


# SOCIETY

This plan shows the location of areas where people live in accommodation rented from either the Council or a Registered Social Landlord. This includes easily identifiable areas of public housing such as the Kursaal Estate in the centre of the Borough and the Somerset Estate.

It is notable that in the areas with higher proportions of properties that are rented from the Council, private ownership still accounts for around 50% or more of the homes with the notable exception of the Kursaal Estate where over 60% remain rented.

**Council and Registered Social Landlord Housing (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



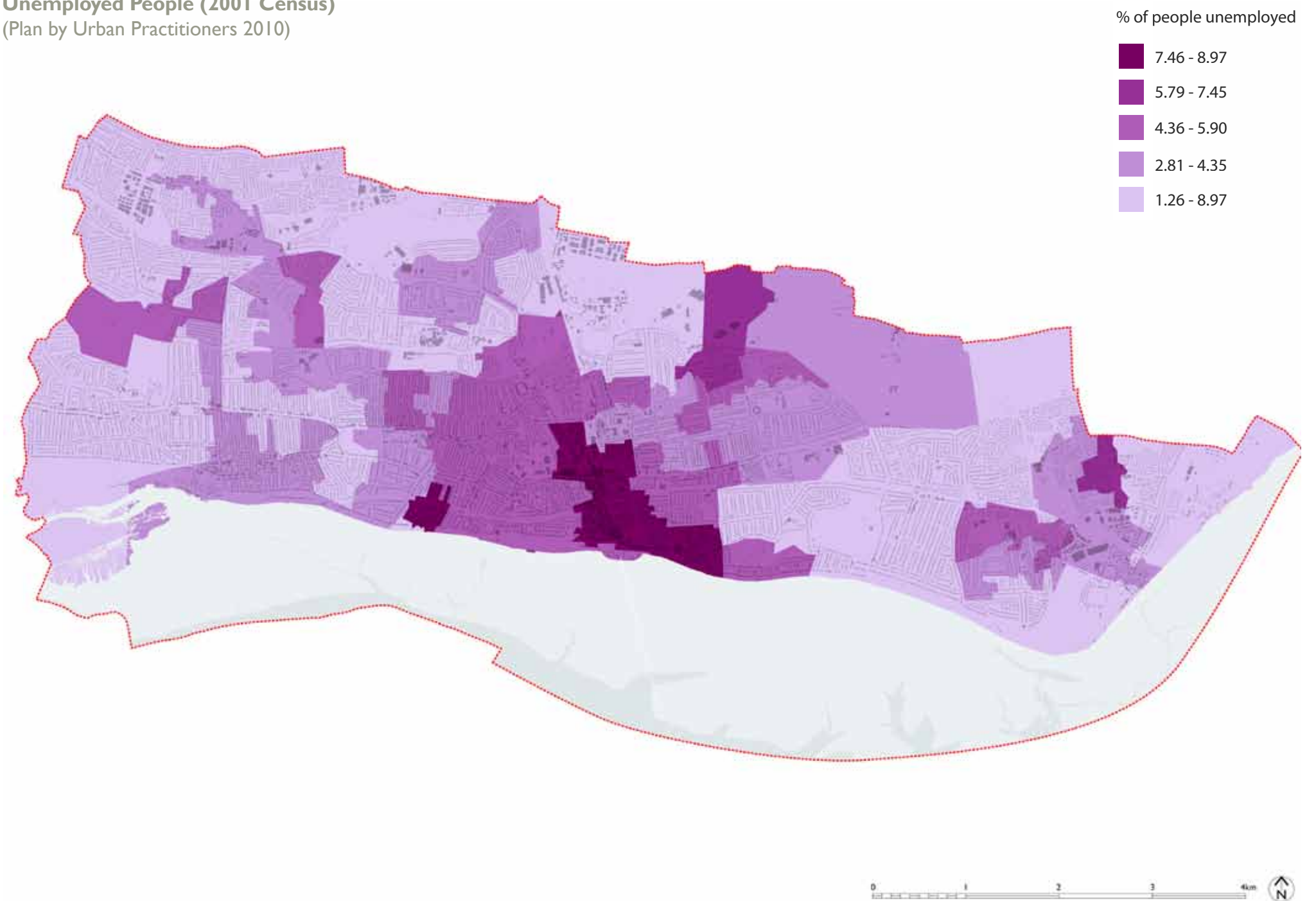
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# SOCIETY

The plan showing the relative levels of unemployment across the Borough bears close comparison with the plan showing high proportions of people living in socially rented housing. Whilst this will generally come as little surprise it is perhaps more noteworthy to highlight the particularly dense area of unemployment focussed around central Southend itself. This is likely to reflect the fact that what residential accommodation there is in the town centre is typically relatively poor quality.

**Unemployed People (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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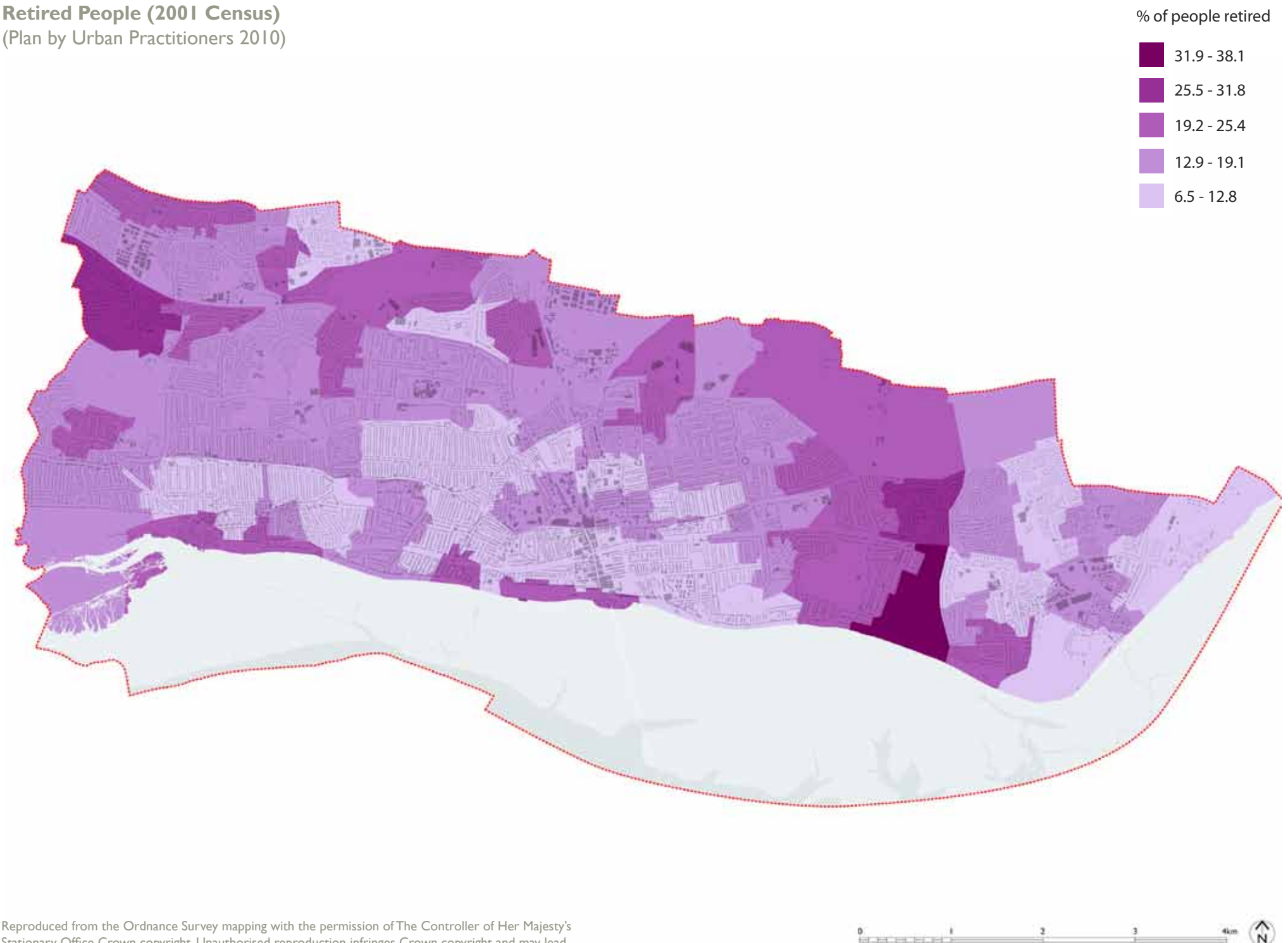
# SOCIETY

The plan showing the incidence of retired people in the Borough highlights two particular but overlapping characteristics:

- For the retired people in the Borough there is generally a move away from the areas most associated with rail commuting, perhaps seeking a quieter pace of life or perhaps reflecting lower house prices; and
- There is a low incidence of retired people living in those areas which predominantly include dense and more urban patterns of housing, particularly the Victorian and Edwardian terraces in Westborough, Southchurch and Leigh-on-Sea

The area with the highest proportion of retired people is the eastern part of Thorpe Bay, an area particularly known for its generous plots and high proportion of bungalows.

**Retired People (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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**URBAN GROWTH**



# URBAN GROWTH

## Introduction

Southend has a fascinating history shaped by a number of practical, social and commercial factors. It has experienced periods of both organic growth and planned expansion, particularly responding to the arrival of new railway and road access.

This section of the report tracks the major period of growth in Southend's development, ranging from the Regency development in the 1790s which was the first steps in the urbanisation of the Borough through rich periods of late Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war development which account for large areas of the Borough's buildings and which accommodated a massive increase in population from under 10,000 in 1890 to around 150,000 shortly after the end of the Second World War.

Historic maps have been used to create a series of graphics which show the process of urban expansion over time, along with railway lines and major roads, providing an easy tool with which to assess the patterns of growth.





## Patterns of growth

Analysis of the historic maps of Southend reveals a particularly interesting aspect of the way in which urban growth took place.

The plans on this page show the development of an area to the west of Leigh-on-Sea town centre over a period of around 50 years, from 1890 to 1940. This clearly demonstrates the manner in which streets were laid out on an extensive scale prior to the sale of individual plots or small groups of plots for development. The middle plan from around 1920 shows the fragmentary way in which plots were built out, some as part of groups, others standing apart from the rest of the street until such time as the gaps were filled in by later development. The 1940s plan shows Leigh much as we see it today, with streets which display a variety of styles within very short distances of each other.

It is interesting to note that whilst plot depths remain relatively constant due to the block depth established by the street layout, the plot widths do vary. This removes the previous sense of homogeneity which earlier Regency and Victorian development imposed on areas. The variations do not exclude the typical narrow-format Victorian terraces but they do permit much greater experimentation with other forms including wider plots and buildings with more horizontal proportions.

c.1890



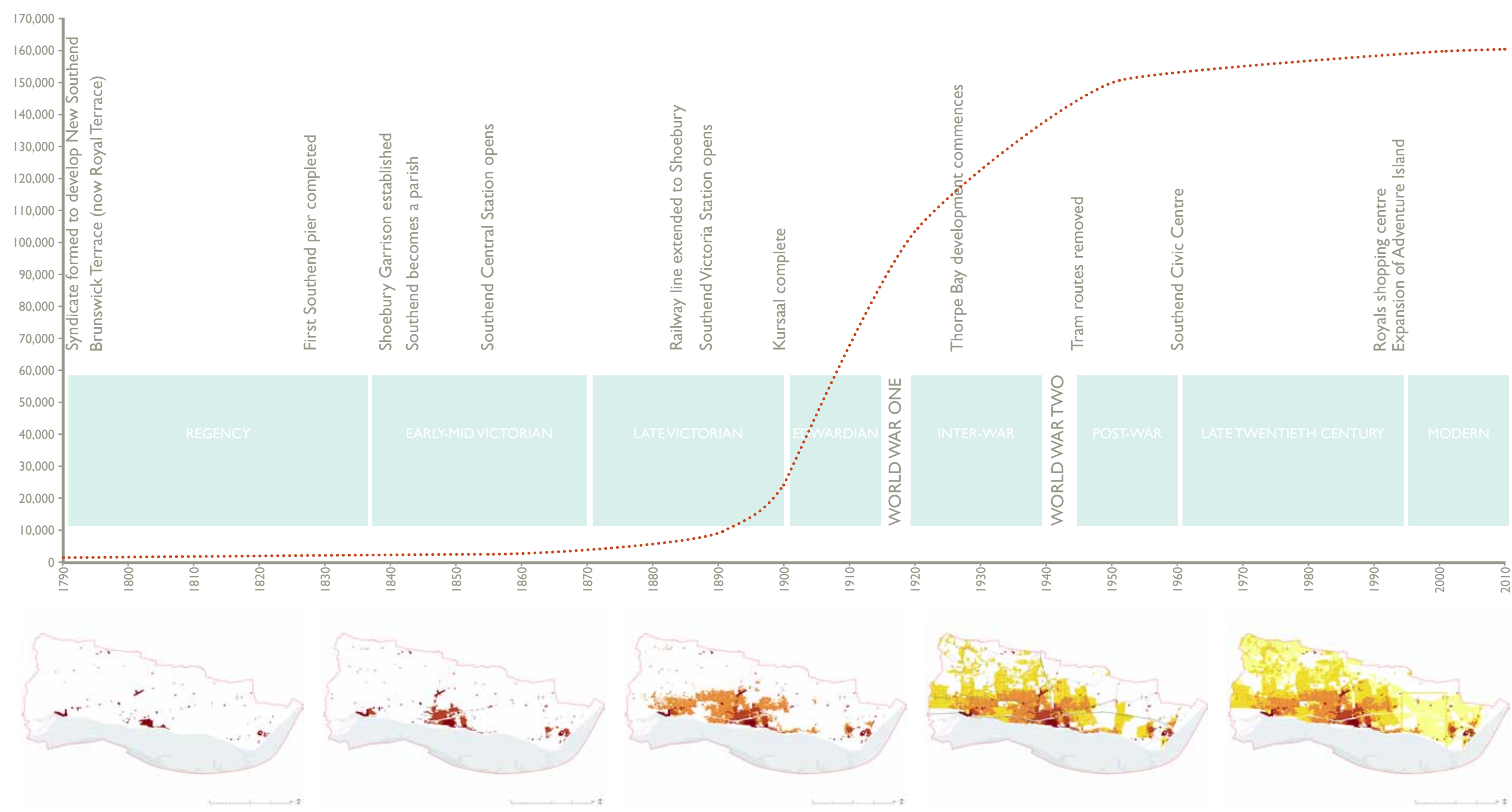
c.1920



c.1940



# URBAN GROWTH



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# REGENCY (1795 – 1837)

The Regency period in architecture is generally taken as being from the latter part of the reign of George III to the accession of Queen Victoria. It is associated with the classical revival and grand architectural gestures, such as the terraces of Brighton or the planning of London's West End by John Nash.

Southend was in its infancy at this period and the built legacy is consequently small, but of high quality. The prime example is Royal Terrace, on the cliff above the esplanade.

Royal Terrace is characteristic of Regency architecture in Southend - substantial brick houses built sequentially and varying in detail, but with common plot widths and sizes. The houses are mostly four storey including attics, and are three bays wide.

The terrace has an exuberant character, mainly because of the very fine wrought and cast iron balconies that adorn most of the houses. They are supported on columns and capped with concave lead roofs. The houses are tall, and the vertical effect is emphasised by the tall French windows at first floor level and slender sashes above and below. Door surrounds vary, but most are variations on classical themes.

The building materials are those that are common to other parts of London and the south east – yellow stock brick with stucco elements and painted stonework

A fragment of early seaside development clings on in the upper floors of the terrace where the early 19th century bow windows survive.





# EARLY AND MID-VICTORIAN (1837-1870)

Southend grew steadily up to the arrival of the first railway station, and thereafter the town's expansion took off at pace.

Some of the first and best quality housing was built as a speculative venture around the central station, where at that time the Fenchurch St line terminated. Clifftown was laid out in the area to the west of Royal Terrace, reaching back inland to the railway line.

The development consists of terraced streets of ascending size (Fourth Class to First Class), from simple houses to larger, more elaborate properties nearer the sea. For those properties with as much as a glimpse of the sea, double height bay windows were commonplace and these provide a characteristic marker as well as a strong rhythm. Larger houses like those around Prittlewell Square had half basements, often used as kitchens or servants quarters.

For the first time the railway network allowed cheap movement of building materials and the introduction of mass-produced components. Houses in Southend at this period were commonly built in yellow stock brick with welsh slate roofs and stone dressings. Cast iron railings were common, although many were scrapped during the Second World War. Cast iron panel embellishments above bay windows also add visual richness to the compositions

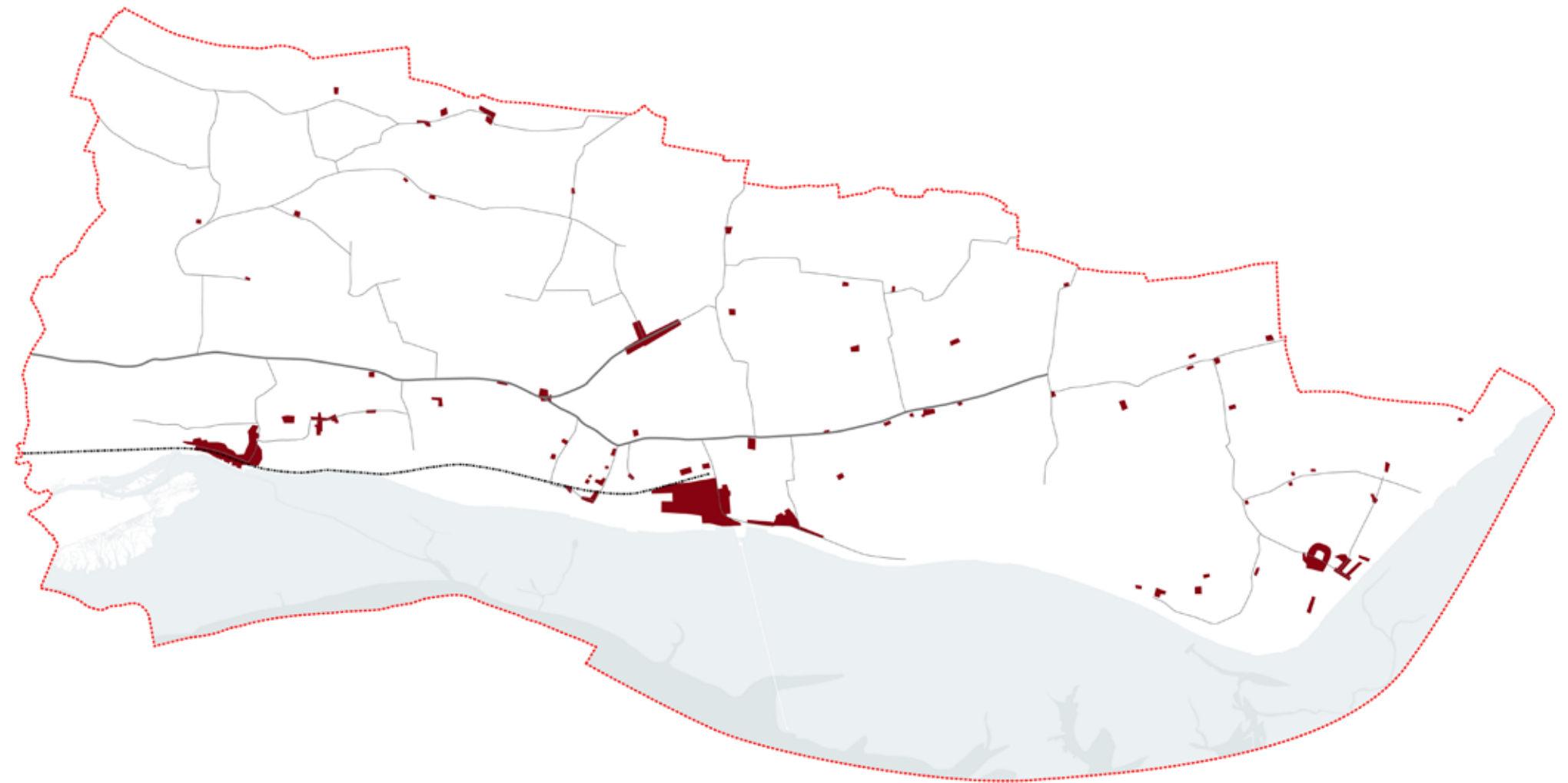




The plan from around 1870 shows the limited extent of the urban area in Southend, mainly comprising the historic cores of Leigh and Prittlewell but showing the Regency and early/mid Victorian growth of Southend.

At this point in time the railway line from Fenchurch was constructed as far as Southend Central, but the extension to Shoeburyness and the development of the Liverpool Street line were yet to follow.

### Historical development c.1870 (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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# LATE VICTORIAN (1870-1900)

In the later Victorian period larger villas were built in Southend, often individualistic with corner turrets, employing a wider range of building materials including red brick.

Large areas of terraced housing was also built during this period, providing mass housing areas based on regular grids. Terraces from this period often have closely spaced square bay windows, with thick stone mullions and cast stone (concrete) mouldings creating closely spaced vertical rhythms in the street frontages.

In some terraces the houses are 'handed' in pairs, with the plan of one house the mirror image of its neighbour. This sets up a longer rhythm of facades as doors and windows are paired up (AABBAAA instead of ABABAB).

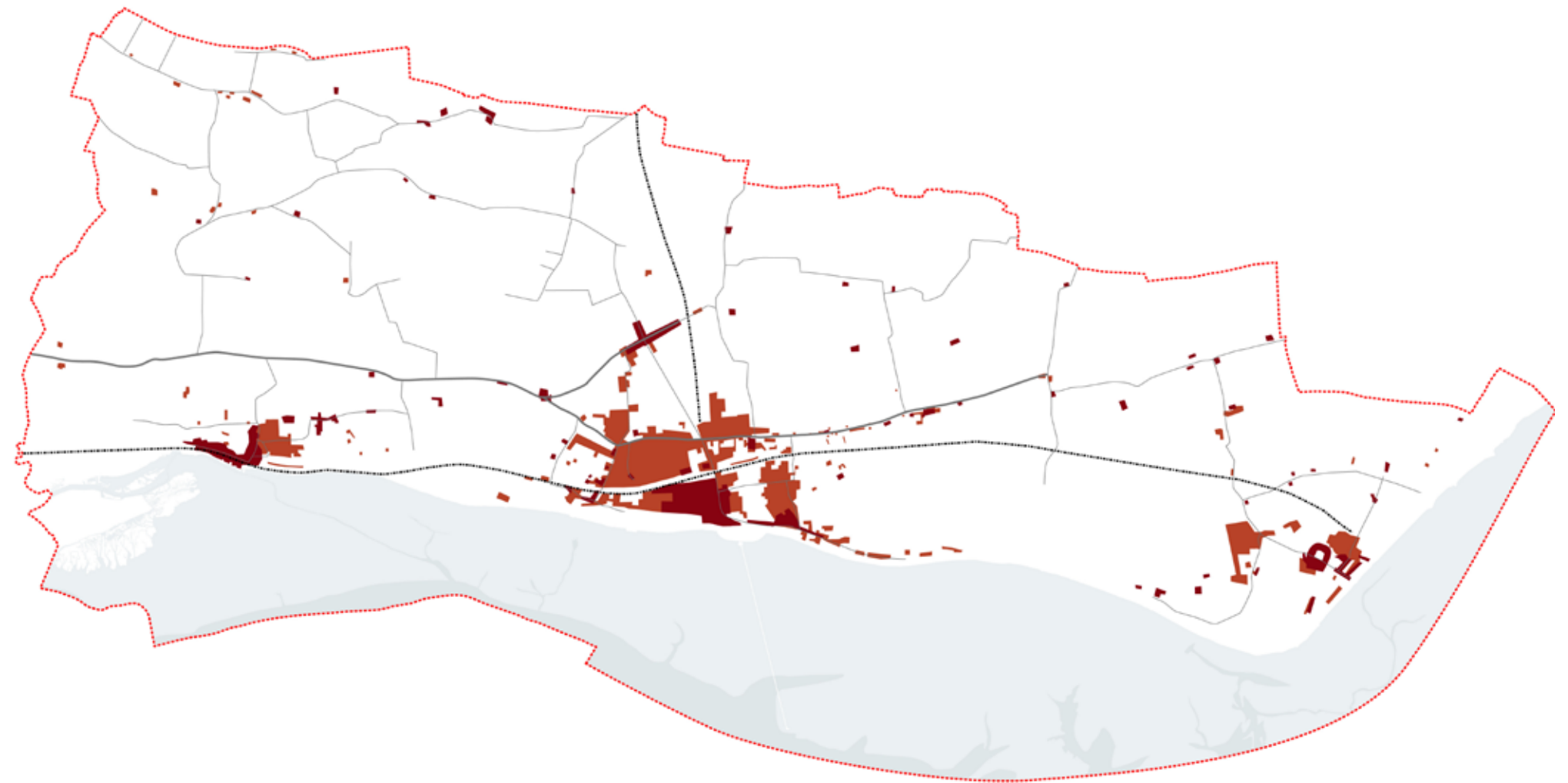




This map captures the mid point of late Victorian growth in Southend and particularly highlights area to the north of Southend Central Station and Porter's Town as key growth areas, no doubt stimulated by the arrival of the Liverpool Street line and the station at Southend Victoria.

The expansion of Leigh-on-Sea to the east is notable, as is the establishment of the Garrison and the growth of Cambridge Town in Shoeburyness following the completion of the railway line.

# **Historical development c.1890** (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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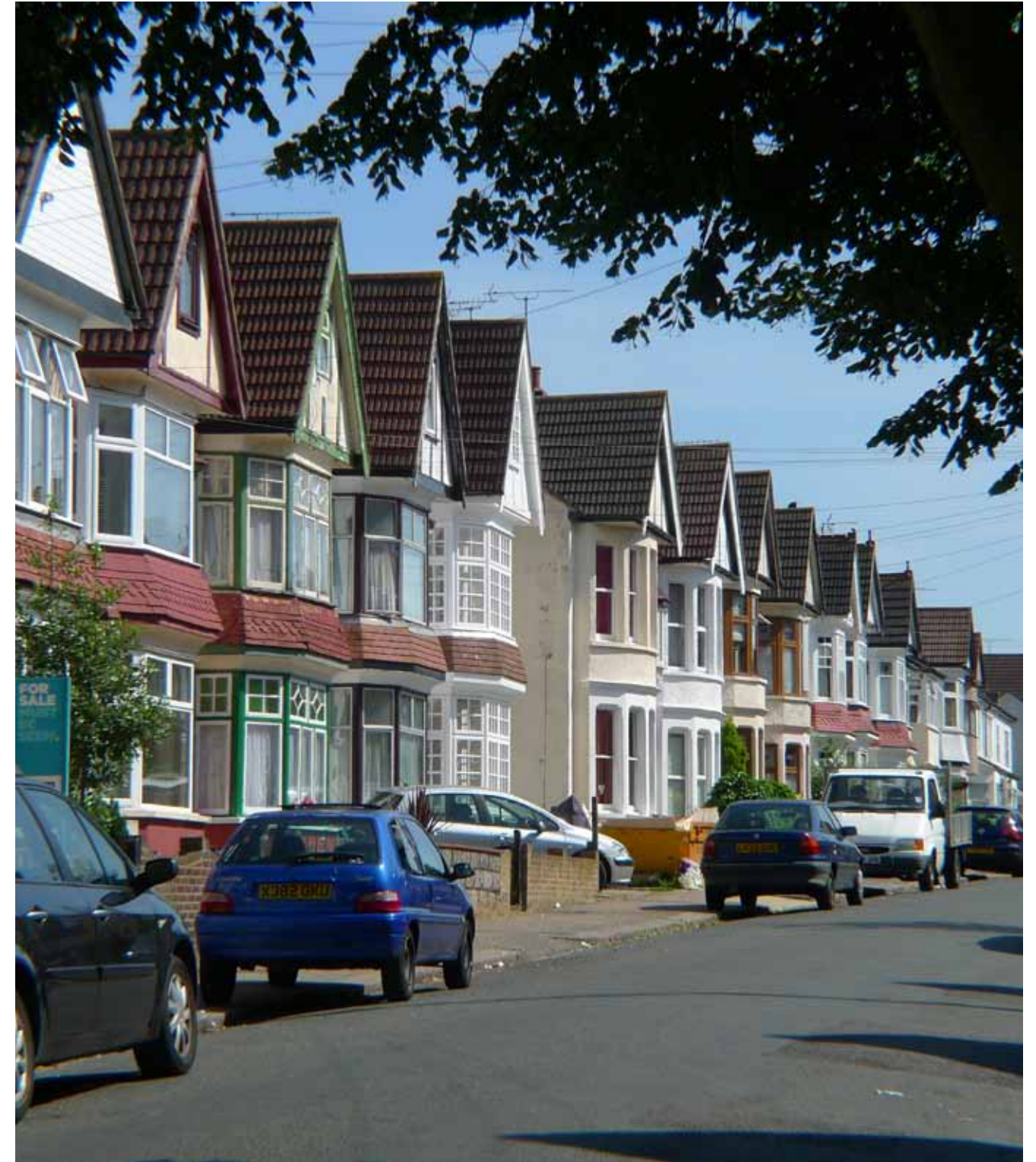


# EDWARDIAN (1900-1914)

The Edwardian houses in Southend are immensely varied with a wide range of stylistic influences: Dutch renaissance, Queen Anne revival and Arts and Crafts, often with an eclectic mix of motifs. As a general rule, houses of this period are richly modelled in three dimensions, with irregular projections, bays, turrets and gables that lend a lively character to the street scene. In town the corner buildings such as pubs, hotels or banks are often given particular architectural flourishes, with entrances on the corner. Swags and garlands of moulded plasterwork (redolent of the East Anglian craft of pargetting) are found in this period.

The Edwardian period is also crucial in the way that it sets the tone for much of the following development. Areas of planned street network, either on a regular or flexible grid, were built out by a wide range of developers. Sometimes this was in planned groups or relatively large areas, but more typically houses have a strongly individual feel which reflects a fragmented pattern of development. This approach to development perpetuated past the First World War and there is a clear sense of continuity between the Edwardian and Inter-war periods.

A wide range of building materials are used – plaster, timber, lead, copper, red and yellow brick and pebbledash. Roofs, are often clay tile, although in many instances they have since been replaced by machine-made ‘Rosemary’ type red tiles.



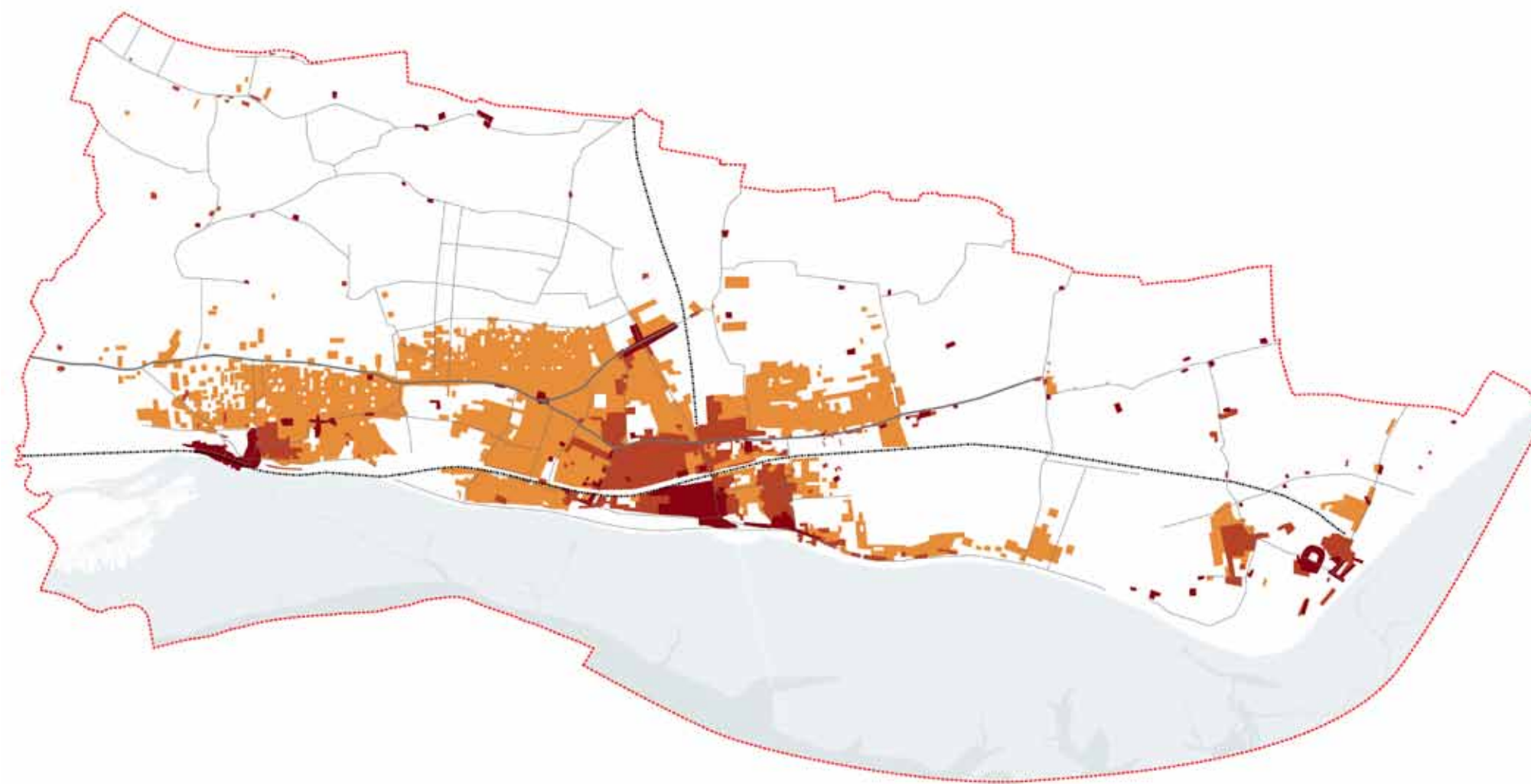


This plan captures a snapshot of the Borough at one of the most prolific periods of development in its history. It reflects the rapid expansion during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, but also elements of the development which took place during and immediately following the First World War.

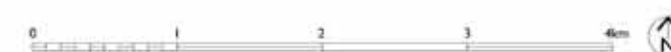
The piecemeal pattern of development on a plot-by-plot basis can be clearly seen here, with expansion focussed on the areas to the north of Leigh-on-Sea up to the London Road and in Westcliff, Westborough and the southern part of Prittlewell.

This plan also shows the initial development of areas of Southchurch, both to the north of the railway but also along the seafront.

# **Historical development c.1920** (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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# INTER-WAR (1919-39)

The Inter-war period sees a clear divergence in approaches to housing, driven by the emergence of a major public sector housing movement.

Whilst the First World War is typically seen as a significant break in many aspects of social and political history there is a strong sense of continuity in many of the developments in Southend which straddle the early part of the century. Although development in style towards the quintessential inter-war semi is very visible, one also sees a number of post-war houses which are clearly Edwardian in feel, perhaps reflecting a conservative approach to design.

The classic house of this period is the semi, with wider, squatter proportions than its Edwardian and Victorian predecessors, curved bay window with strong projecting gable and hipped roof. Roughcast render is a common addition to brickwork. Tall chimneys make an important architectural contribution.

In the immediate post-war period there was a significant push to build new areas of housing, following Lloyd George's declaration that this must be a "land fit for heroes to live in". For a short while this was backed by a relatively well funded programme and it is in this context that the Chapmanslord Estate was developed, reflecting a strong Arts and Crafts influence and establishing a richly landscaped arcadian character in the style of the early garden cities. These returned to a simpler form of building with rustic, pre-industrial notes such as roughcast walls, casement windows and dark roof tiles in steeper pitches (perhaps hinting at the superficial appearance of thatch). Above all the relationship between the house, the front garden and the street – often wide enough to

accommodate grass verges or trees – became paramount.

As the public housing programme grew significantly larger, there was a general recalibration of the approach, recognising that if many more dwellings were going to be built cheaply and quickly they could not be to the same lavish specification. The development of interwar public sector housing took many of the guiding principles of the garden city movement including planned layouts, generous plots and wide fronted cottage-style houses and delivered it in a simple and cost-effective manner. This large dispenses with extraneous decoration or detailing, but does create areas with a generally harmonious character, now often sadly maligned as the 'council house' style.

Art deco buildings are rare in Southend, but this block of flats above a corner shop in an area of 1930s semis with horizontal 'moderne' metal windows and flat canopies is characteristic of the type.

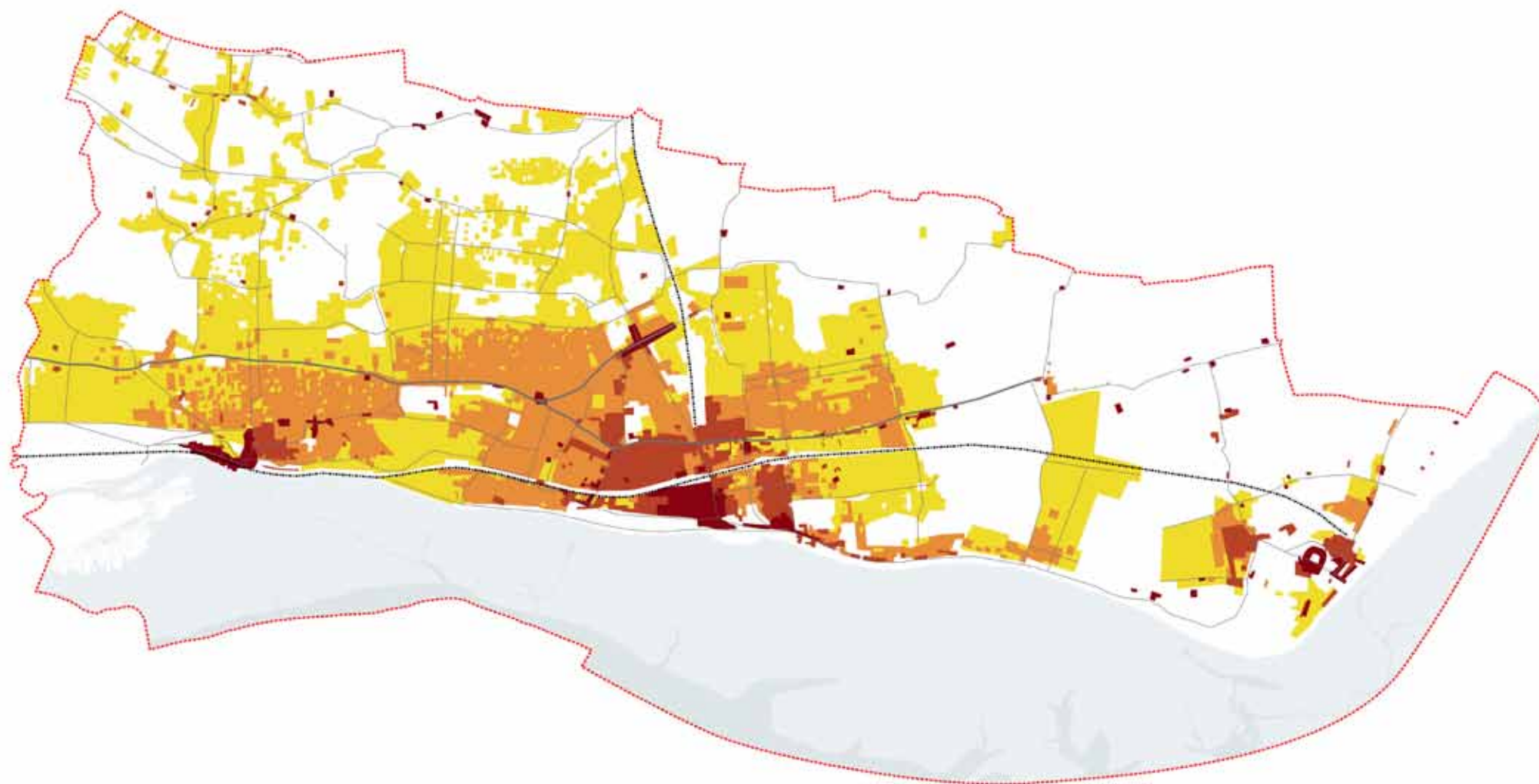




This plan, prepared in the early years of World War Two shows the extent of the inter-war development, taking in Leigh-on Sea, Southchurch and early phases of Thorpe Bay.

It is noticeable at this point that the development in the Borough is still primarily focussed around the seafront and the London Road.

**Historical development c.1940**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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# POST-WAR (1945-1960)

As with the period following the First World War the decade after the Second World War lent renewed vigour and urgency to house building. Initially, the problem which needed to be solved was one of speed and utility and a number of pre-fabricated building systems were developed to enable homes to be erected on site as quickly as possible. Examples of these are still evident in Southend today including most notably the north side of Cokefield Avenue.

It was however, quickly established that the system buildings were not as well liked as conventional brick-built houses and these very quickly became the norm again, accounting for large areas of new development which owe much to the earlier garden city style housing for their design and planning influences. At this point, housing built by the public sector was still largely being planned with the expectation that residents were not likely to own cars and so many do not have specific provision for parking or garaging.

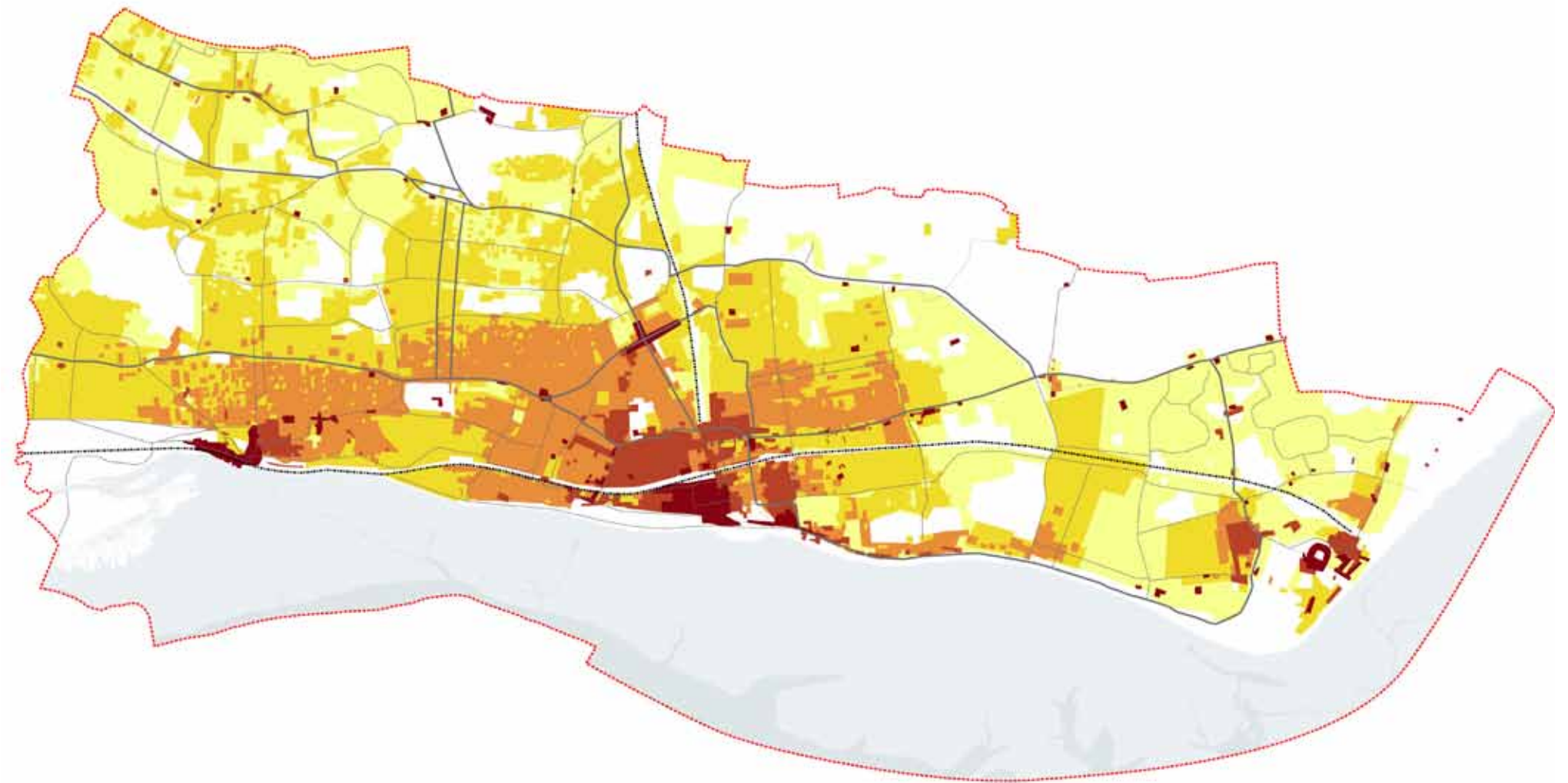




This plan shows the present-day urban extents of Southend, including the most recent areas of development in Eastwood, North Shoebury and the business parks to the north of the A127.

The key infrastructure addition during this period was the development of the A127 as a dual carriageway trunk road, providing a new focus for development and particularly industrial and business development, in the northern part of the Borough. The relative ease of access across the top of the Borough, effectively bypassing the congested London Road and central Southend also opened up much easier access to Shoeburyness, facilitating the development of substantial areas of post-war housing.

# **Historical development c.2010** (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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# 1960S AND AFTER

In the later post-war years public sector housing continued to develop in more and varied urban forms, including layouts which largely dispensed with the traditional perimeter block model in favour of more permeable areas and a greater separation of vehicles and pedestrians. The buildings from this period show a more experimental and overtly modern style with irregular window positions and render, tile or timber infill panels. Roof forms also vary, including some examples with very low pitches and tight verge and eaves treatment alongside others which use a steep chalet-style roof and provide first-floor accommodation within the roof space.

Brick colours vary, including the use of stock red bricks. However, the characteristic colour is a pale, slightly grey, beige brick with a mechanical finish. Original timber windows are now largely replaced by uPVC.

Two other modern influences have a key impact during this period. Firstly, as car ownership grew to near-universal levels even the public housing areas began to feature garage courts and parking areas. Secondly, the arrival of central heating and the rapid decline in the popularity of solid fuels to heat homes resulted in the loss of the chimney as a common feature, rendering roof lines flat and less characterful.

In the latter part of the Twentieth Century modern housing largely entered a cul-de-sac, both literally and metaphorically. The housing designs from this period are generally derivative and feature limited materials and simple cheap details. This is the point at which the cul-de-sac reaches its apogee when compared to the original modest origins in the garden city movement. Here it creates complex and

illegible patterns with long winding cul-de-sacs leading off a major distributor road.

More recent development has seen a return to more clearly defined urban forms which relate to conventional street patterns, often using modern materials and detailing alongside a more traditional and contextual palette.















# URBANTYPOLOGY



# TYPOLOGY OF URBAN FORMS FOR SOUTHEND

## Introduction

The following section of the study sets out a classification of the various urban forms found in the Borough, using a simple taxonomic methodology to gradually break down the various forms into finer levels of differentiation.

This typology is a bespoke approach which has been developed specifically to reflect the nature and types of development found in Southend, including particular reference to the nature of the seafront for example.

The first layer of classification is between areas which are residential and areas which contain a mix of uses. Whilst this may include elements of residential accommodation such as flats over shops the prevailing character of the mixed use areas is non-residential.

## Residential development

Within the residential category there is a clear distinction between those areas which follow a conventional **perimeter block** layout and those (typically more modern) areas which have a looser **free form** structure, either as cul-de-sacs or more open plan layouts. The perimeter block form typically provides a clear and legible environment with a clear distinction between public and private space and a good network of streets that makes pedestrian movement easy. By contrast the free form areas tend to lose this clarity of structure, often at the expense of legibility, permeability or both.

The perimeter block classification is then broken down further to reflect the various densities found in the Borough, ranging from tight Victorian terraces through to very low density inter-war development.

## Mixed use development

The mixed use classification is broken down into four broad categories: - centres, big box, campus and seafront.

**Centres** are the town, district and local centres which provide shops and services. This category has been further subdivided to reflect the broad spread which ranges from the primary centre of Southend which offers a high order of comparison shopping and leisure facilities through to the small tertiary centres and linear arrangements of shops found along key routes such as London Road.

**Big box** development covers retail, industrial and other similar uses which provide large volume buildings in a predominantly car-based setting. This includes examples such as supermarkets, car showrooms and industrial parks.

**Campus** development includes civic and business uses such as schools, hospitals and civic/community buildings. These areas typically have a public function and sit within a site which as well as having a stronger landscape character than big box development is also likely to have its own internal circulation between different elements of building.

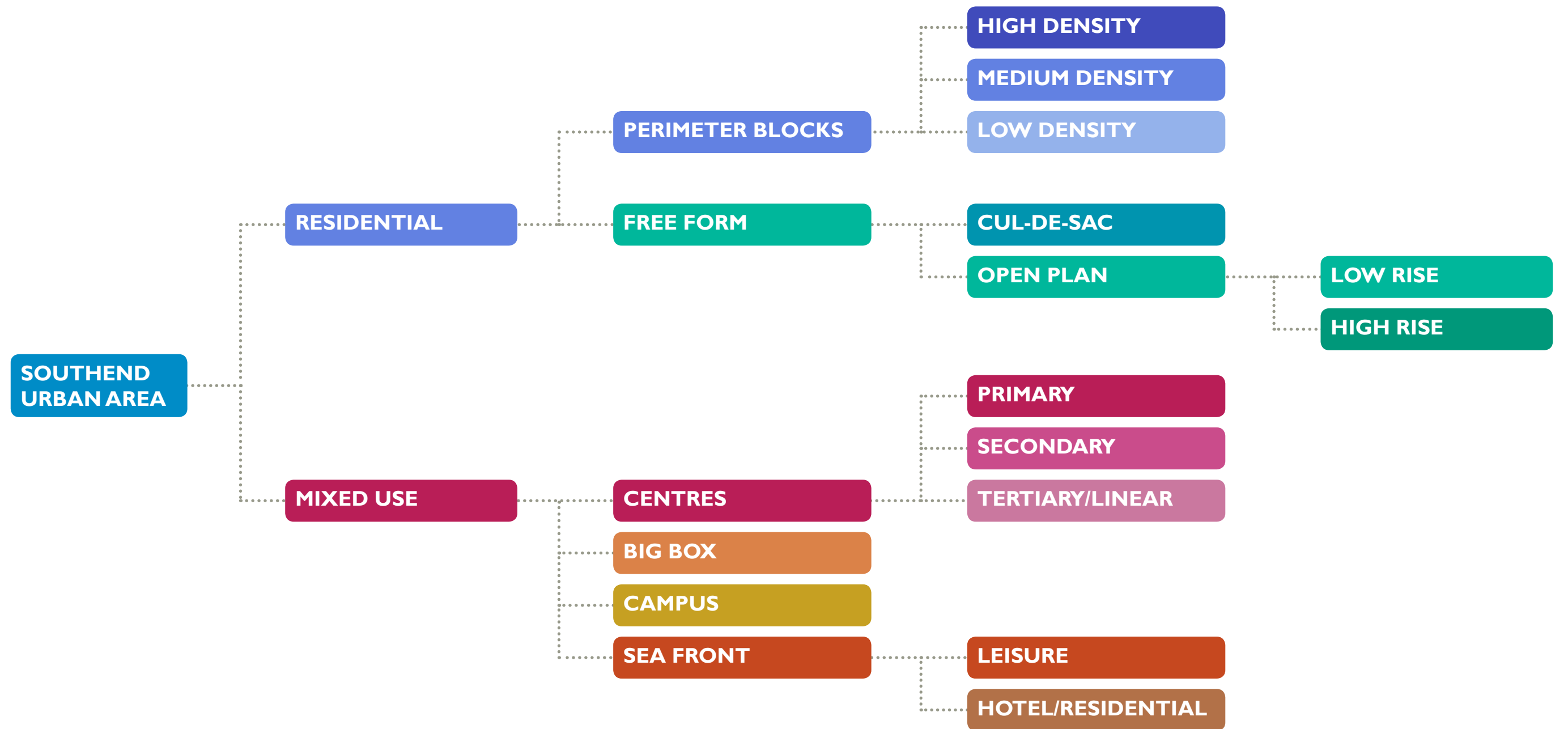
Finally, the **sea-front** category reflects the unique character of Southend's relationship with the estuary. It makes a clear distinction between the central area of the seafront which is dominated by leisure uses and has its own vibrant character and the areas outside this which include larger scale buildings such as hotels, guest houses, retirement complexes and flats.

## Typology mapping

The following section of the report provides a description of each of the typologies established in this classification system, including a review of the key features of urban form, buildings and streetscape/landscape. This is supported by a selection of photographs designed to portray the key features and built character.

Alongside this, each category also features a plan which shows where in the Borough it occurs, along with a more detailed extract from the map which provides a greater appreciation of the urban form and block structure.







Urban areas which fit the description of **high density perimeter blocks** are most likely to be Victorian and Edwardian terraces. By their nature they tend to be tightly arranged, regular rows of houses with on-street parking.



**Medium density perimeter blocks** are one of the key defining urban types found in Southend and include the classic inter-war suburban areas. They are able to accommodate a wide variety of building scale and types including bungalows.



**Low density perimeter blocks** typically characterise the most sought-after areas of Southend. They feature large individual plots, able to accommodate significant houses or bungalows which are often built to individual designs.



**Cul-de-sac** housing areas are the product of post-war development and typically date from the 1960s onwards. They feature generally low densities of development and have generally poor permeability and legibility.



**Free-form low rise** development in Southend is typically a product of the early post-war period. It features low rise terraces and detached buildings which have a fragmented urban layout.



**Free form high rise** development features tall buildings set within areas of landscape and parking. These typically date from the 1960s and were built as part of public housing projects.



Southend town centre is the only example in the Borough which can truly be described as a **primary centre**. This is characterised by the large scale of buildings and variety of comparison shopping, services and leisure opportunities available.



**Secondary town centres** provide a mixture of comparison and convenience shopping. They typically have a much finer grain than a primary centre and are well integrated with their context.



**Tertiary or linear centres** are the most modest collections of retail use. They are typically found as shopping parades within residential areas, but also include the near-continuous string of shops which line the most significant historic routes in the Borough.



**Big box** development describes industrial, business and retail areas which feature large buildings and which are predominantly car-based in terms of access and movement. This includes large scale business parks, industrial units and out-of-town supermarkets.



**Campus** areas are normally associated with institutional or business uses such as colleges, hospitals or civic buildings. They are typically characterised by collections of buildings, often within the middle of a site, and areas of open space which may include playing fields.



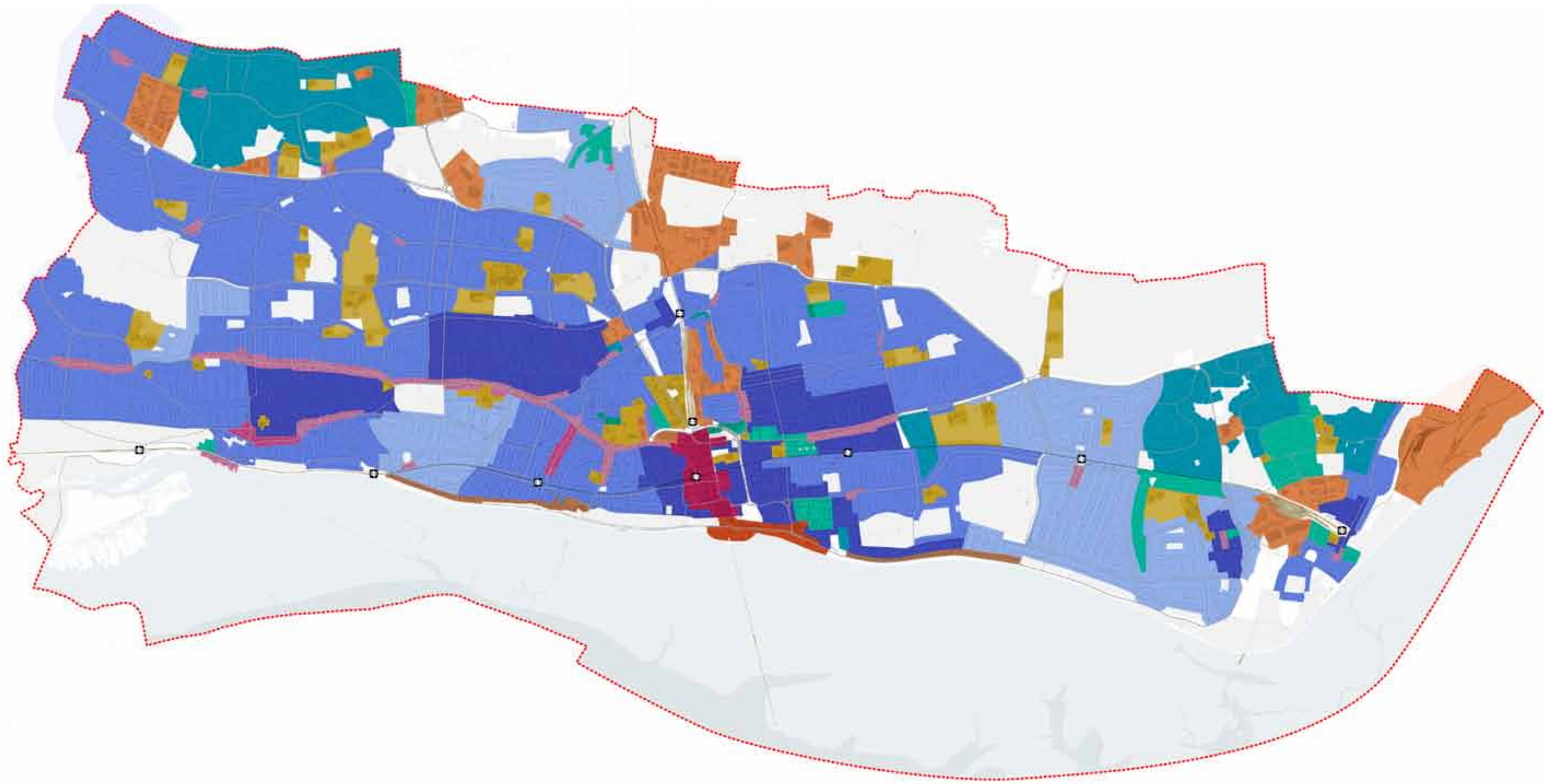
The central area of the seafront is associated with a vibrant architectural style and sea-front leisure and pleasure. It provides a stark contrast to the orderly and mannered Victorian and Edwardian suburbs in the surrounding areas.



In the areas of the seafront east and west of central Southend there is a varied building scale and pattern of use. This includes the presence of numerous guest houses and small hotels, but has also more recently included retirement flats and apartment buildings.







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# RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - HIGH DENSITY

## Introduction

Urban areas which fit the description of high density perimeter blocks are most likely to be Victorian and Edwardian terraces, typically located close to an established town centre. By their nature they tend to be tightly arranged, regular rows of houses with on-street parking.

## Urban form

High density perimeter blocks are typically arranged in a manner which optimizes available land, using a regular grid as far as possible within the constraints of topography and existing historic routes. In the case of Southend, many of the historic routes run east-west, parallel to the coast. The residential streets most often run north-south, establishing a strong grain which is sometimes broken by intermediate perpendicular routes where required. Houses are arranged in a regular terrace along the residential streets with back gardens backing onto one another, giving a typical block depth of approximately 50 to 55 metres, measured between boundary lines. Where the perpendicular intermediate routes are significant in their own right the houses are turned to face onto them, creating short terraces between regular junctions. In other cases where the route is more secondary, the terraces simply terminate in a gable end and garden wall.

This grid system provides a high degree of permeability and is generally easy to navigate on foot. In some areas featuring relatively narrow streets, one-way systems have been introduced which can make wayfinding by car more complicated.

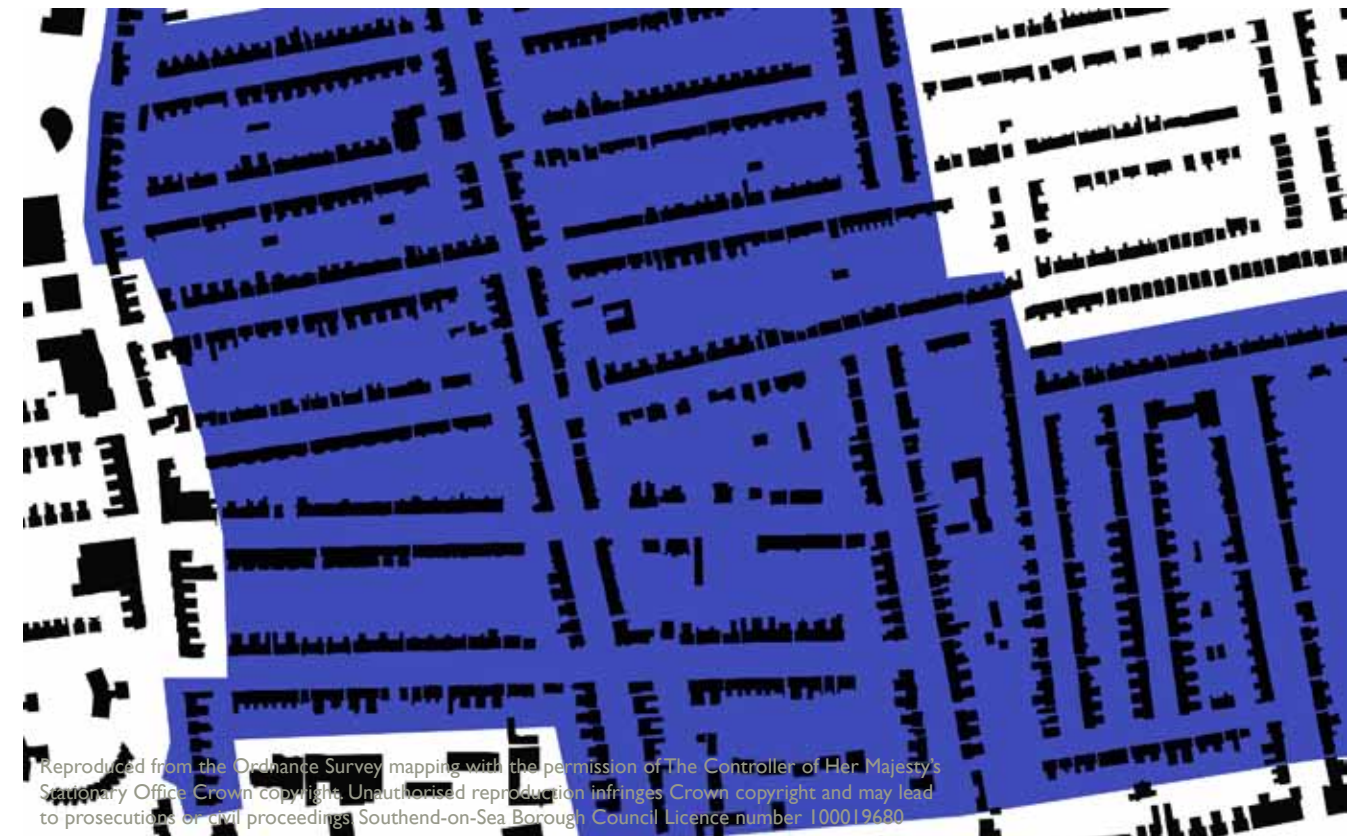
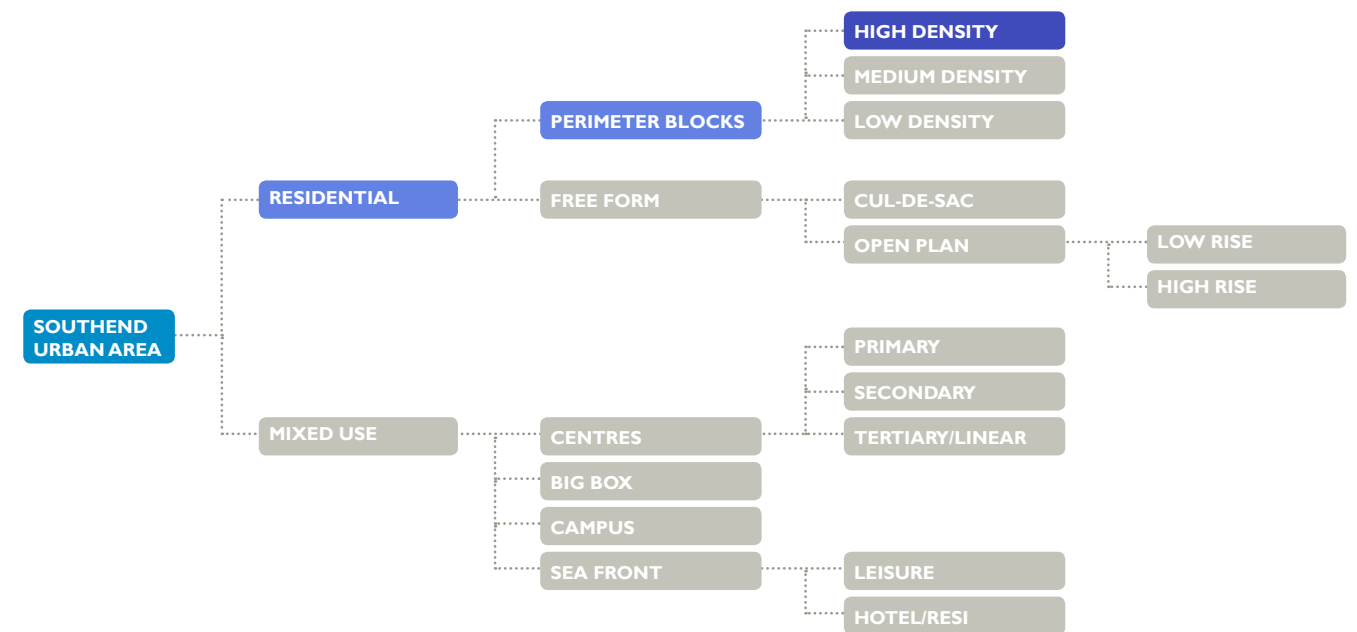
## Buildings

Houses within a high density area typically dates from the Victorian and Edwardian periods. They are most likely to be built to a regular design in significant groups, although there is still likely to be some variation along a street. Plot widths vary, but are typically between four and five metres. This establishes a high frequency of front doors with a strong rhythm and relationship to the street. It also ensures that the buildings tend to have a deep plan in order to provide sufficient accommodation, creating the well-recognised L-shape configuration which is so common to this period.

It is very common for buildings in this category to feature bay windows, often surmounted by gables at the roof. This can lend a very strong repeating motif to a terrace which establishes a clear unity of design and also creates a clear vertical scale. Victorian buildings are most likely to feature details such as bays and gables in largely stone or re-constituted stone. Later Victorian buildings, merging into the Edwardian period show a greater exuberance in the design and are more likely to feature external timber work in porches, gables and sometime even balconies. Building height is most likely to be two storeys, although there are some examples which feature additional attic roof space.

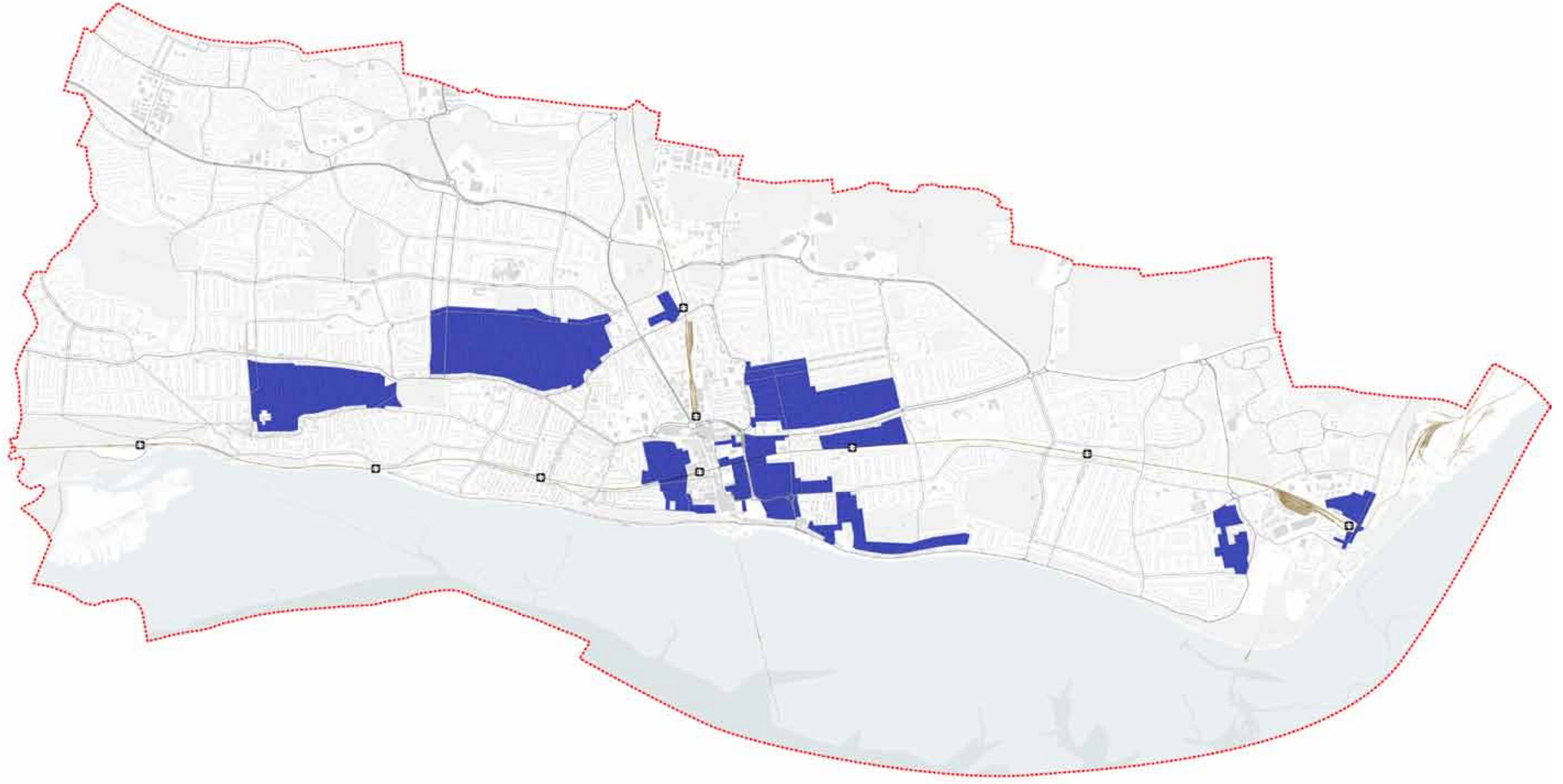
## Streetscape and landscape

Streets typically have a narrow profile and have terraced rendered or brick properties on both sides of the road. Most streets have very shallow front gardens, often as little as 1-1.5m deep. These are often paved or surfaced in concrete with no planting and a variety of boundary treatments including low walls



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and different types of fencing often in poor condition. This mix of boundary treatments often creates a poor quality streetscape. In a few cases mature privet hedges planted behind a low brick wall provide visual and habitat value to the streetscape. A few roads such as Fernbrook Avenue have no front gardens at all and properties face directly onto the pavement edge. Streets are generally dominated by on-street parking on both sides of the road and in some cases like the roads running between Fairfax Drive and London Road/ West Drive including Hainault Avenue and Shakespeare Drive, roads are not wide enough to accommodate two way traffic and parking on both sides and have therefore been converted to one way.

Streets are typically urban in character, dominated by on street parked cars and with little vegetation. The street character is normally strong and coherent due to the consistency and rhythm of the terraced architecture. However, the variety of boundary treatments and the introduction of late twentieth century changes to doors and windows etc has weakened this to some extent.

Vegetation in the residential perimeter block high density streets is generally sparse due to the lack of space available. In some streets, small ornamental trees (eg ornamental cherries, flowering hawthorn and purple leaved cherry) or larger lime trees have been planted, (mainly in the late twentieth century) and occasionally trees have become established in front gardens either self-sown or planted and squeezed into the space available. Although there are few trees, those that are present make a valuable contribution to the street character and provide some shade in summer months and

relief from the hard built-up environment. Green verges, either grassed or planted with hedgerows are absent from high density areas.

A few front gardens contain some domestic ornamental planting with a mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and herbaceous plants. The small size of the gardens has also had the positive effect in that there have been very few conversions to off-street parking which has allowed the street profile to remain intact.

All roads in the Borough in this typology are surfaced in macadam and many have retained the original wide Victorian/Edwardian granite road kerbs. Pavements are generally surfaced in pre-cast concrete slabs or macadam. Many of the roads have low levels of street lighting with widely spaced columns which are often the original green cast iron street lighting columns. Most of these are rusty and in poor condition and in need of repair or replacement eg Beaufort Street and Dalmatia Road. However, with suitable maintenance they could continue to make a valuable contribution to the character of the areas. Most front paths are concrete surfaced although a few properties have Victorian style chequered tile paths (either original or, more usually a more recent replica).









# RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - MEDIUM DENSITY

## Introduction

Medium density perimeter blocks share many of the urban characteristics of the high density blocks. However, they typically date from a later period and feature larger dwellings, often arranged as semis rather than terraces. Most importantly, at a medium density, there is the potential for the street network to follow a more fluid layout.

## Urban form

As with the high density blocks, medium density blocks provide a grid network of streets. Whilst the blocks are typically deeper at around 70 metres, creating larger plots, the block themselves are often shorter, providing a reasonably similar level of overall permeability.

The overall layout of the urban structure tends to fall into three broad types:

- Regular grid, taking a regular form of parallel streets, typically running perpendicular to main routes;
- Flexible grid, taking a more relaxed and organic form, introducing curved roads and creating variations in block depth; and
- Planned layouts, featuring a network of streets and spaces which together establish an overall pattern, often geometric and with elements of symmetry.

## Buildings

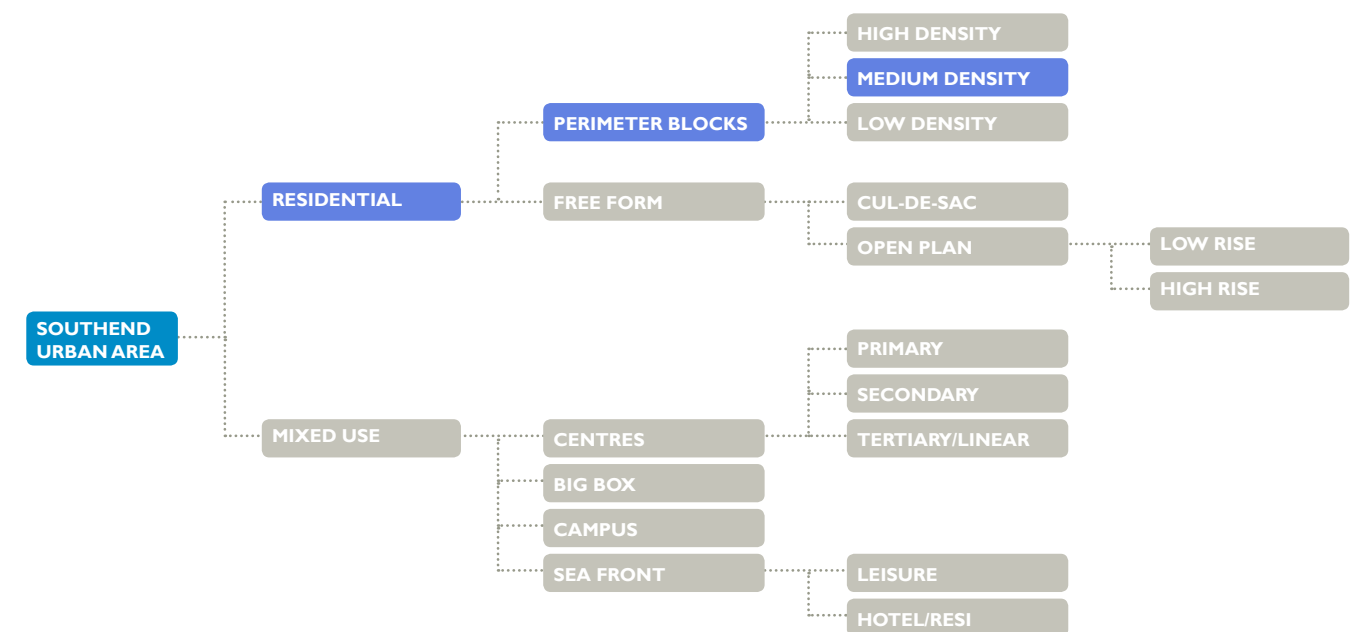
Buildings within the medium density areas are most likely to be semi-detached or smaller detached houses. Examples can be found from a wide range of periods. Whilst the earliest

typical examples are Edwardian the most common period for this style is the inter-war years, creating one of the most dominant building forms in the Borough. Post-war examples also feature, particularly in post-war areas.

Regular and flexible grid areas are most likely to have been built by private developers and builders. As a result, they typically feature a richer architectural palette which can include a high degree of variation between plots. By contrast, a number of planned layouts are the result of public sector housing projects and so feature regular building types with simple detailing.

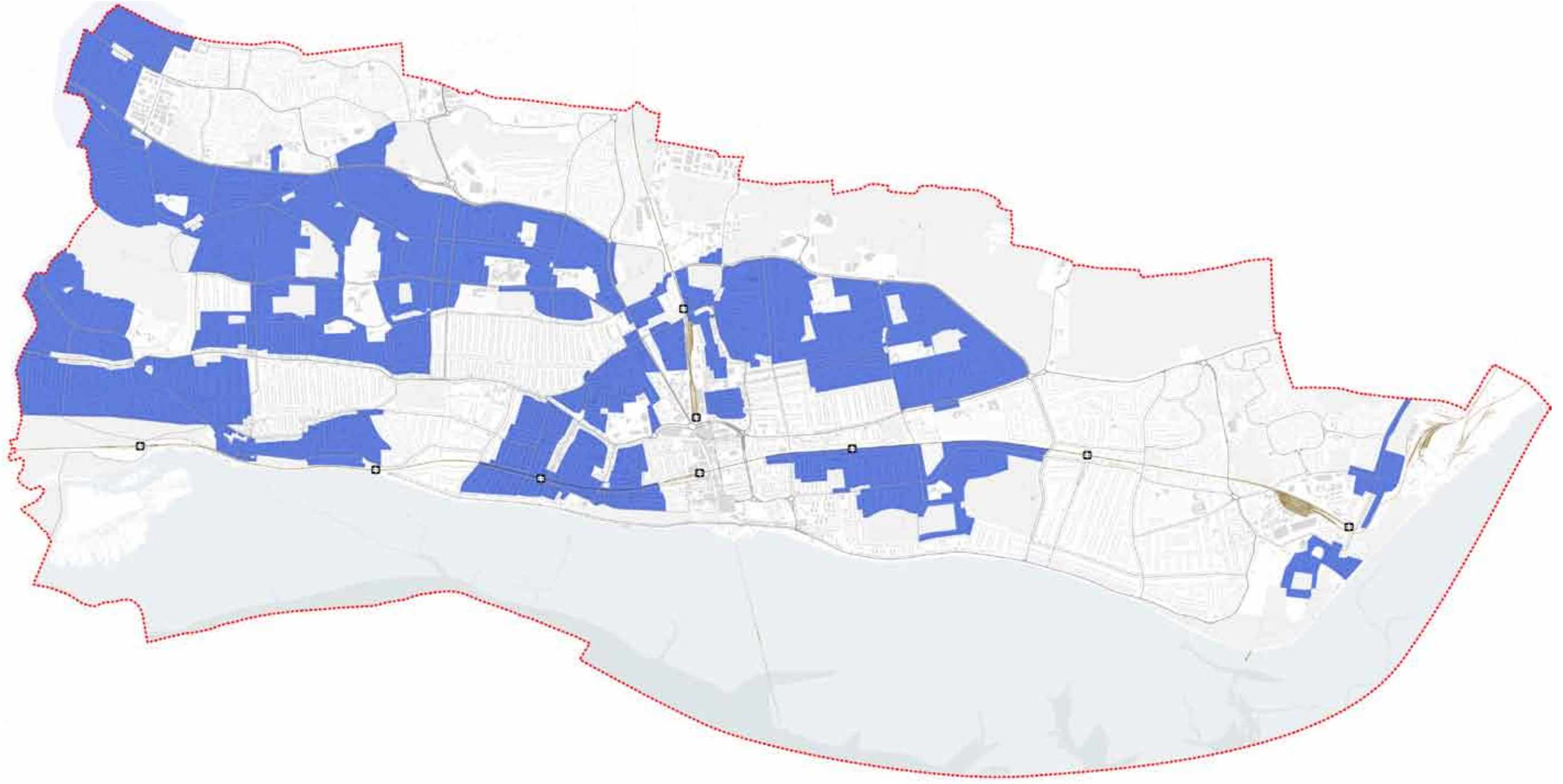
Areas developed by private sector developers are also likely to feature a significant degree of variation in the building design as a result of plots being bought and developed on an individual basis, either speculatively or to commission. Consequently there is a wide range of plot and building configurations, giving a less defined rhythm to the street. Plot widths also vary, typically ranging from 7m wide up to just under 10m wide. However, whilst building design and configurations vary there is often a relatively consistent approach to the styles and fashion of the period in which the streets were built out, which establishes a reasonably cohesive feel. There is also a reasonably consistent building line, which contributes to the overall cohesiveness of the street.

Buildings are most likely to be two storeys, although three storey examples can be found. This typology also includes bungalows, either as cohesive groups or in small numbers interspersed with two storey housing in mixed areas.



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## Streetscape and landscape

Streets in this typology typically have a much wider profile than the areas of residential high density perimeter development and have a considerable variation in streetscape and landscape character. The street cross-section is normally symmetrical and on either side comprises residential properties set back from the road with private front gardens of three to six metres deep often bordered with a low brick wall. Roads are typically six to seven metres wide often lined with trees and with pavements (1.5 – 2m wide) on both sides. Importantly, many streets also have a grass or planted verge (1 – 2m wide) separating the road from the pavement and normally incorporating tree planting.

Most of the houses in this typology were not planned with car ownership in mind and as a result car parking is accommodated in an ad hoc manner with the addition of garages and driveways which can dominate the streetscapes.

Many streets have parked cars often on both sides of the road and many front gardens have been converted to provide off road parking. The loss or reduction of front gardens to provide parking often has a detrimental effect on the quality of the streetscape as garden vegetation is lost, boundary walls are removed and the frontage line of properties is broken by the creation of new crossovers.

Front gardens (where they have not been completely paved over to create off road parking) make a valuable contribution to street character. Gardens are typically well-maintained with a variety of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and herbaceous plants and are normally bordered with low brick walls. Typically, boundary walls of the earlier properties are made of London Stock bricks often in an irregular or basket bond and incorporating bits of tufa. Later properties typically have low red brick walls in traditional flemish or stretcher bond.

Road surfacing materials within this typology vary with some roads surfaced in tarmac and others in concrete. (There is a large area of roads surfaced in concrete in the north east of the Borough eg around Poynings Avenue). Pavements are generally surfaced in pre-cast concrete slabs. Street lighting is a mix of the original green cast iron street lighting columns and more recent highway street lamps.

Patterns of street planting vary considerably within this typology and as a result three sub-types of character have been identified as set out and described below.

### a) Grass and planted verge streets

Grass and planted verge streets are typically found in the areas constructed in the mid twentieth century with rows of bungalows and /or semi-detached two storey properties eg Wick Chase, Poynings Avenue and Parkstone Drive. Grass verges are generally well-maintained and regularly mown. In most cases they have been retained intact and have not

been eroded by parked cars or paved over to provide parking spaces. The verges make an important contribution to the character of the street and provide a valuable separation between the road and pavement. They also often act as an informal sustainable urban drainage systems absorbing run off from the adjacent pavements and other hard surfacing and allowing natural replenishment of the groundwater store. Where verges have been lost eg due to the creation of new crossovers, this degrades the character of the street.

Street tree planting contributes to the street character but trees are often smaller varieties with small canopies. This limits the benefits they bring to the streetscape and their potential influence on the wider area. Percentage tree cover in these areas is often low despite the presence of a substantial number of trees. Typical species include Flowering Cherry (prunus sp), Whitebeam (Sorbus sp), and Maples (Acer). Where larger varieties of trees have been planted eg American sweet gum





(Liquidambar styraciflua) on Quorn Gardens these have a stronger influence and provide a leafy character to the street. Often there is sufficient space for larger varieties of trees to be incorporated which would bring substantial benefits in terms of mitigating the effects of climate change and improving the streetscape.

#### b) Tree-lined (unverged) streets

Some streets do not have grass verges but have a strong structure of street trees planted within the pavements. In a few streets these are large maturing species for example, St John's Road which has an avenue of mature pollarded limes and Cambridge Road which is lined with mature Plane (Platanus x acerifolia) and Lime trees (Tilia). These trees are tall with large canopies resulting in a high percentage tree cover for the street. However the streets are relatively narrow and the trees require regular pruning/ pollarding to maintain them within the space available.

#### c) Bare streets

Some streets within the residential perimeter medium density typology have no verges or street trees eg Danescroft Drive, Keith Way and Thornford Gardens. The resultant street character is hard with little shade resulting in a harsh environment particularly in summer.





# RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - LOW DENSITY

## Introduction

Low density perimeter blocks typically characterise the most sought-after areas of Southend. Whilst the block layout may be regular or flexible, they feature large individual plots, able to accommodate significant houses which are often built to individual designs.

## Urban Form

Low density perimeter blocks vary in form in a similar manner to the medium density blocks, with both regular and flexible grids and areas which feature elements of geometric planning. The grain of these areas, as expected is larger than either of the two previous categories, with typical block depth being between 80 and 90 metres.

Where the layout creates very deep blocks it is common to see a small cul-de-sac created within it as the block effectively turns in to create a re-entrant form such as Burlescoombe Close or Barnstable Close. However, unlike modern planned cul-de sac layouts, the overall impression is still one of a permeable and legible grid which remains relatively easy to navigate.

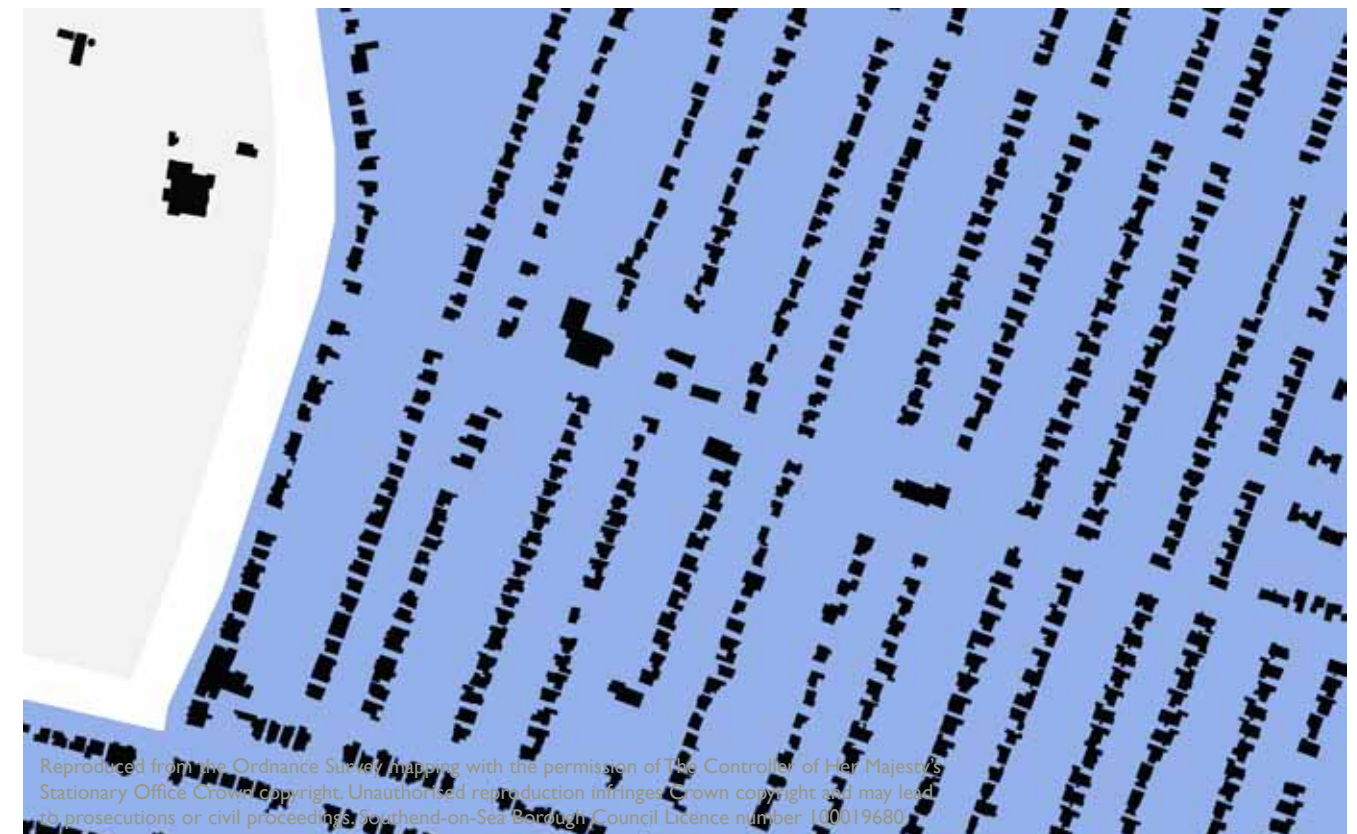
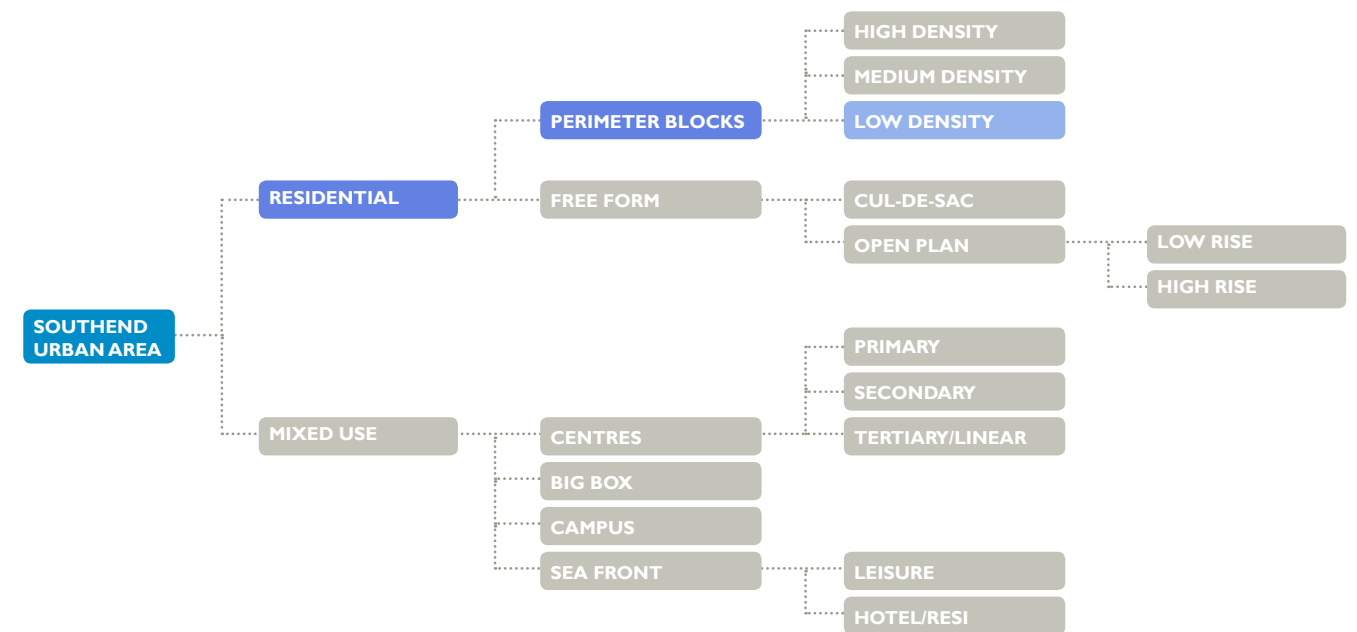
## Buildings

Buildings in this typology are typically from the Edwardian and interwar periods, although later examples also exist as the result of infilling and replacement. Plot widths usually exceed 10 metres and can range up to 15-20 metres in some areas. This creates the potential for relatively wide building forms which address the street but at the same time can accommodate side garages.

Given the relatively exclusive nature of these areas, it is very common for buildings to vary significantly between plots, including bold and elaborate features and details, particularly at street corners. The general scale of buildings in these streets is two storey, although this can range from 'chalet' style dwellings with the first floor rooms enclosed within a large roof space to buildings with two conventional storeys and a third in the roof space. However, this typology is also the one most likely to feature significant numbers of bungalows, both as individual plots but particular in established streets with consistent scale.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streets in this typology contain some of Southend's most attractive and distinctive streetscapes. Streets typically have a very wide street profile (often 20 -30m between building fronts) comprising detached properties set well back from the road with large front gardens (8 – 10m deep or greater) and wide pavements and roads. Many of the streets incorporate an attractive broad verge of mixed planting on either side of the road separating the road from the pavement. These wide hedge verges were often incorporated in housing developments in the early-mid twentieth century and are particularly widespread and well preserved in Southend. Planting comprises a mix of shrub species (mainly evergreen) including Barberry (*Berberis* sp), St John's Wort (*Hypericum*), Oleaster (*Eleagnus*), Hebe and Euonymus. The hedge verges are generally well maintained to a maximum height of approximately 1 - 1.5m allowing visibility of pedestrians from the road. A variety of mature trees of ornamental species are generally incorporated within the



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hedge verge. Species include: Ornamental maples (*Acer*s), Flowering and purple leaved cherries (*Prunus* sp.), Lime (*Tilia*), Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus*) and American sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)

These residential streets were generally designed assuming residents would be car owners and as a result most properties have private drives and parking is well-integrated in front gardens or garages. Some on road parking still occurs but roads are generally wide enough to accommodate this and parked cars do not dominate the streetscape.

Front gardens are often substantial and are an important part of the streetscape. They are typically well maintained with a variety of ornamental tree and shrub planting and grass areas. Mature examples of the distinctive Torbay Palm (*Cordyline australis*) are relatively common in front gardens giving a seaside character to the area. Some gardens have been paved over in recent years to accommodate additional off road parking. The traditional boundary treatment between front gardens is a low brick wall often constructed from London Stock brick with tufa detailing and often characterized by an undulating top. In many cases an evergreen hedge of privet (*Ligustrum* sp) or laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) has been planted behind the wall and is clipped to form a green top to the wall.

The streetscape materials are typically macadam or concrete roads with a granite or concrete kerb. Street lighting is mainly the original green cast iron street lighting columns with some late twentieth century standard highway fittings. Most pavements are surfaced in pre-cast concrete slabs with front garden paths and private drives surfaced in a variety of materials

ranging from traditional stone and tiles to modern concrete block and brick paving. A few properties have retained their original timber traditional style gates.









# RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - CUL-DE-SAC

## Introduction

Cul-de-sac housing areas are the product of post-war development and typically date from the 1960s onwards. They feature generally low densities of development and have generally poor permeability and legibility.

## Urban Form

Cul-de-sacs have over a century of history in planned urban areas, first established as a permissible form in Unwin and Parker's proposals enshrined in the Hampstead Garden Suburb Act of 1906 which overturned earlier 1875 legislation banned their use. Whilst some examples in this vein can be seen in the low density garden suburbs within the low density perimeter block areas, the cul-de-sac in this category is principally concerned with the post-war suburban developments including examples such as North Shoebury and Eastwood.

These post war developments typically feature a very clear hierarchy of a main distributor road from which flow a series of cul-de-sacs, some as small as a dozen houses and others which include a branching layout and many more houses. The distributor road provides the main, and sometimes only, route around an estate, carrying all car and bus traffic. This is often designed to a generous standard and in some examples will be devoid of building frontages as they all turn inwards to face into cul-de-sacs. These are then designed to a smaller and more intimate scale, with narrower carriageways and the ubiquitous turning head at the end.

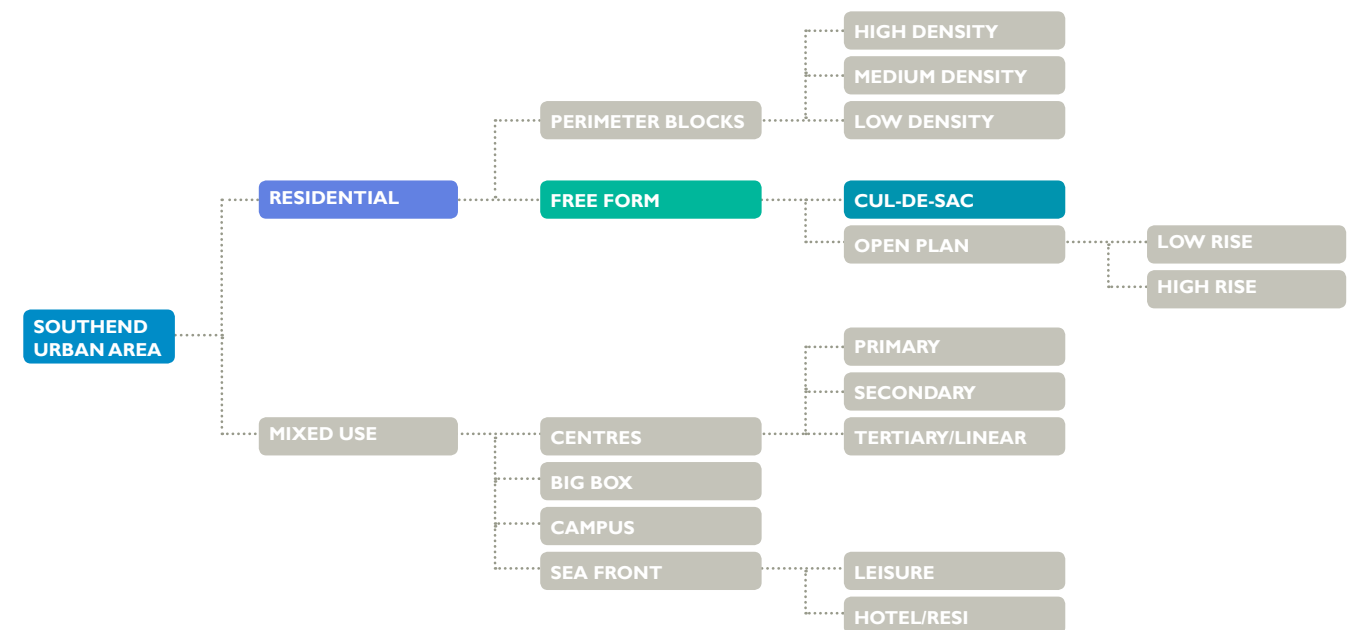
Cul-de-sac areas are frequently criticised both for their lack of legibility and permeability. The use of consistent building types repeated

throughout an amorphous layout can make it difficult to distinguish easily between different streets. The nature of the layout is also to funnel movement on to the main spine road, making walking and cycling around the area much less efficient than it could be - there are few other choices and the routes are often far less direct than necessary. Some areas of cul-de-sac development feature pathways which link the heads of cul-de-sacs together, creating an alternative pedestrian network. However, whilst this permeability may improve freedom of movement it is not legible and does little to overcome the inherent limitations of the form.

## Buildings

Post-war suburban houses vary widely in form and design but have a number of particular characteristics which can be applied to achieve significant variations. They are unlikely to have a tight relationship to the street and so can feature significant modelling to the front elevation, including substantial projecting elements to create dynamic forms; in later suburban forms it is common for the building frontage to be dominated by the presence of an integrated garage.

Building proportions are generally squat, with relatively low floor-ceiling heights by comparison with pre-war and inter-war buildings – this in turn has a significant impact on the scale and proportion of windows. External materials and details are likely to be from a limited palette and very simple, with chunky boxed eaves and relatively unsophisticated approach to the assembly of elements. In some examples, additions such as







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bay roofs, porches or even chimneys may be one-piece fibreglass structures.

Plot configurations vary enormously as most are grouped in an irregular way around a curving street layout. However a common feature is that houses in this form rarely feature gardens deeper than 10 metres, creating a minimum back-to-back relationship which maintains a basic level of privacy.

### Streetscape and landscape

Cul de sac streetscapes are typically open with few boundaries between the public and private realm. Housing is typically arranged in an informal layout resulting in an irregular street profile. Front gardens vary in depth from two to six metres or more and typically have no boundary treatment between the pavement and garden. Gardens are often open areas of mown grass with limited low shrub planting but are rarely used as amenity spaces. There are typically few or no street trees along the public highway but some small ornamental trees have been planted in private front gardens.

The flow of pedestrian and traffic movements are normally low due to the absence of through traffic and pedestrian through-routes. Consequently, the character of these areas is typically quiet and low key, often feeling closed and semi-private.

Most roads are tarmac with concrete road kerbs, standard highway lighting and tarmac pavements on both sides. Car parking is accommodated mainly off road in garages and private driveways although most roads still have some parking on road (normally on one side only).









# RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - OPEN - LOW RISE

## Introduction

Free-form low rise development in Southend is typically a product of the early post-war period. It features low rise terraces and detached buildings which have a fragmented urban layout. This typically offers a poor relationship between building frontages and public spaces but does feature a relatively high degree of pedestrian permeability.

## Urban Form

The urban form of the open plan areas is quite unlike more conventional layouts based on urban blocks and streets. Typically the product of post war public sector development, the open plan layouts provide a fragmented structure in which car movement and pedestrian movement are separated out to a significant degree; parking is typically provided in parking courts; and the primary access to a front door may be along a pedestrian-only route.

The key intent behind this approach is to offer a pedestrian friendly environment which is away from cars and therefore feels inherently safer. However, in doing this, it creates routes which lack the clarity and safety of a more conventional block structure whilst also creating parking courts which typically expose the rear boundaries of gardens to the public realm, creating large areas of dead frontage.

## Buildings

In the low rise areas, buildings are typically two storeys although some three storey types occur where flats are included. One of the key distinguishing features of this form is that unlike

the cul-de-sac layouts, buildings here are likely to be grouped as terraces to a common design. This perhaps reflects the origins of the buildings in the public sector, with a greater emphasis on the communal identity and form as compared to the more individualistic emphasis found in private sector development.

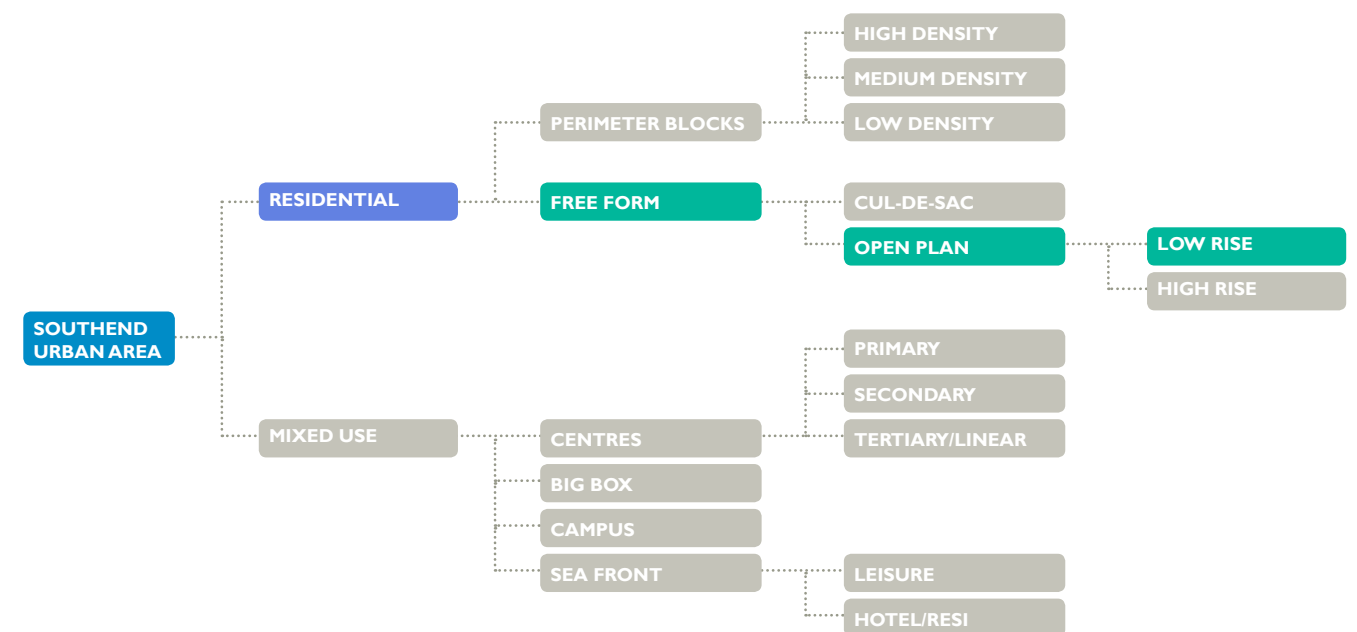
Buildings are likely to feature a very limited palette of materials in any given area and often include features such as timber infill panels set between windows in brick elevations. Windows are also most likely to have a strong horizontal proportion with generally very flat-fronted buildings.

Individual plots in these areas are some of the shallowest found, often being less than 20 metres deep overall giving an equivalent block depth of 40 metres. On the other hand the plots are generally more square, being between 7.5 and 10 metres wide.

## Streetscape and landscape

The street profile in this typology is variable. In some cases profiles are narrow with properties facing onto pedestrian walkways and shallow front gardens (often as little as 1 – 1.5m deep). In other examples, street profiles are wider with generous mown grass verges or front gardens separating properties from the road. The boundary between public highway and private garden and between the front gardens of adjacent properties is rarely marked with a wall or fence resulting in an open plan character to the streetscape.

Typically, there is little vegetation in the streetscape with few street trees and little tree or shrub planting in front gardens. The



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percentage tree cover in these areas is normally very low. Open spaces between residential units are common, particularly around road junctions. These tend to be areas of closely mown amenity grass sometimes with a margin or island beds of amenity shrub planting.

Roads are typically concrete or tarmac with concrete road kerbs and standard highway lighting. Pavements are tarmac and are often set back from the road edge behind a wide grass area. Car parking is typically dispersed with some on street, others in front gardens and some in private garages or parking courts. Parking is rarely on both sides of the road and cars do not generally dominate the streetscape.

The streetscape character is typically quiet with low pedestrian, cycle and car movements and little activity on the streets or in front gardens.









# RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - OPEN - HIGH RISE

## Introduction

Tall buildings set within areas of landscape and parking. These typically date from the 1960s and were built as part of public housing projects.

## Urban form

High rise residential buildings typically occur as part of a wider residential area. However, their special nature typically creates its own small area of character which breaks from the normal building-street relationship. They typically feature a single point of access which may relate to the street but may also relate to the location of parking.

Tall buildings are typically surrounded by green space, creating an ambiguous relationship between the ground floor flats and the space outside which is neither properly public or truly private. The large number of residents for a relatively small building footprint also means that parking often accounts for a notable proportion of the surrounding groundscape, further breaking up the pedestrian environment.

## Buildings

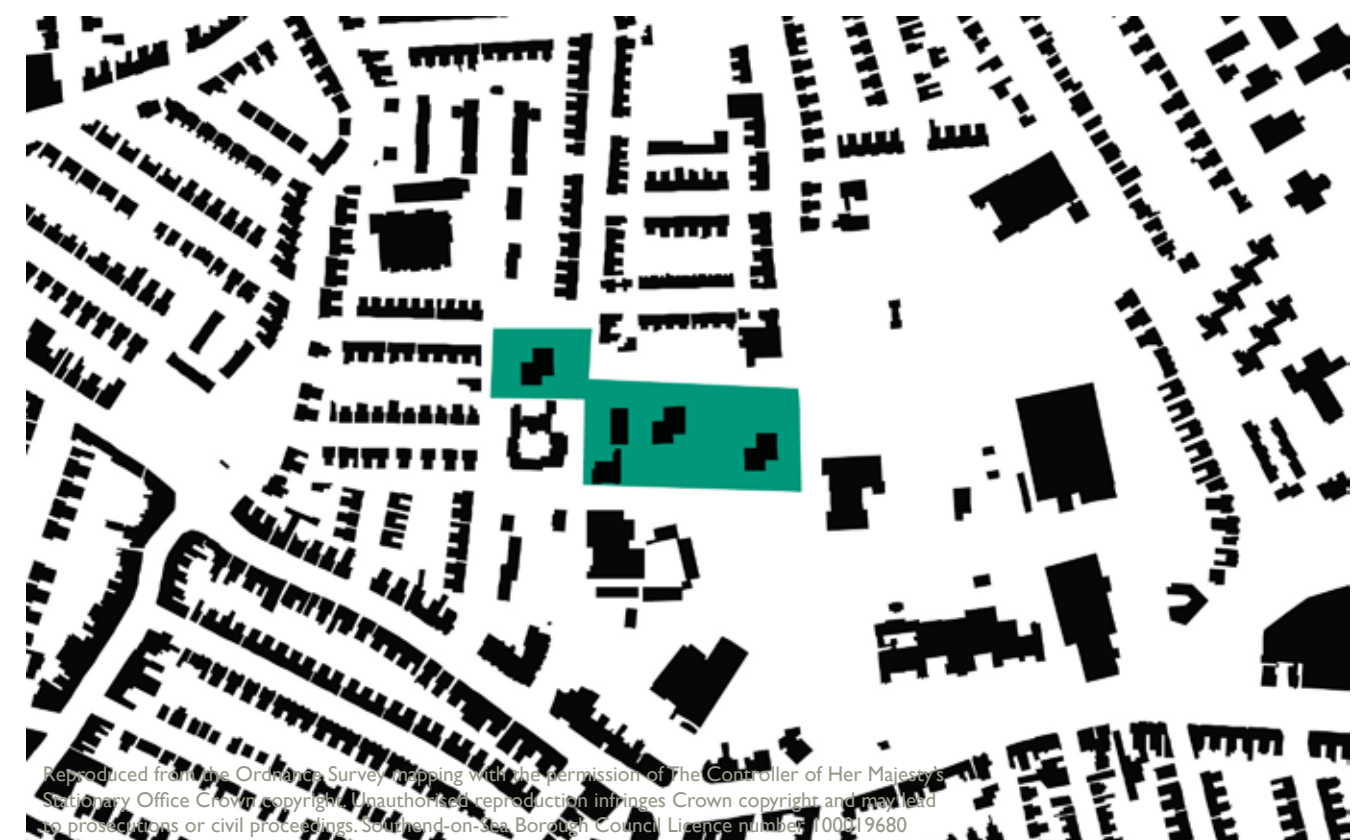
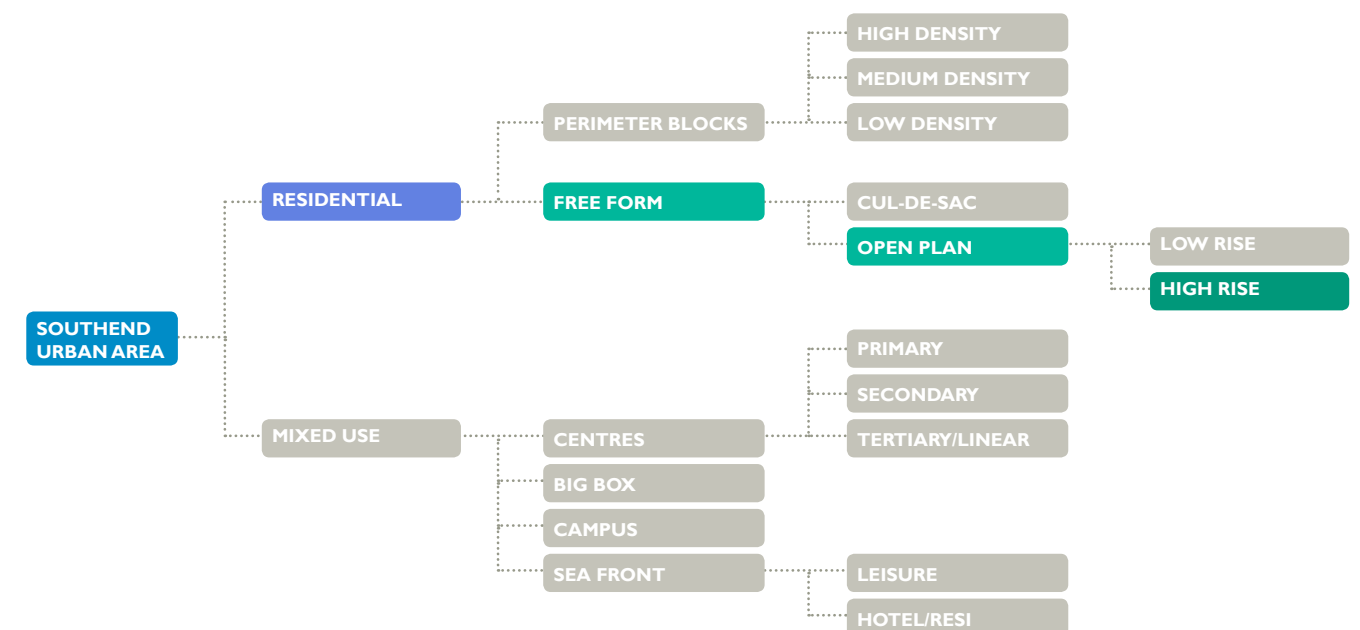
The examples of tall residential buildings in Southend typically date from the 1960s. Whilst they vary in height and form they are typically between 11 storeys and 17 storeys high. They follow a limited number of designs, typically matching others in their group where they are clustered as can be found in the group of three towers around Salisbury Avenue. Other examples in the Borough are built to the same plan configuration, despite being spread over a relatively large area including Cluny Square,

Sherwood Way, Whittington Avenue and the cluster around the top of central Southend on Queensway. The residential towers built during this period typically now lack any balconies or other private amenity space such as roof terraces as they were removed during refurbishment. They hence rely on the provision of amenity space in the surrounding area.

Development density is difficult to calculate given small isolated examples. However, studies have shown that towers set within landscape and providing surface parking as can be usually found in the Borough does not provide a dwelling density significantly higher than conventional Victorian terraced streets.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape and landscape in this typology is similar to that of the previous typology. Street profiles are generally wide with substantial areas of open space between the residential blocks and the surrounding roads. The spaces around the residential blocks are typically low key amenity spaces with substantial areas of mown grass areas and scattered blocks of low maintenance shrub planting (predominantly evergreen). Some include small paved seating areas with standard local authority benches, litter bins etc. The areas typically have a strong municipal character as the landscaped areas are generally designed and managed by or on behalf of the Local Authority with a limited palette of materials and planting species. The ownership of the landscape however is often ambiguous with no clear signs as to whether spaces are private for residents use only or are public open spaces for the wider community. The boundary



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between the public highway and the amenity space is rarely defined with a wall or treatment which contributes to this ambiguity.

Tree cover in these areas is variable with some examples of areas with a relatively high percentage tree cover with large mature trees including species such as London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) but most have a relatively low percentage tree cover with predominantly varieties of small ornamental trees such as flowering cherries (*Prunus* sp) and Whitebeam (*Sorbus* sp).

Roads are typically concrete or tarmac with concrete road kerbs and standard highway lighting. Footpaths are usually tarmac or concrete slabs. Parking is often prominent with considerable amounts of on street parking and large off-road parking areas.









# MIXED USE - CENTRES - PRIMARY

## Introduction

Southend town centre is the only example in the Borough which can truly be described as a primary centre. This is characterised by the large scale of buildings and variety of comparison shopping, services and leisure opportunities available.

## Urban Form

Southend town centre is an intensely urban environment with a strong focus on commercial activity and a scale and type of buildings not found anywhere else.

Whilst the street pattern has evolved from an original historic layout, and retains many of the original block dimensions, many of the plots have amalgamated over time to create larger retail units, including some such as the shopping centres which define an entire block. The centre of Southend is also notable for its significant area of pedestrianisation.

The pre-eminence of the main street and its importance for retail frontage is largely at the expense of the surrounding streets which as a consequence become dominated by servicing, access and parking. The transition from a substantial commercial building to the domestic terraces around can also be stark, perhaps demonstrated most particularly by the new college building on Elmer Approach.

Land uses in the primary centre feature a mixture of comparison shopping, services and leisure uses. Convenience shopping is present as a peripheral element, whilst evening economy uses can play a significant role, particularly in the areas on the edge of the centre and where traditional building types have been retained.

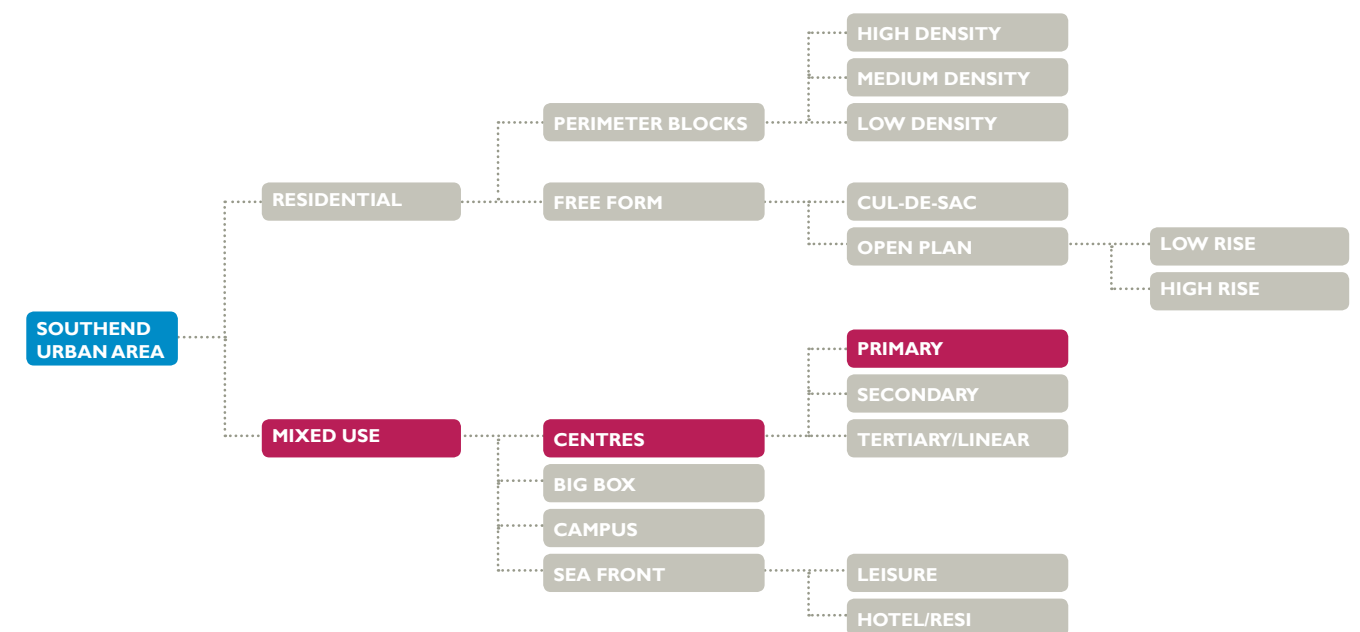
## Buildings

Buildings in the primary centre vary significantly in scale and form, and cover a wide range of periods and styles. There are some examples of historic fabric retained in the main areas and these provide a human scale and fine grain of unit size. However, there is also a significant proportion of post-war buildings, including the substantial 1960s Victoria shopping centre to the north with the later Royals shopping centre at the southern end of the High Street.

Along with the civic campus and business area to the north, the primary centre is the single most notable cluster of taller buildings in the Borough with around 10 buildings and structures such as car parks in the central area which all rise significantly above the prevailing domestic scale in the wider Borough. This makes the primary centre a clearly visible focus for more intense activity, assisting with the general legibility of the Borough.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape in this typology is intensely urban. High Street, Southend is the key streetscape within this typology. The street is predominantly pedestrianised and has been designed to create a linear civic space leading down to the seafront. A framed view towards the seafront is formed by the street edges with the sea visible in the distance. This is one of the most important sea views in the town which greets thousands of visitors on arrival in the town. The streetscape is often busy with large numbers of pedestrians using the shopping facilities and moving between the rail stations and the seafront. The streetscape often has a lively and vibrant character during the daytime



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although this changes in the evening when the majority of shops and food outlets are closed and in winter months.

The street has a wide, uncluttered profile (c. 16m between facades), with a level surface promoting ease of movement from side to side across the street. Surfacing materials vary with a range of designed paving systems including concrete blocks, slabs and unit block systems. The streetscape is modern with contemporary style street furniture including stainless steel bollards and tall modern street lights. Unusually, (compared with other typologies in the Borough) the streetscape is free of traffic and parked vehicles which gives a sense of openness to the street and allows clear visibility in all directions.

There is no vegetation in the streetscape although there are often glimpses towards street trees in the adjoining streets (for example views of new tree planting in Elmer Approach.)









# MIXED USE - CENTRES - SECONDARY

## Introduction

Secondary town centres relate to established urban areas and provide a mixture of comparison and convenience shopping. Whilst they tend to feature a scale of building which is larger than the surrounding residential area, they typically have a much finer grain than a primary centre and are better integrated with their context.

## Urban Form

In terms of urban characterisation, the name secondary centres is used to describe the centres of Leigh-on-Sea and Westcliff-on-Sea. Both of these are essentially linear in form and follow the alignment of historic routes.

Unlike the pedestrianised main street within the primary shopping area, both Leigh and Westcliff are based around conventional streets. Whilst cars and other vehicles have a significant impact on the character of the space in terms of movement and parking this also has the advantage of providing relatively easy access and creating a sense of business and activity.

The structure of the centre is based around very conventional traditional shop formats facing onto the street and does not feature shopping centre or other deep formats of retail. In some instances one or two shop units have been amalgamated to create larger premises whilst Havens department store in Westcliff provides an example of retailing over several floors. However, this is an exception to the typical pattern which is for a single storey of retail with either office/storage space above associated with the store or in some instances residential accommodation.

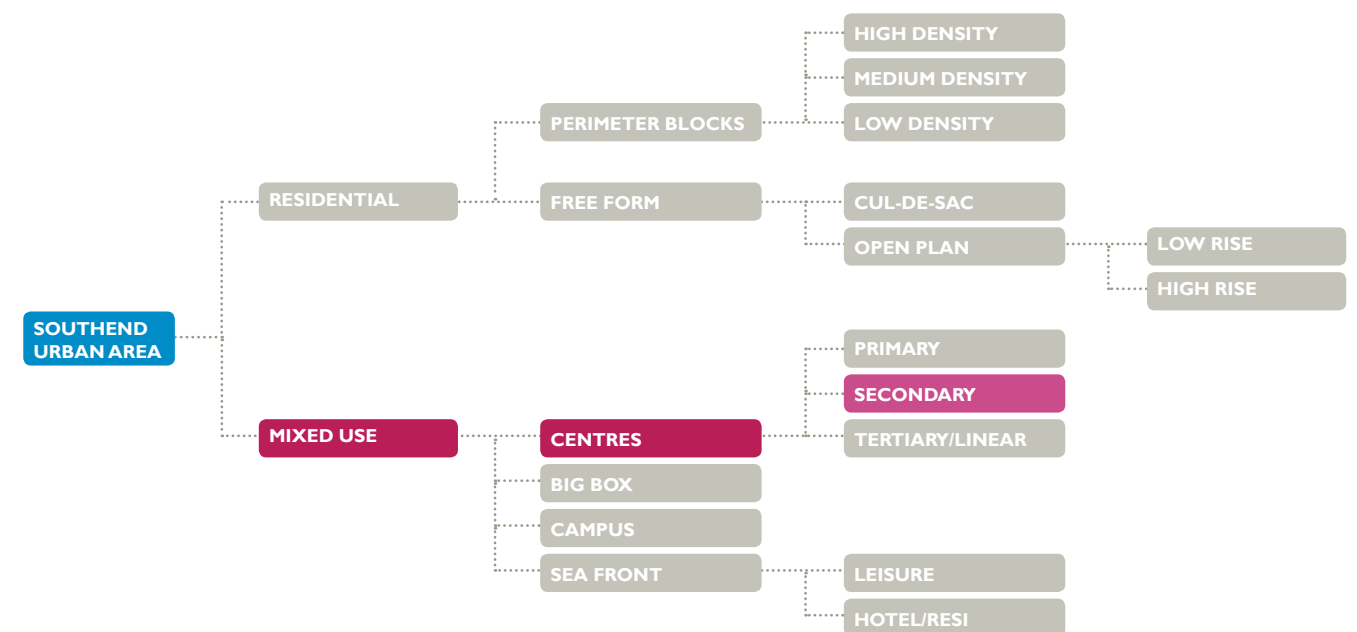
## Buildings

The mix of buildings in secondary centres is more likely to feature a good selection of historic forms, either purpose-built as shops but also as conversions from residential accommodation. Shops which have been converted from residential accommodation often feature a projecting ground floor element, built where the garden of the house would have been. They are also most likely to display a significant disjuncture between the floors, where the ground floor does not appear to 'fit' with the upper levels. Examples of this are common in the southern half of Westcliff.

There are a number of good examples of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and shop fronts in Westcliff and Leigh. Examples in Leigh include The Atelier Gallery, the Sue Ryder charity shop, the Faux Workshop & Gallery and several banks which are built in robust Edwardian style on corner plots. Westcliff includes the Havens Department Store, Courtway House which has an imposing view down the street, and the terrace which includes the Co-operative food store (although this has been badly butchered by the significant modifications to number 157).

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape of the Secondary Mixed use centres is typically urban and vibrant in character. Unlike the Primary Mixed Use Centre of Southend, this typology is normally a busy thoroughfare with large numbers of parked cars and a continuous stream of traffic. Typically, bus routes pass along the street and roads are often congested with buses, queuing traffic







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and delivery vehicles servicing the high street commercial properties.

The street profile varies considerably with some as little as 15m wide and others over 20m wide. Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff on Sea benefits from a wide profile of approximately 22m and a recent streetscape improvement project has resulted in the creation of wide pedestrian walkways on both sides of the road with new tree planting and street lighting. Parking and signage has been rationalized to create a simple streetscape with minimal clutter. Other streetscapes are narrower and more cluttered for example Broadway in Leigh on Sea which is approximately 16m wide and has narrow pavements (particularly on the south side).

Streetscape materials vary but most streets have modern concrete slab paving and concrete or granite road kerbs. Street lighting is typically modern with heritage style fittings in some places (eg Broadway, Leigh-on-Sea) and contemporary style fittings in other places (eg Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff on Sea).

Typically, the streetscape of the Secondary mixed use centres has little vegetation with few street trees and insufficient space for ornamental shrub planting. An exception to this is Hamlet Court Road which widens significantly in the southern half. Here an avenue of young Elm trees has recently been planted which, when it matures will give a leafy character to the high street.









# MIXED USE - CENTRES - TERTIARY/LINEAR

## Introduction

Tertiary or linear centres are the most modest collections of retail use. They are typically found as shopping parades within residential areas, but also include the near-continuous string of shops which line the most significant historic routes in the Borough.

## Urban Form

Tertiary and linear centres are by their nature very elongated. Where they are discreet areas of shopping within an otherwise residential context they may account for a short parade or street of shops. In the case of the London Road, this effect is significantly magnified and can continue almost unbroken for some distance.

As with the secondary centres, the tertiary centres are based around a conventional street. They are most likely to feature a mix of local and convenience shopping (ranging from conventional corner shops through to large food stores) along with a jumble of more specialist shops ranging from small niche uses through to secondhand car showrooms. The provision of short-stay parking on street in reasonable proximity to shops is a key element of ensuring that they continue to be viable trading locations.

## Buildings

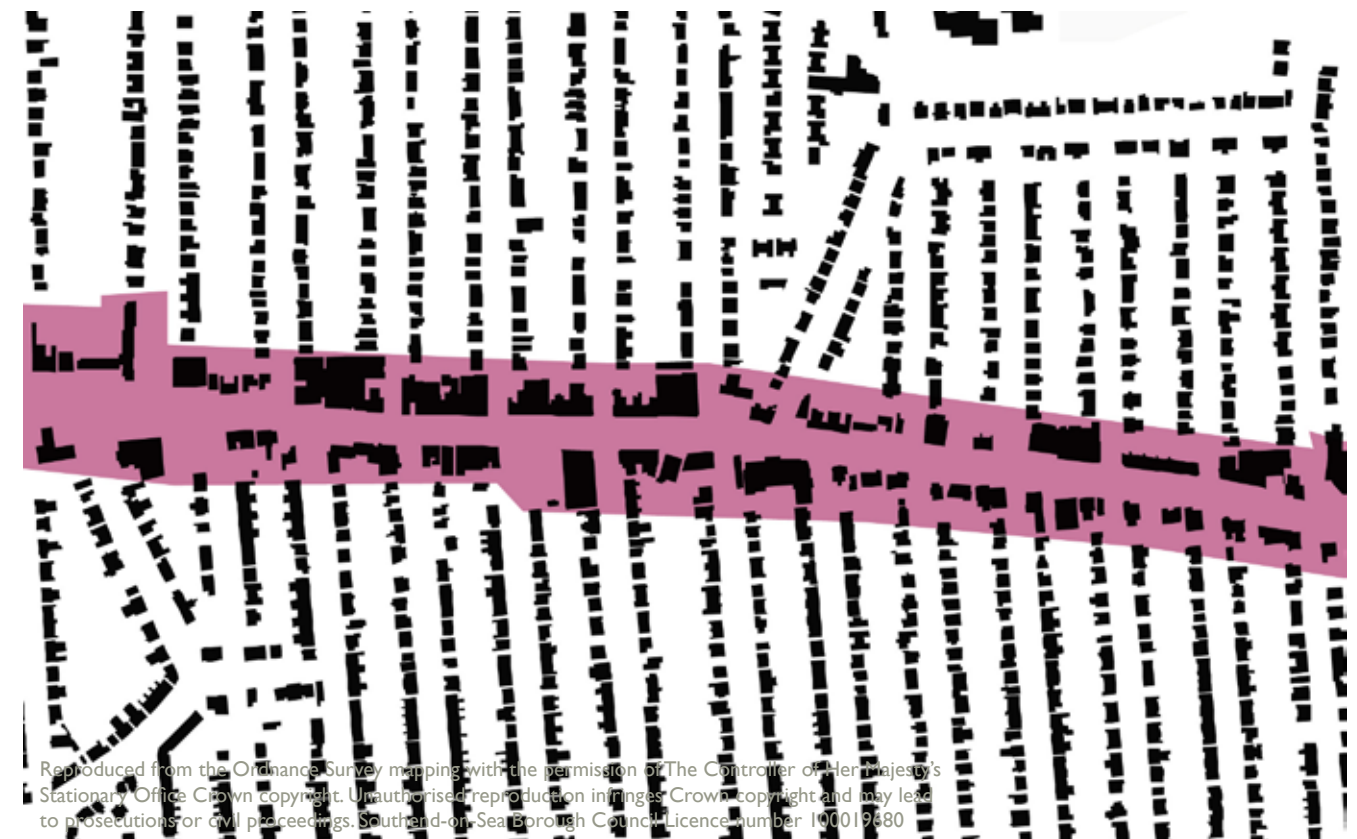
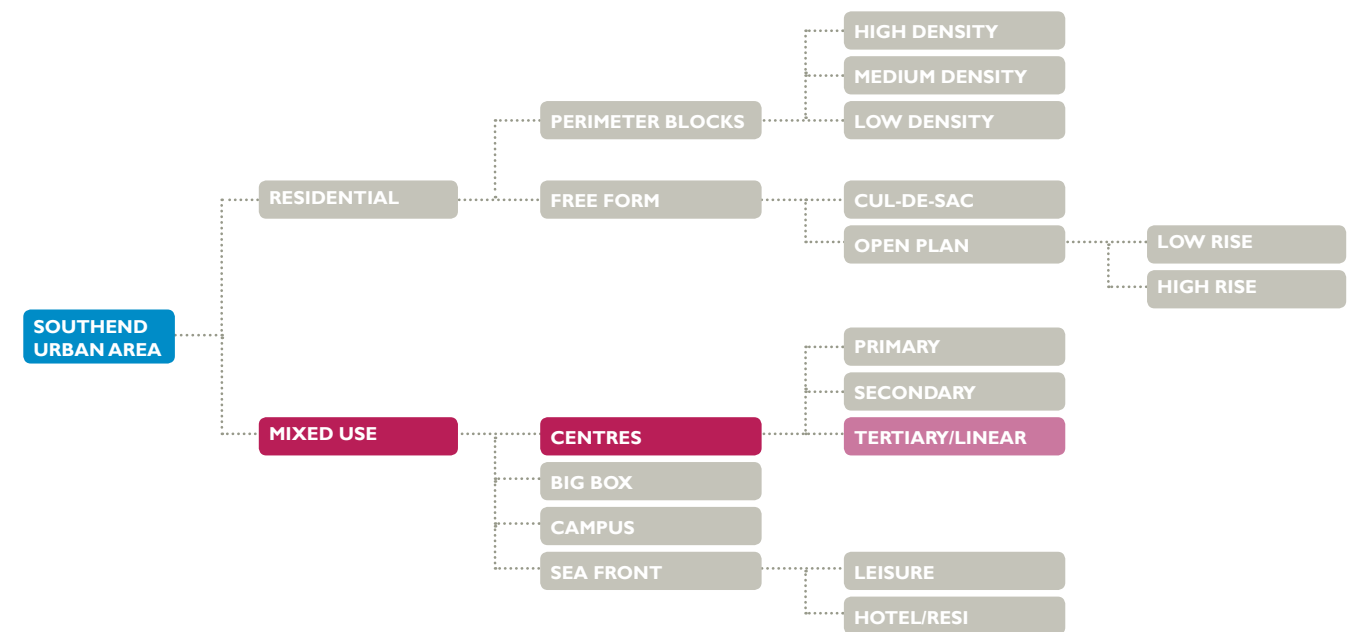
Buildings in tertiary centres include a mix of custom-built units and conversions from residential units. In the case of areas like Cluny Square or West Road in Shoebury terraces have been designed from inception with separate flats above. However, it is more typical to find

units in linear centres being converted from residential development, often with the addition of a front extension. The effect of conversion when considered as part of a generally jumbled and varied built character along these main routes tends to give them a character which can be quaint but can often tends towards the messy. Particularly in more marginal locations the quality of the conversions and the design of the shop fronts can be detrimental to the character of the building and the wider area.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape of the tertiary mixed use centres is variable. In some areas it is similar to that of the secondary mixed use centres with busy streets with significant numbers of pedestrians and a busy through flow of traffic. The street profile may be narrower than in secondary mixed use centres and often has narrow pavements but the character of the area can be similarly vibrant. Other tertiary mixed use centres are quite different and have a more suburban character. Eastwood Road North for example contains a small local mixed use centre with a parade of shops set back on both sides of the road. The street profile is wide with a substantial area in front of shops, sometimes used for displaying goods for sale and sometimes for parking. This is often privately owned and therefore differentiated from the highway.

Streetscape materials vary but most streets have modern concrete slab paving or tarmac paths and concrete or granite road kerbs. As noted above, in the suburban areas there is often substantial areas of hard surfacing in front of the shops. This is normally tarmac



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or concrete slab paving and in some cases changes in front of each shop at each change in landownership. Street lighting is normally standard twentieth century highway lighting although some stretches have more modern luminaires.

The tertiary mixed use centres rarely contain street trees or other vegetation. There is potential for new tree planting to be added particularly in the suburban areas where there is more space.









# MIXED USE - BIG BOX

## Introduction

Big box development describes industrial, business and retail areas which feature large buildings and which are predominantly car-based in terms of access and movement. This includes large scale business parks, industrial units and out-of-town supermarkets

## Urban Form

Big box developments are those which feature large volume buildings, either to accommodate industrial functions or retail uses such as supermarkets, DIY stores or car showrooms. By their nature they tend to be very car-based and most typically feature a large box building separated from the road by a large car park.

The urban grain in big box areas varies, but is typically not friendly to pedestrians with the expectation that most or all will arrive by car or van. More recent food store designs retain the option to walk to the store from the surrounding urban area but this is clearly not a priority.

Business and retail parks place a high importance on clear legibility and easy wayfinding, using simple road structures and obvious layouts coupled with clear signage to make orientation easy.

Older examples, such as Progress Road are more conventionally integrated with the overall urban area and provide an important part of the local road network.

## Buildings

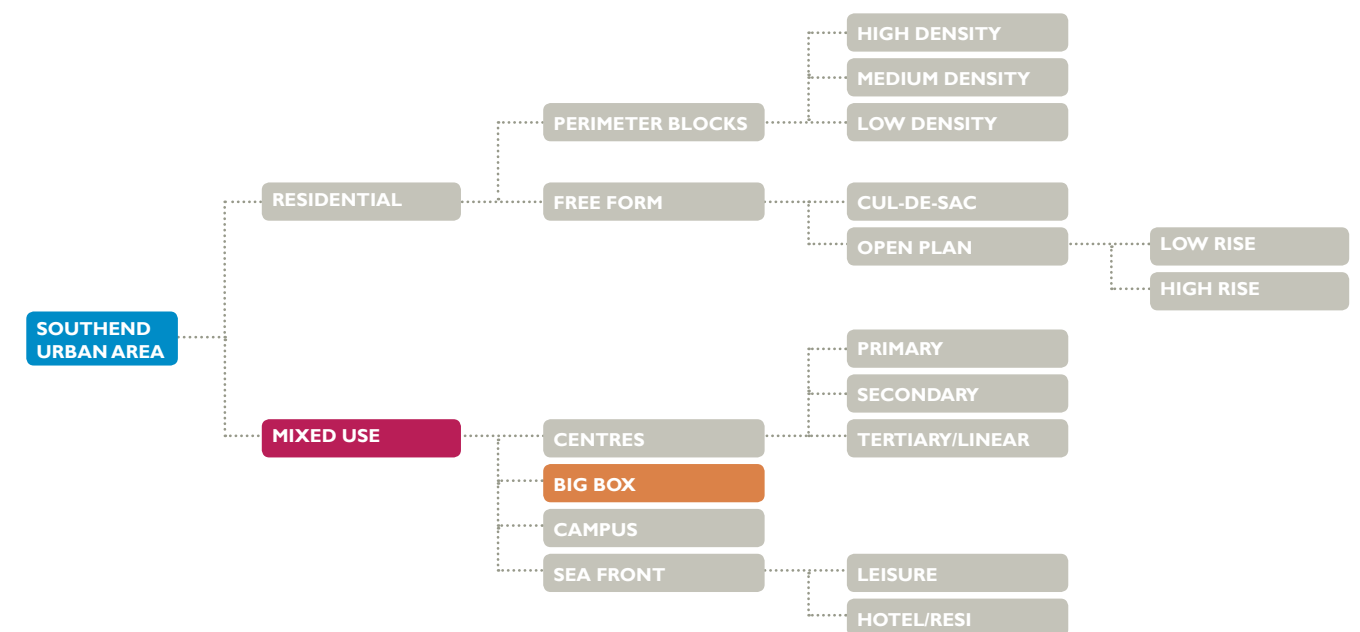
Buildings within the big box typology are typically large and simple and frequently have

only a small area of windows relating to the office and administrative area of a largely industrial facility. Most retail buildings in these areas are likely to be relatively young, reflecting the rapidly changing developments in shopping formats and habits. Industrial buildings may be older, although these are also likely to be the smaller examples.

Buildings in these areas are unlikely to have any significant reference to local building forms and materials, and whilst supermarkets have historically used areas of pitched roof and traditional materials to ape local forms this is not generally regarded as successful.

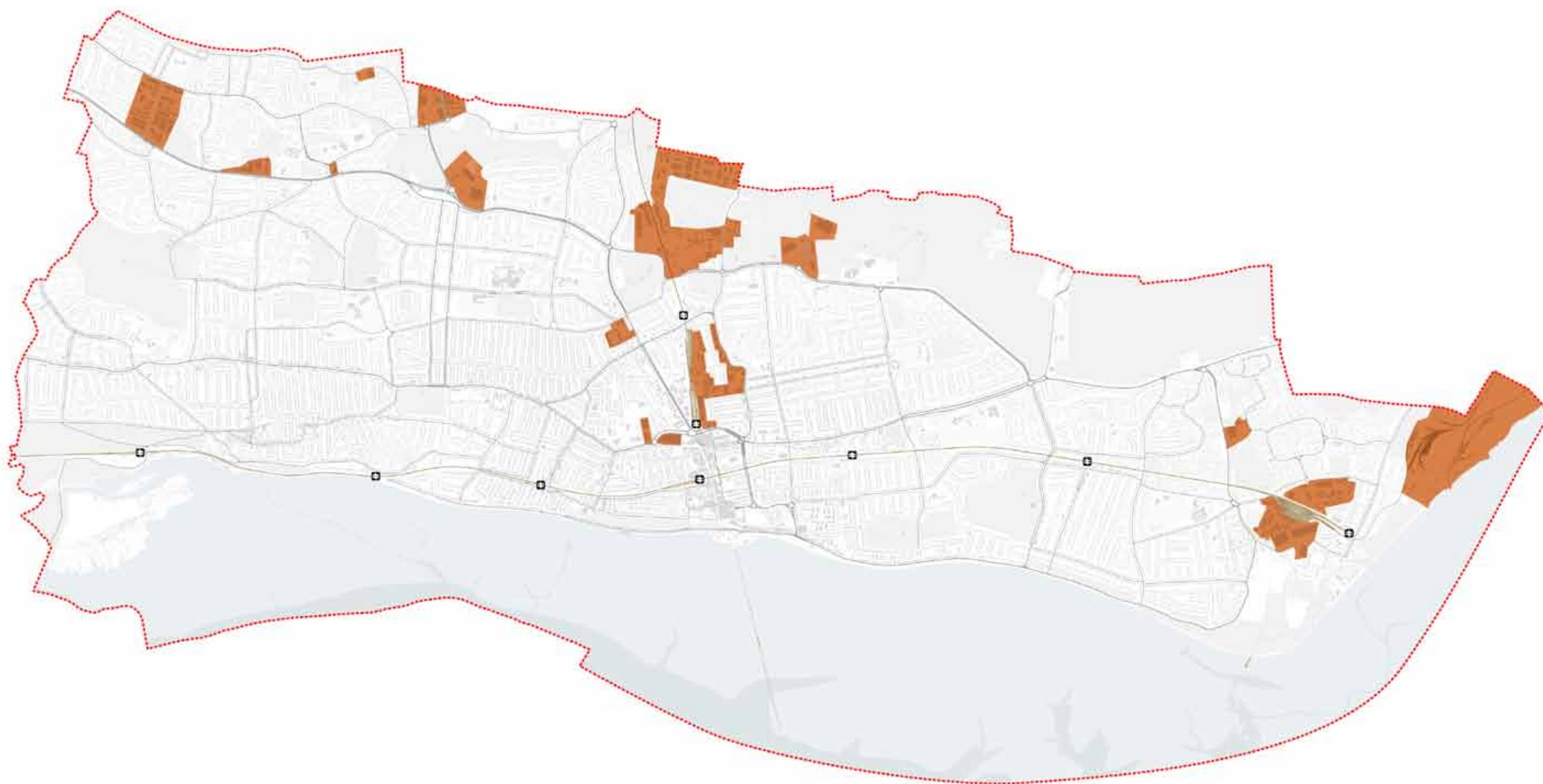
## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape and landscape of 'Big Box' areas is typically extensive forming large areas of open (unbuilt) space which is often publicly accessible. These areas contribute to the openness of a local area and give a sense of space in otherwise densely built-up areas however much of it is bland and poor quality. The areas are characterized by large expanses of hard-surfaced parking areas with wide roads and little vegetation. Roads are typically tarmac with concrete kerbs and well lit with standard highway lighting. Parking areas are normally surfaced in tarmac or concrete block with a range of modern street furniture particularly bollards. These extensive areas of impermeable surfacing are typically drained to a piped drainage system which results in a low percentage of rainfall permeating the ground naturally and replenishing the groundwater store.



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Many of the supermarket car parks have some planting comprising young ornamental trees set within the parking areas and a mix of low maintenance evergreen shrub species. However, establishment rates of these are slow and canopies are small so the tree cover is very low. Landscapes are typically well-maintained with closely mown grass, clipped evergreen shrub areas and litter-free paved areas.

Much of the streetscape and landscape is in private ownership but the boundary between public and private ownership is normally undefined. However, some of the older industrial areas such as Vanguard Way Industrial estate and industrial units on Campfield Road in Shoeburyness are not accessible to the public and are enclosed with security fencing. Some of these older areas have more extensive landscaped areas than the more recent 'big box' developments. These typically have substantial areas of mown grass and some large mature trees including some native species.









# MIXED USE - CAMPUS

## Introduction

Campus areas are normally associated with institutional or business uses such as colleges, hospitals or civic buildings. They are typically characterised by collections of buildings, often within the middle of a site, and areas of open space which may include playing fields.

## Urban Form

Institutional uses such as large schools, hospitals and civic functions create a distinctive urban form. They are typically characterised by buildings standing within grounds, and particularly in the case of older examples they are likely to present a formal and sometimes symmetrical frontage to the street. Given that for many buildings such as schools and hospitals security is a significant issue it is quite typical to find that the buildings have a strong boundary treatment and limited points of entry which allows for close monitoring. Although these boundaries are usually defined with railings to offer visibility they do create an isolating effect which removes these buildings from their community to a degree.

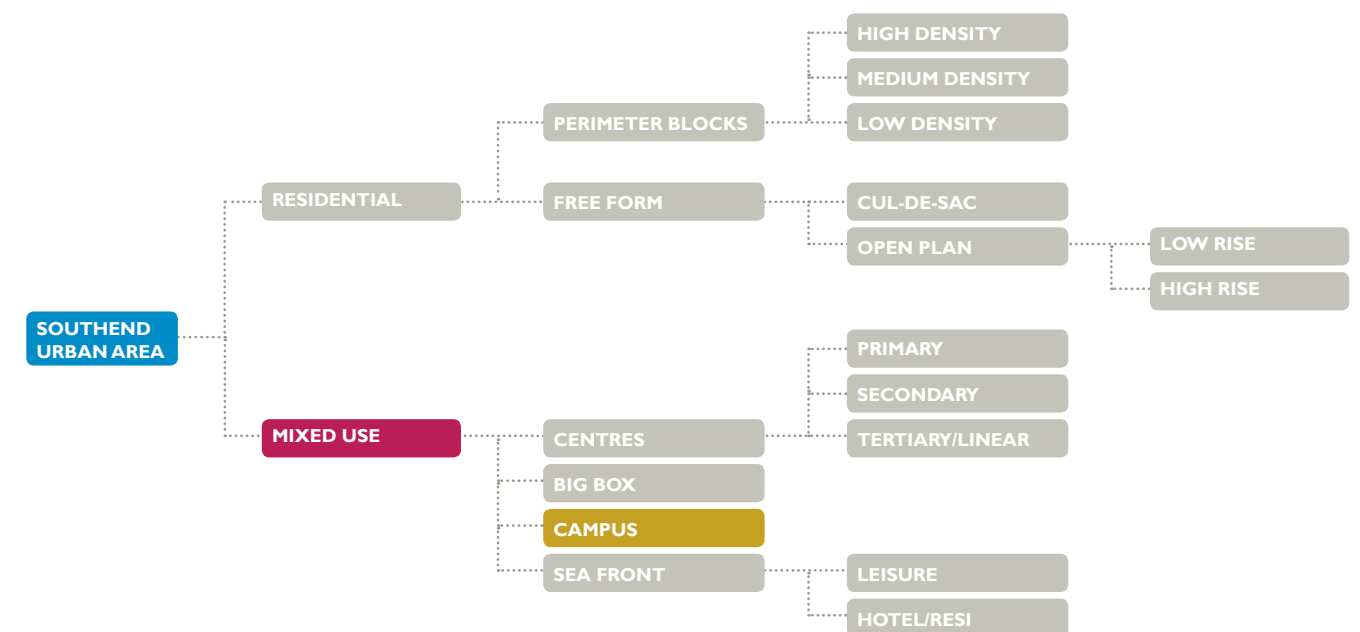
One significant impact of a campus building, can be the disruptive effect that a large enclosed area can have on the network of pedestrian routes in the area. By being a substantial body of land which doesn't provide through-routes it can reduce the frequency and directness of pedestrian routes and make journeys longer. However, it is also notable that a campus area also typically has its own internal circulation, linking different buildings and spaces together.

## Buildings

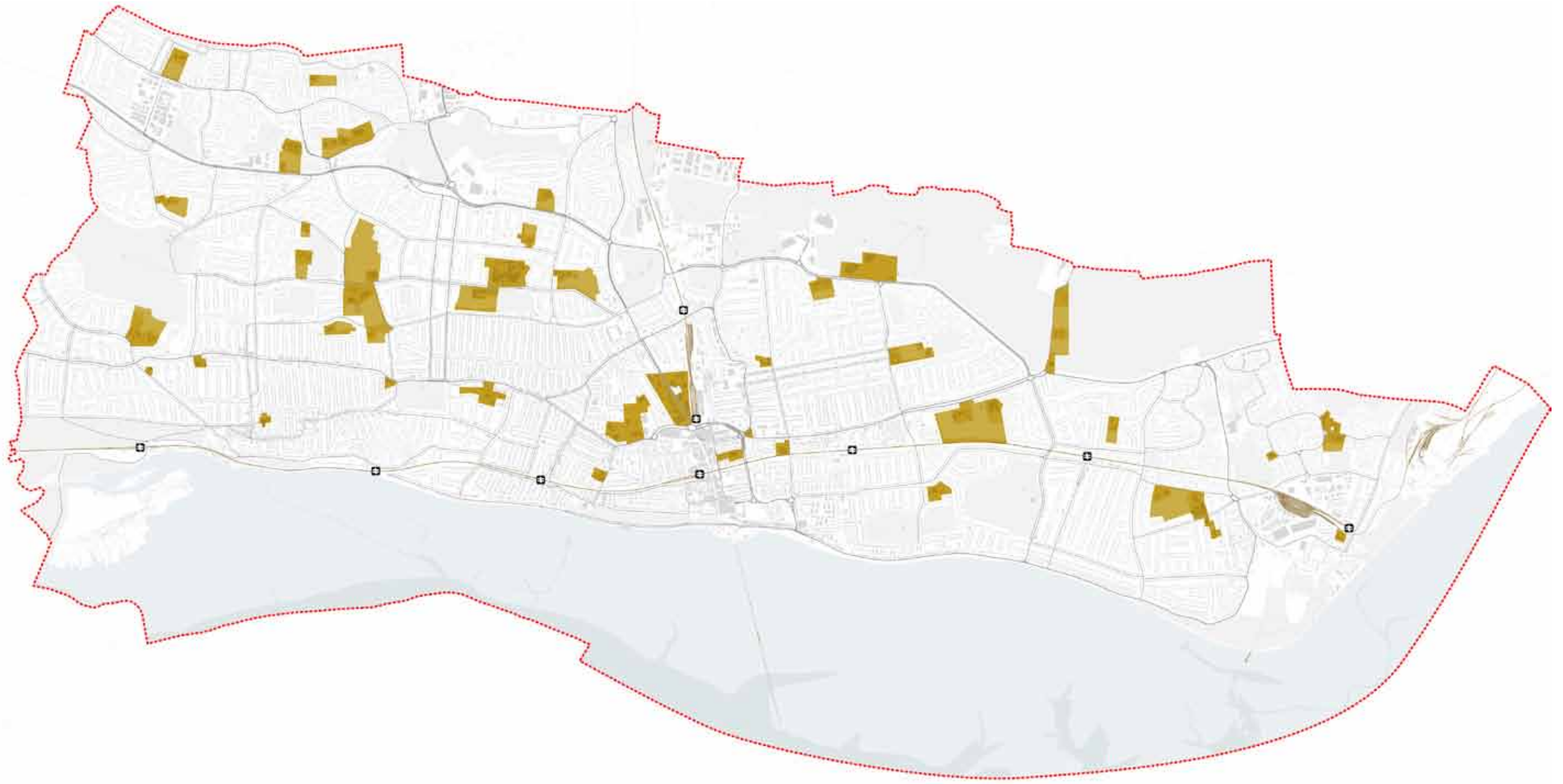
Buildings which fall within the campus typology vary widely in their built character, ranging from stout Victorian and Edwardian schools through to very low-rise 1960s schools and more expressive modern designs.

However, there are a number of factors which tends to be common to campus developments regardless of their period or origins:

- Most campus developments have been formed over time, and include buildings from more than one period. This can cover a range of approaches, from well-integrated and sensitively designed additions to temporary structures;
- It is common for an institutional site to accommodate more than one use or a large use which has several distinct components - examples would include the departments of a hospital or a school divided into a number of age bands;
- It is usually the nature of campus buildings to have a public function, and as a consequence it is common to have a clearly defined main entrance. In the case of more traditional structures such as Victorian and Edwardian schools this is clearly articulated through the architecture. However, schools built in the 1960s and 1970s often lack the natural signposting which makes them legible.







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## Streetscape and landscape

The landscape of school and sports campus areas is typically large scale and open with broad expanses of mown grass sports fields. These form a valuable resource for sport and recreation and also make a significant contribution to the character and quality of the surrounding area, in particular the sense of openness. The large fields allow long distance views for the surrounding residential properties and provide relief from the surrounding built up areas. Many sites contain mature and semi-mature trees particularly along boundaries and the site entrance. These include a wide range of ornamental species including some large-maturing species such as Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). Shrub vegetation is typically low maintenance ornamental species (often evergreen).

Hospital campus sites contrast with the school and sports ground sites and are typically densely developed with little areas of open space and vegetation except around the boundaries.

The Campus landscapes are normally well-maintained with regularly mown grass, clipped and weeded shrub beds and little litter. Boundaries are normally well-defined and the sites (particularly schools) are often enclosed with high security fences (typically vertical bar palisade or weldmesh fencing). The entrance to sites is normally a well-defined gateway with clear signage.

All types of campus sites typically have substantial areas of parking (particularly Southend Hospital) which is normally formally arranged in hard-surfaced car parks. Hard landscape materials vary, but sites often have a

narrow range of standard materials including tarmac paths with concrete edgings, concrete slab paved areas and some areas of clay or concrete block paving.









# MIXED USE – SEAFRONT – LEISURE

## Introduction

The central area of the seafront is associated with a vibrant architectural style and sea-front leisure and pleasure. It provides a stark contrast to the orderly and mannered Victorian and Edwardian suburbs in the surrounding areas.

## Urban form

The central seafront is an area under intense pressure from a number of competing influences including the strident leisure industry, intense residential development, the impact of through traffic and the constraining effect of the natural geography.

There are a number of distinct features:

- **Adventure Island** started out life in the 1920s as public gardens situated on reclaimed land. Over the years a number of childrens rides were added and the area soon became known as Peter Pan's Playground. In the 1990s the park expanded significantly to straddle both sides of the pier and has become a significant, if garish, landmark and destination.
- **Marine Parade** is the central part of the seafront area running from the pier to the Kursaal and features large scale buildings, mostly with extremely elaborate and vibrant elevations. The steep geography to the west means that Marine Parade effectively divides the town from the seafront, something which has been addressed in one of the newest local landmarks, the Pier Hill Tower.
- **The Palace Hotel** is the most imposing single building in the central area of seafront, and provides an example of a large bulky

building on the seafront which has become acceptable over time and is now listed.

## Buildings

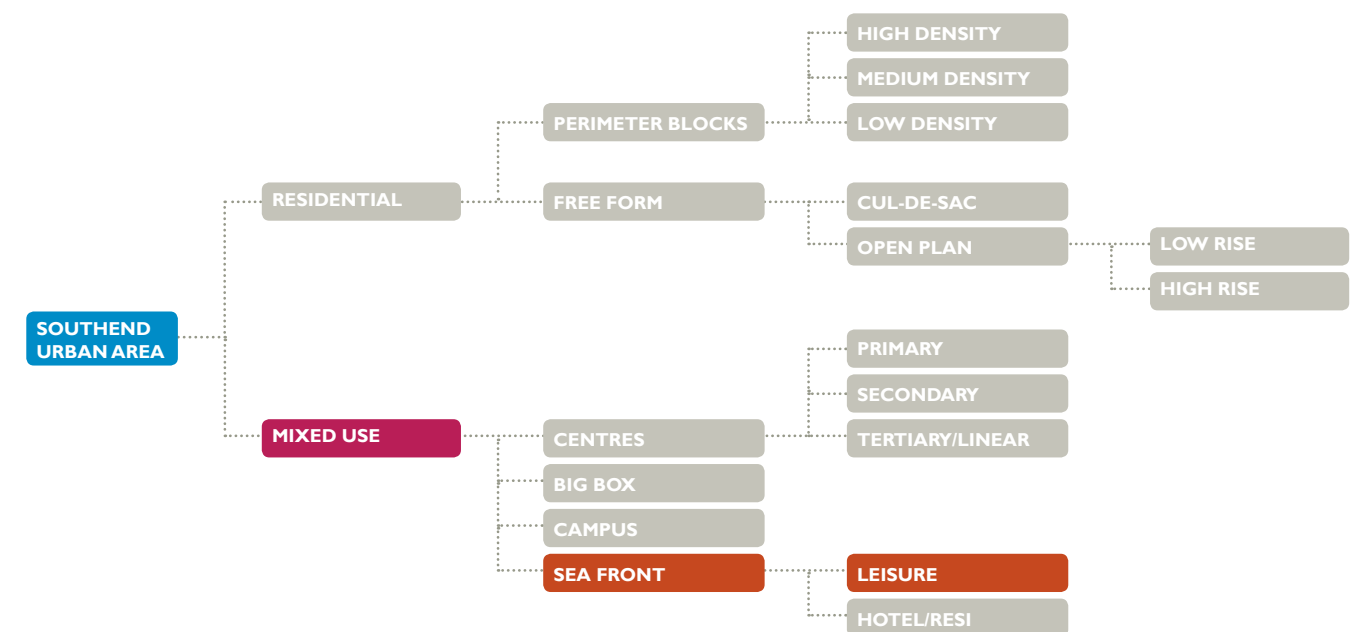
The majority of the buildings on Southend's sea frontage feature bold and exuberant external decoration in a manner which has few comparators beyond other seafront resorts and one-off examples such as Camden Town in London. Beneath the neon and applied decoration there is a mix of buildings, including some which show mid-Victorian origins in their bay windows.

Although not formally classified as buildings the rides and installations of Adventure Island also lend the seafront a very lively character and in some cases are substantial landmarks in their own right.

The Palace Hotel dates originally from 1904, but is presently in the process of a major redevelopment to provide a combination of hotel and residential accommodation. It remains a substantial landmark.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape and landscape of the leisure areas of the seafront is dominated by the presence of the Thames estuary, its beaches and the associated leisure facilities. This is an area designed and managed for pleasure and leisure. The area within the typology contains large linear spaces of publicly accessible open space the largest of which comprise the beach, promenade and cliff gardens. The pier and its associated facilities provide a focal point for the seafront but activity and facilities are spread along the full length of the seafront.







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The character varies considerably over the year. In the summer, the area is busy and lively with thousands of visitors enjoying the seafront and its facilities. On a fine day the road and car parks are busy and the beach and promenade are packed with visitors. Music, cries and shrieks from the amusement parks add colour and atmosphere to the area. In the winter, the area is quieter with large areas of empty car parks, less stalls and smaller, more scattered groups of people on the beach and promenade.

Cars are a dominant feature on the seafront with parking on both sides of the Western Esplanade at its eastern end and a substantial parking area in the central reservation at the western end. In winter months these become large areas of open unused tarmac.

Despite the exposed location there are some substantial blocks of vegetation particularly in the adjacent cliff gardens where large mature trees are well established including Oak (*Quercus*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and a variety of ornamental species including a particularly large proportion of conifers. The cliff gardens is a substantial open space with a range of both formal and informal greenspace. Informal areas including native planting, long grass and rough paths contrast with the formal areas which have substantial areas of ornamental bedding displays. These colourful displays are a traditional feature of the Southend seafront and parks and the Borough is renowned for the quality of its annual bedding displays. Along the seafront itself, vegetation is limited although the central reservation of the Western Esplanade contains a broken line of Tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.) - a traditional seafront plant and Adventure Island is planted with a mix of evergreen shrubs around its perimeter.

















# MIXED USE – SEAFRONT – HOTEL/RESIDENTIAL

## Introduction

In the areas of the seafront east and west of central Southend there is a varied building scale and pattern of use. This includes the presence of numerous guest houses and small hotels, but has also more recently included retirement flats and apartment buildings.

## Urban Form

Southend benefits greatly from a south facing aspect over the Thames Estuary at the point where it widens to meet the English Channel. As with many seafront towns this creates significant pressure for space in the premium positions along the front and from the very earliest urban development of Southend in the 1790s this was evident in the striking terraced forms erected.

This pressure continued over time, and the seafront has generally attracted larger scale buildings, either as private houses or as guest houses. More recently, the scale of buildings on the front has gradually increased, with significant pressure for taller and bulkier apartment buildings.

## Buildings

As well as being some of the larger examples of domestic and guest house buildings in the area, the seafront also plays host to some of the most elaborate and heavily articulated buildings in Southend, including bold use of bays and balconies. Corner sites are particularly exploited, often providing opportunities for additional height and decorative features such as towers.

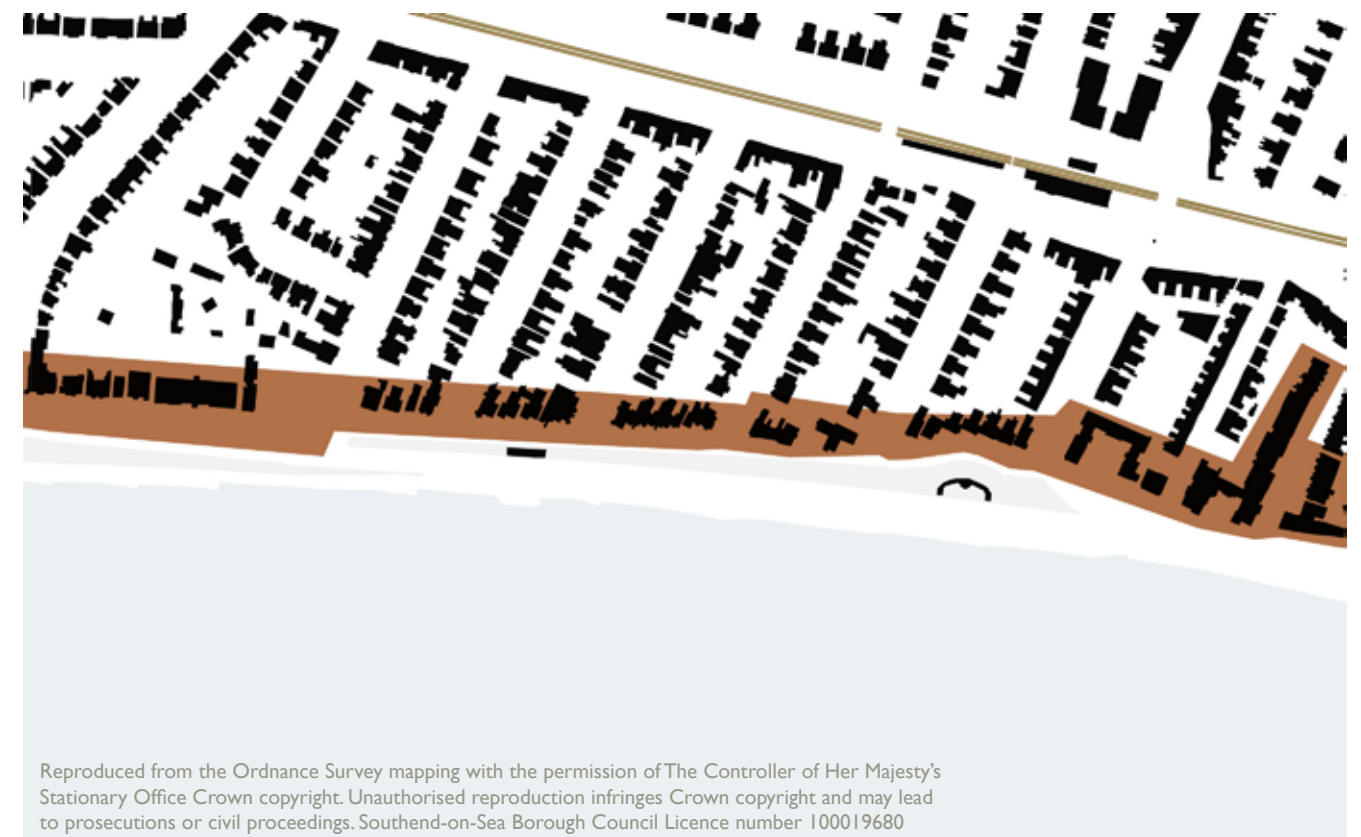
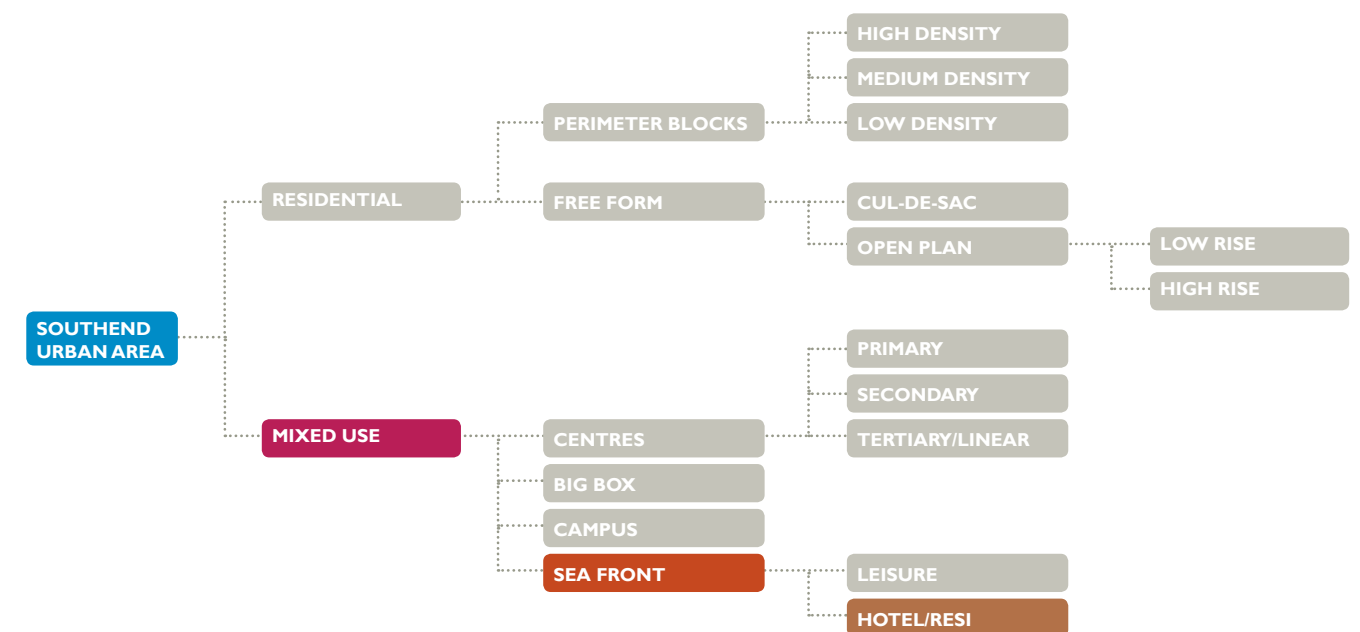
Of particular interest is the strong orientation towards the sea. Coupled with the south-facing aspect this gives a strong, single-minded approach to orientation and particularly with buildings which provide retirement or residential accommodation tends to manifest itself in features such as sun lounges, panoramic windows and enclosed balconies.

Areas at the extremities of the Borough, including Leigh-on-Sea and Thorpe Bay also exhibit some of these architectural characteristics. However, they typically retain a much higher proportion of their original buildings, and crucially have far fewer developments which create bulky structures through amalgamating residential plots.

## Streetscape and landscape

The streetscape and landscape of this typology is strongly influenced by the presence of the Thames Estuary which forms the dominant focal point for the area. Properties have been designed to maximize their views towards the sea and there are frequent linear public open spaces along the cliff top allowing these views to be enjoyed by all.

A typical street profile comprises residential dwellings or apartment blocks on one side of the road, a two way road (on which parking is often controlled) with pavements on both sides and a linear public green space (often separated from the pavement by a privet hedge). Residential properties typically have well maintained front gardens with ornamental shrub and herbaceous planting. Trees are infrequent mainly due to the exposure to sea winds which creates difficult growing conditions. The clifftop and cliff-side green spaces contain



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some established trees although many of these have a distorted form due to the prevailing winds.

Streetscape materials typically comprise tarmac road and pavements, wide granite kerbs and standard highway lighting. The adjacent residential properties are typically bounded by a low brick wall, close-boarded timber fence or an evergreen hedge. The adjacent linear green spaces vary in character from formally designed open spaces with mown grass and seasonal bedding displays, to more informal open spaces with long grass and native scrub. Timber benches are located at frequent intervals through the open space.















# SOUTHEND'S PLACES



# SOUTHEND'S PLACES

As with any borough, Southend is not a single homogenous place. Rather, it is a collection of separate and distinct places which have grown together over time to create a substantial conurbation.

Despite this coalescence the various places retain their individuality. This can be seen in the types of street pattern and architecture, the structure of centres and focal points and the names used to describe locations. In each case the history of the origins and growth of a place are crucial to the establishment of the later character and as has been noted previously in this study, elements such as the arrival of the railway in an area or the closure of the Garrison in the case of Shoeburyness can have a profound effect on the shape and character of a place.

This section of the study identifies eight different places within the borough which can be regarded as distinct places. Within each of these there are smaller neighbourhoods or areas of character. The definition of these zones has arisen from the consultation work undertaken with local groups but it is important to note that they are not intended as definitive boundaries - there are likely to be many cases where there could be significant debate over the placement of boundary lines. Rather they are used as a framework to present the key characteristics of each area and the key issues which they each face in terms of challenges to the existing urban character.

EASTWOOD



SOUTHEND



LEIGH



SOUTHCHURCH



PRITTLEWELL



THORPE BAY



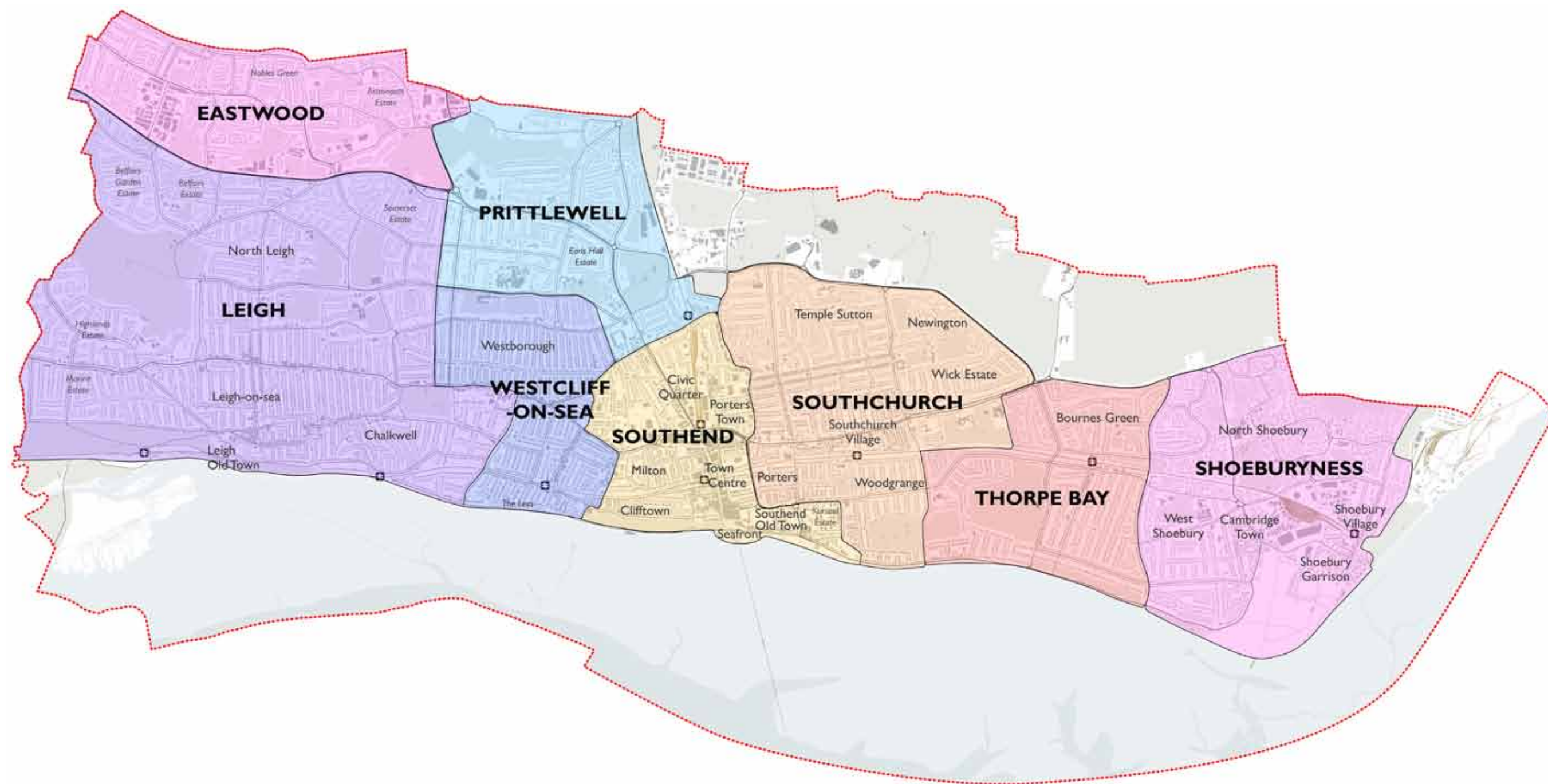
WESTCLIFF  
-ON-SEA



SHOEBURYNESS







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# EASTWOOD

## Key characteristics

Eastwood is a relatively modern area of Southend, featuring mainly post-war buildings. It is defined to the south by the A127 Arterial Road which creates a strong boundary and has the effect of isolating the area from Leigh to the south to a large degree.

Areas of Eastwood feature the same variation between buildings as is commonly found in more mature areas of the Borough, suggesting that they were built in a piecemeal way either by individual owners or by builders working on small groups of plots. The style and format of buildings varies significantly, but includes a range of forms fashionable for the post-war period such as chalet style houses. Notably, the blocks in the western part of Eastwood are arranged in a regular grid pattern, with some of them unmetalled and unadopted

The northern part of Eastwood, known as Noble's Green includes a number of very large properties, some backing onto the green open space beyond the Borough boundary.

A substantial portion of Eastwood is laid out as cul-de-sac development, ranging in period from the late 1960s to the late Twentieth Century. These areas lack a clearly legible network of spaces and streets and particularly they lack the classic bone structure which defines a district centre and associated public realm. Instead, the focus is a Morrisons supermarket based on an out-of-town format.

Eastwood is perhaps most visible to non-residents as the location for the Progress Road industrial estate. This provides a significant body of employment and some retail/service counters for the general public and trade. However, it has also recently become the

focus for car retail fronting onto the A127. The recent Progress Road Estate Framework provides a design brief which is intended to gradually raise the quality and provision of employment by setting new standards and aspirations for the types of uses in the area and the quality of the urban environment.

## Key issues

Eastwood contains few elements of significant historic value. It is relatively isolated from the core historic areas of the Borough and so there is little potential for change to have a significantly detrimental impact on the Borough.

By contrast, there may be a number of positive changes which may be sought over time. This could include reducing the impact of the A127 as a barrier which isolates Eastwood from its surrounding areas, and improving the network of streets and spaces to make the area generally more legible and permeable. Finally, there may be opportunities to redevelop the retail centre to provide an environment based more closely around public realm and which is better orientated towards pedestrians and cyclists.







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# LEIGH-ON-SEA

## Key characteristics

Leigh-on-Sea is a large area of Southend, really only defined at the northern edge by the A127 where it abuts Eastwood.

The southern part of the area is that properly known as Leigh-on-Sea and has its focus around the historic settlement on the hill-top overlooking the estuary. This provides a vibrant secondary town centre with a wide range of shops and services and a generally attractive environment. The suburbs which extend out from this core were largely built out during the Edwardian and Inter-war period and represent some of the most attractive and desirable parts of the Borough.

Old Leigh is the original coastal settlement, based around the shellfish beds along the estuary. The arrival of the railway line from Fenchurch Street cut it off from the rest of the area and despite the construction of a large fly-over in the latter part of the twentieth century it remains a microcosm of townscape from another age.

The London Road forms the spine of the area, providing a linear centre for local shops and services as well as specialist retail and businesses such as car show-rooms. It also acts as the dividing line between Leigh-on-Sea and plain Leigh to the north. Whilst the character of Leigh-on-Sea extends across the London Road it makes way for other forms of development including the public sector-built Somerset Estate in the north. This follows many of the same influences as privately built housing of the same period, with its layout being heavily influenced by garden city and Radburn planning. However, the buildings are much more plain and modest in their design and are generally grouped in

short terraces, creating an overall cohesiveness and homogeneity which distinguishes them from their private sector cousins.

## Key issues

It is difficult to see how and where the built extents of Leigh might grow. Given that the area is largely characterised by mature suburbs in private ownership it is therefore likely to experience little change at a strategic level. Perhaps more significant is the potential for change at a plot-by-plot basis.

As in other areas there is pressure for extensions and loft conversions. This can have a particularly damaging effect in areas with semi-detached houses with hipped roofs which can lose their symmetry and affect the composition of the skyline through insensitive conversion;

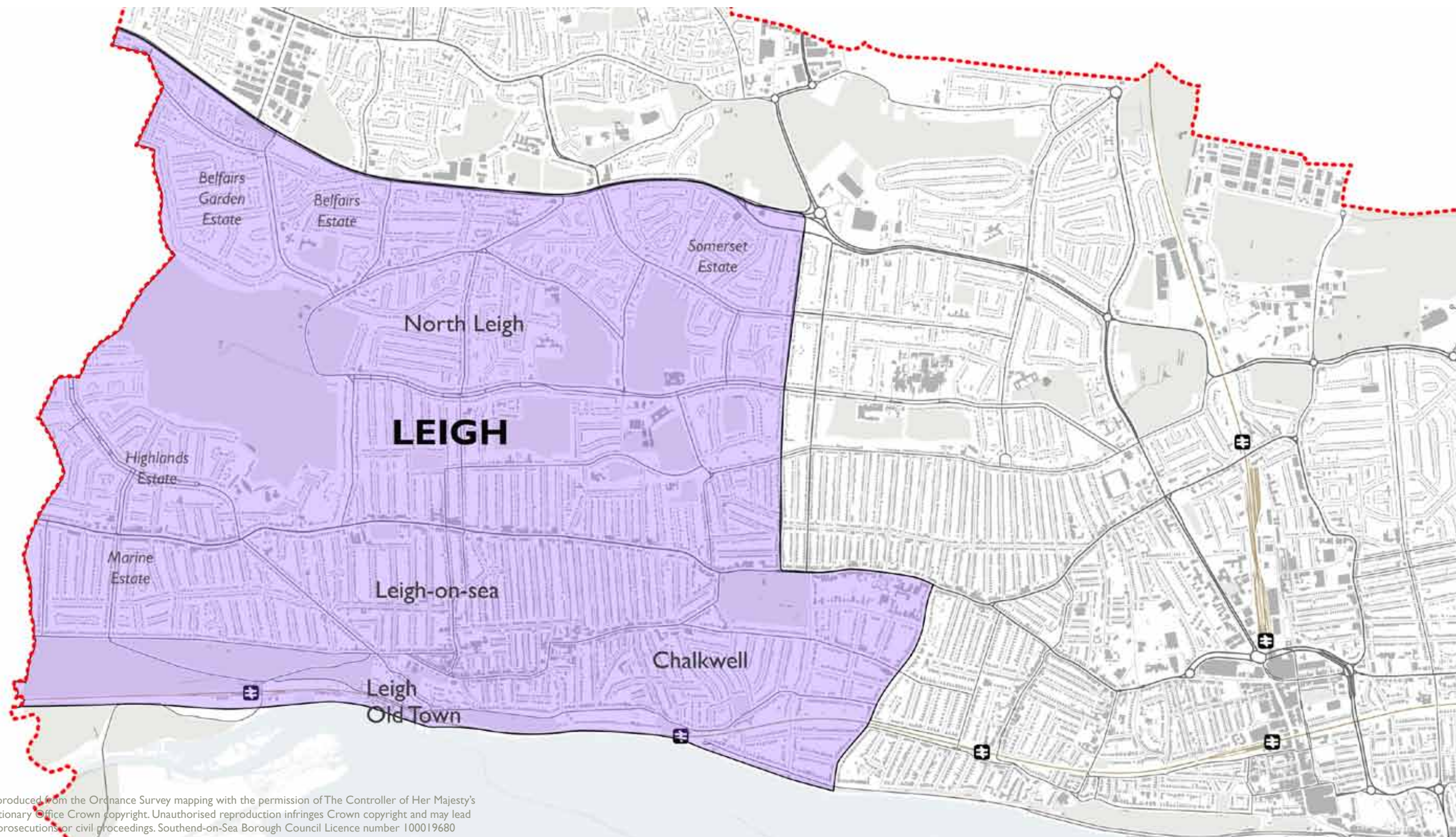
In older suburban areas, designed without universal car ownership, there can be significant pressure for conversion of front gardens into parking, resulting in the loss of greenery and reduced definition of public and private space;

One of the strongest streetscape features in the area is the verge hedges and trees. These are at risk of removal to release land for parking. However, this would significantly affect the character of the streets and result in the loss of green infrastructure which contributes to sustainable drainage, biodiversity and climate change adaptation; and

Pressure for larger blocks of flats and more intensive development in local centres and along the London Road.







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# PRITTLEWELL

## Key characteristics

Prittlewell is located on the northern side of the Borough and effectively forms the gateway into the town centre of Southend for those travelling in along Prince Avenue, the A127. This road dominates the area, cutting it in half. Although the character of the road is softened with landscaping including wide verges and tree planting the volume of traffic and dual carriageway nature of the road has a significant impact, making it all but impossible to cross except at a few controlled locations or bridges. It is unfortunate that the very large Tesco store and car park on the A127 junction entering Prittlewell is one of the most significant and visible landmarks in the area.

Prittlewell is largely characterised by low and medium density housing. Whilst there is a strong inter-war component of this, particularly on key routes, there are also substantial areas of post-war housing including examples of system building (pre-fab housing) such as Hornby Avenue.

Prittlewell is the location for a number of elements which have significance for the wider area: Southend University Hospital is located in the southern part of Prittlewell and orientated towards Prittlewell Chase; Southend airport is also immediately to the north of Prittlewell, with the terminal buildings and hangers backing close onto residential properties in Wells Avenue; and Southend Football Club is located in the southern part of Prittlewell, although the club plans to move to new premises on the outskirts of the urban area. These significant functions do little to help Prittlewell establish a cohesive identity.

The most significant component of Prittlewell's origins and identity is the historic settlement which was focussed around the junction of East Street and West Street with the road now known as Victoria Avenue. The parish church is an imposing historic presence, but beyond this only a handful of pre-Victorian buildings remain to give a sense of what existing before the urban expansion of Southend. These are some of the oldest buildings in the Borough and are an important part of the town's history.

Prittlewell Priory (Grade I listed) is another significant aspect of the area's history, having been founded in the early twelfth century. It now houses a local museum and forms the centrepiece of Priory Park, a large and well landscaped area.

## Key issues

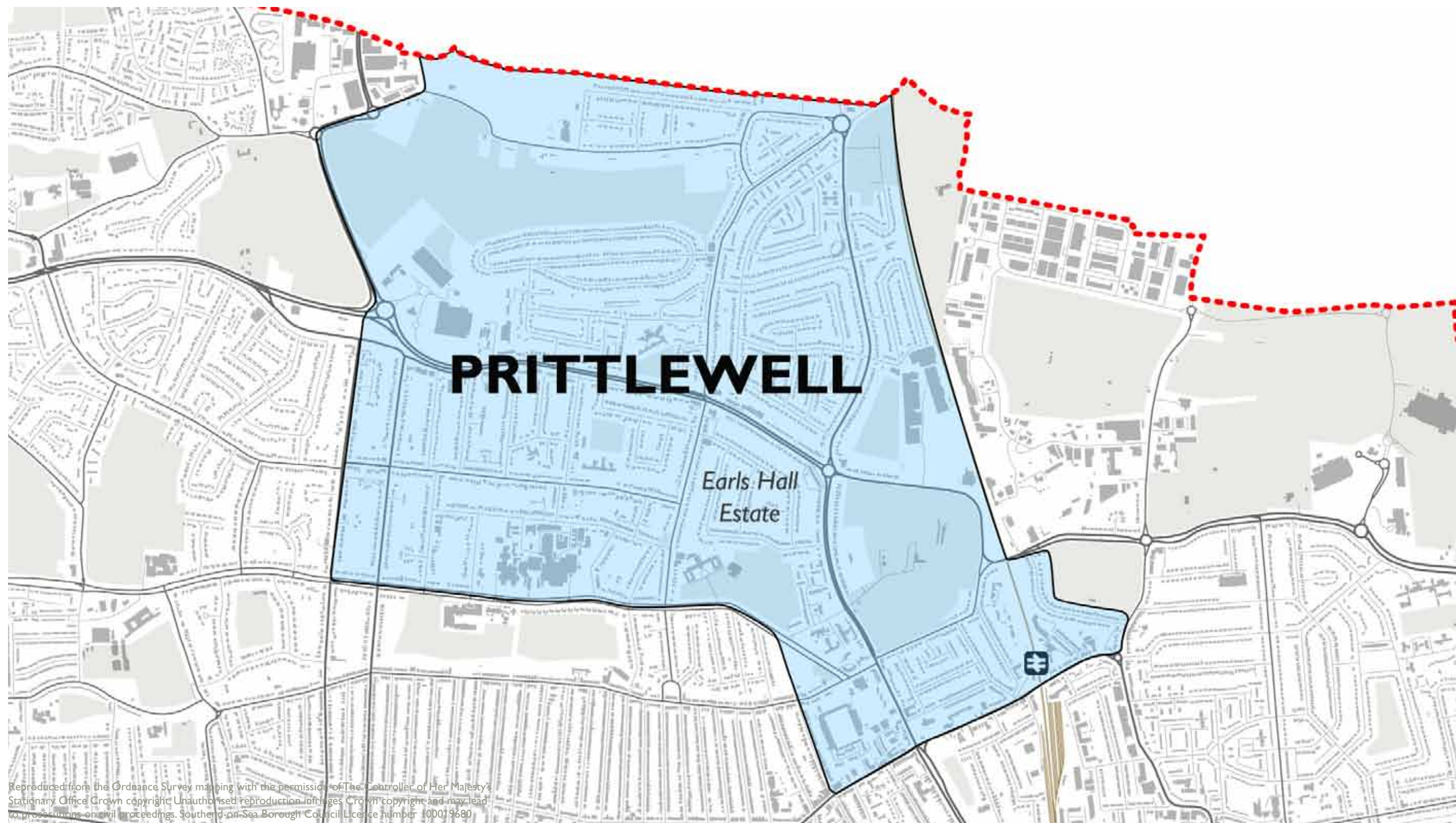
As and when the new football stadium development is completed the existing stadium site will provide a large area of developable land close to the location of the historic core of Prittlewell. This presents an opportunity for well-integrated urban development;

The A127 will continue to have a major impact on the character of the area. However, opportunities might be sought to reduce the barrier effect it creates with a preference for at-grade crossings rather than over-bridges; and

In the long term, the character of the area will be strengthened by improving the key gateways, recognising their important role as the approach to Southend town centre. This work is already progressing through the Victoria Avenue Development Brief.







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# WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

## Key characteristics

Westcliff-on-Sea lies between Leigh and Southend, and stretches from the coast in the south to the Prittlewell Brook in the north. It is bisected by the London Road which runs east-west through the area. This marks a clear change in the character of the street pattern and defines a distinct area in the northern part which is known as Westborough.

Most of Westcliff is a product of the late Victorian and Edwardian era, with most of the development taking place in the two decades up to and including the First World War. The key physical determinants which formed its structure were the London Road, the coast line, and the establishment of Westcliff Station. This set up a strong north-south axis in the form of Hamlet Court Road which has become the main shopping street for the area.

The character of the southern part of Westcliff, particularly in the areas closer to the seafront is a good example of vibrant Edwardian architecture, with strong modelling of the front elevations including external timberwork, bays, gables and balconies. The seafront itself is the most extreme example of this type, with large properties competing in scale and elaborateness.

By contrast, Westborough is a much more modest area, with smaller and more repetitive houses. It is noticeable on maps of the area for the exceptionally strong nature of the grid plan which is established, with 22 almost perfectly parallel streets.

## Key issues

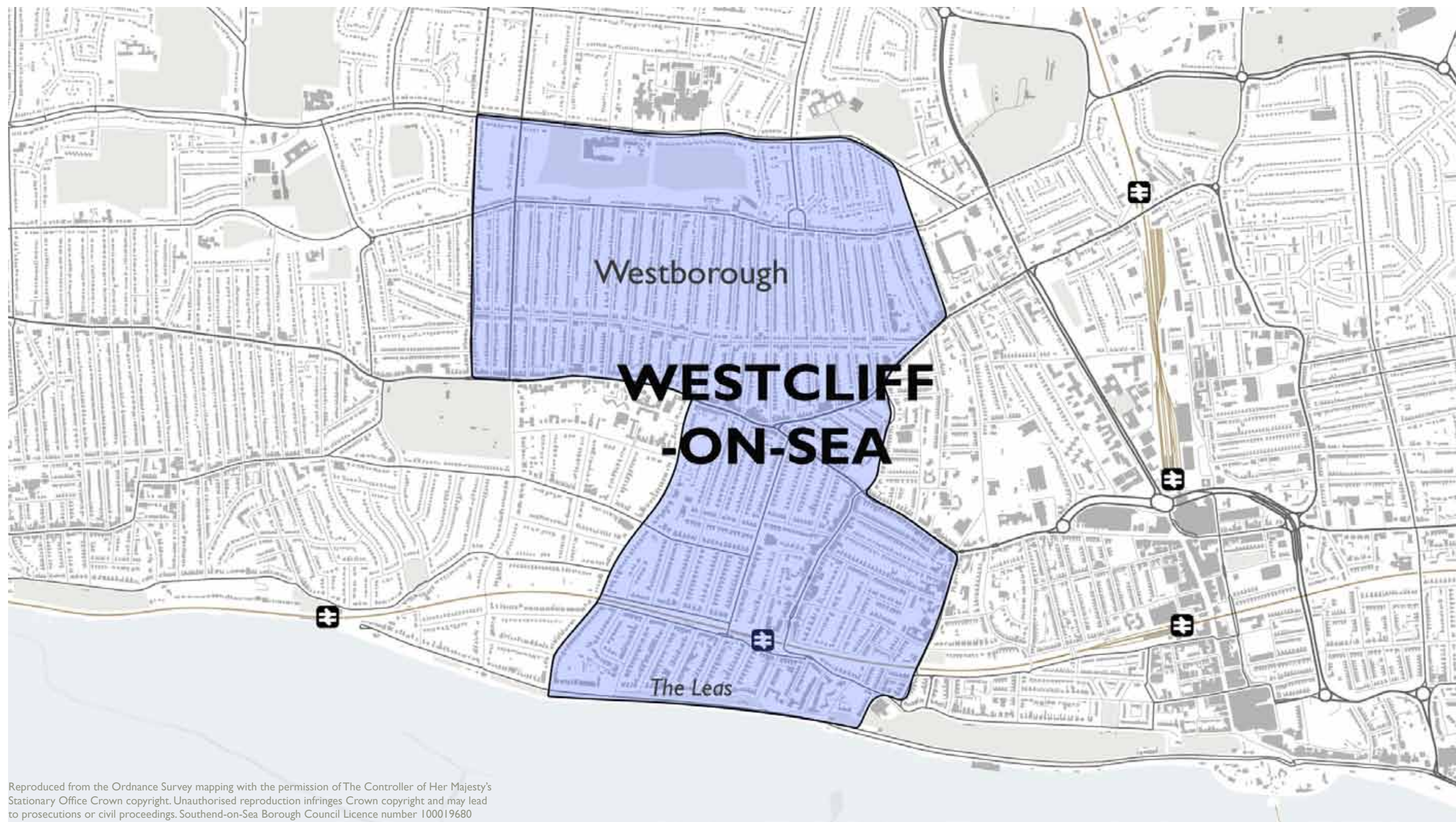
Perhaps the most visibly pressing issue in Westcliff is the character of the seafront and the streets immediately inland. The attractiveness of the location has made it an extremely desirable place to live, and so there has been significant redevelopment of former large houses and traditional hotels to provide blocks of apartments and care homes. As well as the resulting loss of the attractive Edwardian architecture, the larger scale and massing of the new buildings is regarded as having a significant impact, particularly where plots have been merged to create larger sites. The increase in population density has also resulted in very high demand for parking spaces and increased pressure on local streets.

In residential streets a key issue is the loss of front gardens to parking and the gradual loss of original architectural features such as windows, both of which denude the streets of their consistency and appeal.

Hamlet Court Road is the historic shopping centre for the area and features a number of impressive Edwardian and inter-war buildings which have a particularly decorative character. This would benefit from a greater level of protection to promote preservation and enhancement of the buildings and may merit consideration as a conservation area.







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# SOUTHEND

## Key characteristics

The area regarded as central Southend covers a multitude of distinct neighbourhoods and quarters:

Town Centre - the main retail heart of the Borough and dominated by comparison shopping including shopping malls at the northern and southern end of the High Street;

Milton and Clifftown - early residential expansion of Southend, including some particularly attractive planned streets and spaces much of which is now conservation area;

Civic Quarter - a grouping of bulky post-war civic buildings along Victoria Avenue, including the library, law-courts and the Civic Centre itself (also reflected in the offices on the western side of the road);

Seafront - the entertainment heart of the Borough arranged along Marine Parade between Adventure Island and the Kursaal; and

Kursaal Estate - a post-war brutalist estate of slab blocks on the site formerly occupied by the Kursaal amusement park.

In addition to this there are a number of fringe areas such as Porters Town which include a mix of residential and other uses and which have a generally fragmented urban character.

The central area of Southend is largely cut off from its hinterland to the north and west by Queensway, a large urban bypass which cuts a swath through the area and has resulted in a very fragmented character.

The town centre is also the principal transport hub for the Borough, although it is noted that the two railway stations and the bus station

are isolated from each other although work is underway to address this.

## Key issues

The central part of Southend is covered by an Draft Area Action Plan. The identifies a number of issues and opportunities. In terms of urban character the most significant potential lies in tackling the impact of Queensway (and to a lesser extent Chichester Road) and the sites around it. This covers key opportunities east of Victoria Station, sites on the margins of the existing town centre and the significant opportunities between Queensway and Marine Parade. Careful consideration needs to be given to the retention of any remaining historic fabric in any major project.

Milton and Clifftown both benefit from protection from conservation area designations. However, their close proximity to the town centre means that the transition to residential streets is becoming ever more stark as pressure on scale and density increases on sites such as Elmer Square/western car park sites.

Outlying areas of residential development, particularly north of the town centre feel very fragmented and would benefit from improved links into the town centre.

The seafront area has recently undergone major public realm improvements. However, the buildings along the seafront are under pressure for more intensive redevelopment - whilst this may be appropriate it will be important to maintain the historic character and grain.

As in other parts of the borough, pressure for parking has a major impact on the street scene.,









# SOUTHCHURCH

## Key characteristics

Southchurch is focussed around Southchurch Road, a linear centre which runs east-west and effectively forms a continuation of the A13 London Road on to Shoeburyness. The area in the few streets to the north of the A13 and the development along the seafront are the oldest neighbourhoods in Southchurch, showing a significant phase of growth in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Over recent years this area has increasingly been referred to as Southchurch Village. As with other areas of Southend, there is a clear sense that the plots were sold off either individually or in small groups, resulting in a very varied character in some streets.

On the northern edge of Shoebury, the A1159 marks a clear line to the edge of the urban area. Whilst its main function was to provide a quicker bypass-style route to Shoeburyness, one gets the clear sense that the position of the road has been defined in an attempt to draw a clear line which will limit the expansion of the urban area. Whilst this has so far succeeded in terms of housing, there a growing number of developments outside this boundary, including sports, education and retail as well as the proposed location for the new Southend United Football Club stadium.

Housing in the northern part of Southchurch is distinctly more ordinary than the earlier and grander Victorian and Edwardian housing in the southern part of the borough. There is a strong flavour of public sector housing, both in the execution of some of the areas of buildings, but also in the form of the urban layout which features strong geometric shapes. This is particularly evident around Bournemouth Park Road, an area which features a high proportion

of bungalows mostly dating from the interwar period contrasting with the nearby residential towers.

A further number of streets running between Poynings Avenue and Southchurch Boulevard also feature a very high proportion of bungalows, with some streets being entirely single storey. As has been noted elsewhere in this study, there is considerable pressure for bungalows to have roof extensions or to be redeveloped as larger houses, usually on a plot-by-plot basis or in small groups.

## Key issues

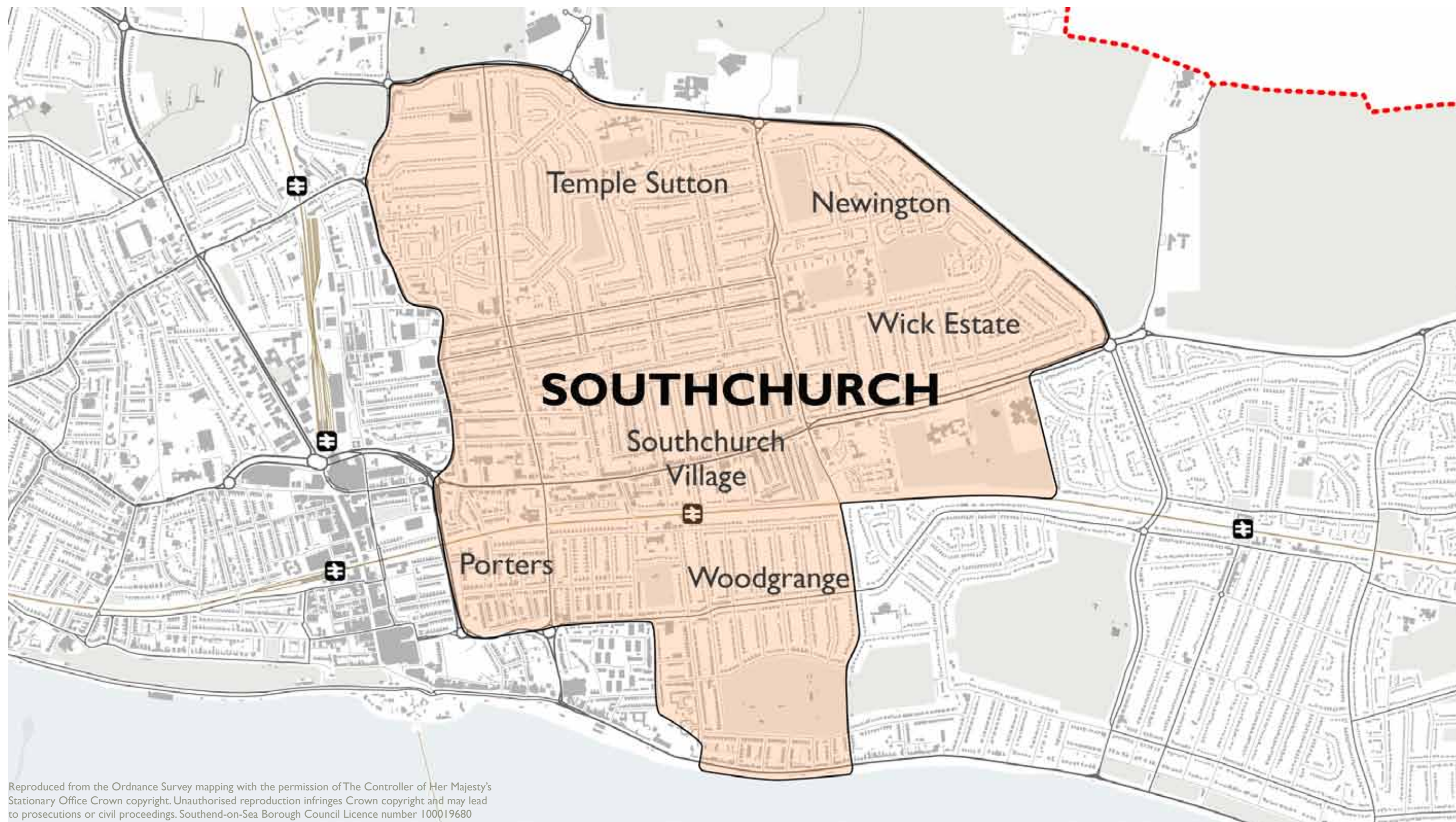
Where there are large groups of bungalows, particularly as in the northern half of Southchurch as described above, the consistency of the character should be maintained. Whilst they are not considered to be areas which would merit a conservation area designation, significant changes to some plots would have a detrimental effect on the overall appearance of the street in a way which would not be apparent in streets with a more jumbled character.

Southchurch Road performs an important function as the centre for the area but suffers from being a very long centre stretched out along a key historic route. As a result it lacks some of the identity and focus of the more compact centres, particularly as it bleeds out over such a long distance.

As with other older areas of the Borough, Southchurch has a strong grid character in its central area. However a noticeable portion of this has a strong east-west grid rather than the north-south grid that prevails elsewhere and demonstrates the application of the form to suit local circumstances.







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# THORPE BAY

## Key characteristics

Thorpe Bay is one of the most affluent and low density areas of Southend and is also one of the last major areas of the borough to be built. Although the southern part of the area shows a strong Edwardian legacy the bulk of Thorpe Bay is a combination of interwar and postwar development.

The main body of Thorpe Bay to the south of the railway line is characterised by a very strong grid drawn to generous proportions and with wide plots. This has facilitated a number of very large Edwardian and interwar houses as well as a substantial phase of post war bungalows and houses. The area has a very leafy and relaxed feel and benefits from an attractive centrepiece in the form of St Augustine's Church which sits in an oval at the centre of the grid. The sea front of Thorpe Bay is known for its attractive gardens which include a number of activities such as bowls and tennis as well as the colourful beach huts along the top of the beach.

To the west of this grid is a golf course and an area of largely post-war housing, a significant portion of which is located in a flood risk zone. The seafront in this area lacks the set back and gardens of the central Thorpe Bay area. The seafront is characterised by a somewhat muddled composition of Edwardian and interwar development with later flats, hotels and care homes.

North of the railway is Bournes Green. This is an area planned and commenced in the interwar period but finally built-out after the Second World War. This was a privately built enterprise, heavily influenced by the garden city movement both in terms of the rural design motifs seen on the buildings but also in the plan form of the development. Here, the structure

follows a loose grid of square-proportion blocks but with small cul-de-sacs in each block, typical of the plan form established by Hampstead Garden Suburb.

## Key issues

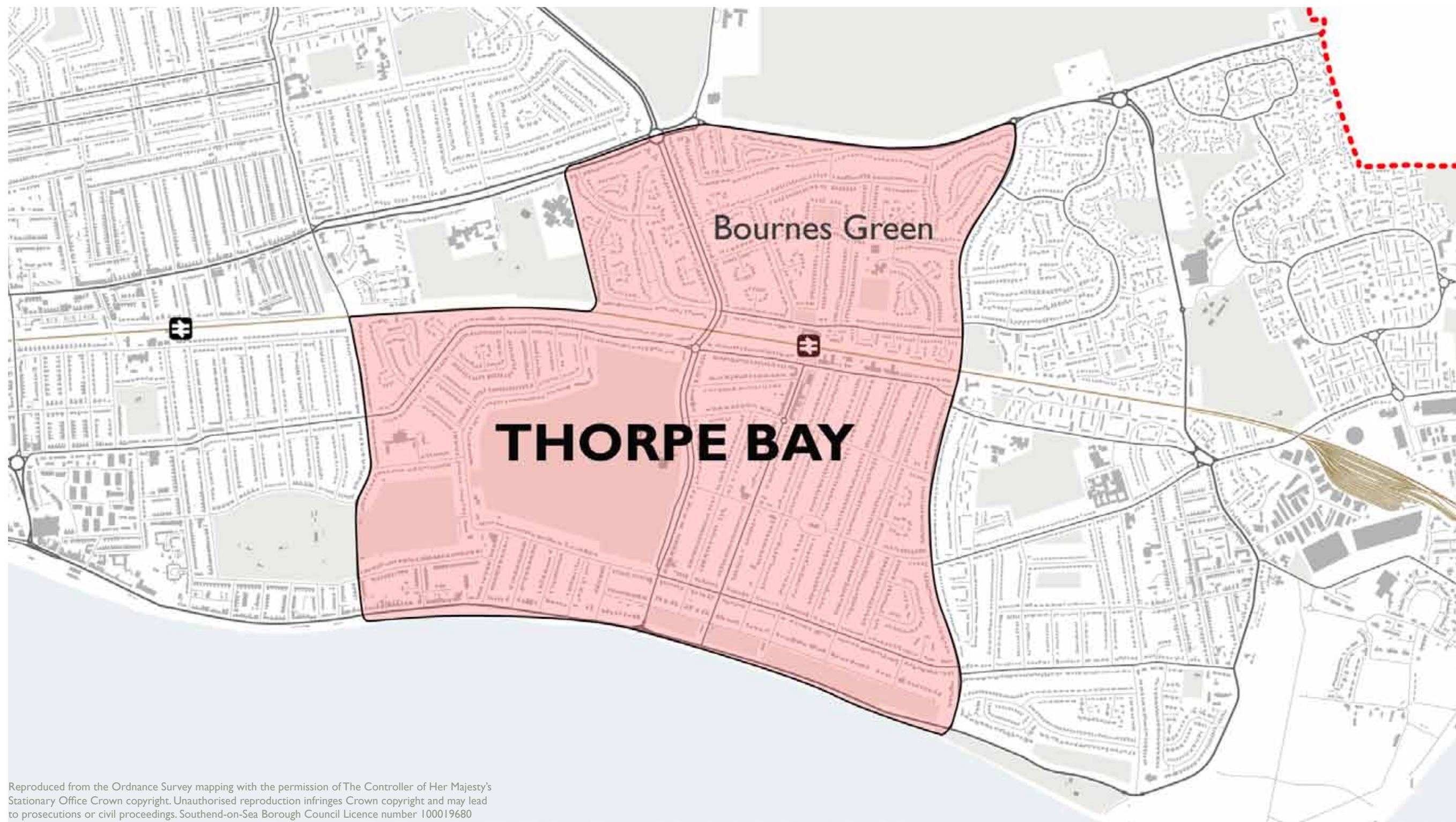
The main area of Thorpe Bay, with its large plots and low density, faces the threat of increasing intensification over time, particularly in zones where bungalows predominate and appear to offer easy opportunities to increase the built form on a site. The main danger here is likely to be that as there are few very distinguishing architectural features which might be regarded as setting rules for development, affluence and opportunity will combine to create buildings which are out of scale. This could create a very fragmented street scene which would dilute the quality of the area.

In the western area, the main threat to the character is in the development of seafront buildings in new and bulkier forms, losing the Edwardian grain and scale.

Whilst the buildings in Bournes Green show a great deal of variation they are lent an overall cohesiveness by the arcadian style of the materials and detailing and the very strong landscape quality of the streets. This is helpful in enabling the area to accommodate change on a plot by plot basis provided it is not substantially out of scale or at variance with the overall architectural theme.







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# SHOEBURYNNESS

## Key characteristics

Shoeburyness is perhaps the most fragmented of the areas in Southend, displaying a wide range of spatial and architectural characters over a number of distinct zones.

Perhaps the most significant feature is the Garrison, an important example of Victorian military establishment design with a strong urban form and attractive robust buildings. This area is now undergoing considerable change following the sale of the site with large areas of new housing being developed to integrate with the original form.

There are two traditional high streets in the area - Shoeburyness High Street which essentially links the station to the entrance of the Garrison and West Road which provides the local shops and services for the area known as Cambridge Town which itself sits within West Shoebury. Shoeburyness has the more appealing historic character but otherwise the two areas perform similar functions. Both are affected by the impact of the modern district centre in the north of the area which includes a large food store and a number of uses but is dominated by car use and not well integrated with the surrounding housing.

The rest of South Shoebury presents a character which owes much to the influence of Thorpe Bay, with a gentle grid and relatively large plots which provide a clear and attractive network of streets.

By contrast North Shoebury has far less clarity, comprising two distinct character types of post-war planning, both of which lack a clear structure and sense of place. In the case of the older postwar development, the form follows the open plan-low rise format which

offers a high degree of permeability but very little clear streetscape. The later cul-de-sac based forms provide slightly more definition in terms of street but lack in terms of legibility or permeability.

Between all these areas lies the business/ industrial zones of Towerfield Road and Vanguard Way which are located either side of the substantial railway sidings.

## Key issues

The Garrison development will offer an attractive new area with a strong built character which reflects the nature and historical significance of the original Garrison buildings. As the area occupies a prominent frontage to the estuary and provides significant open space for public access it will be vital to ensure that the existing surrounding areas are properly linked in to overcome any perception that the Garrison is somehow set-apart.

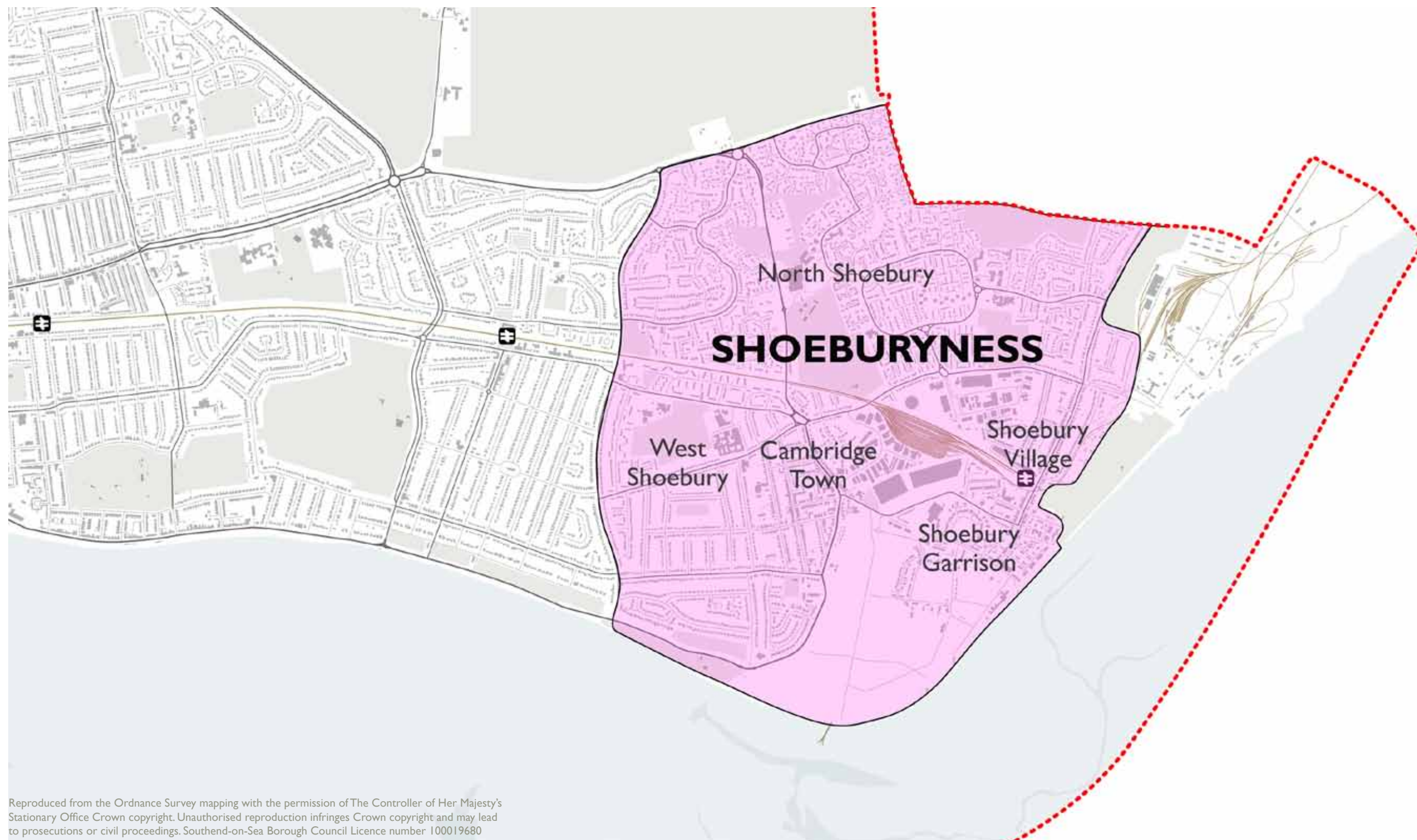
In the northern parts of Shoeburyness the main challenge is to overcome the legacy of the original street plan and form which lacks the clarity and legibility of the traditional perimeter block structures. Opportunities should be sought to better define property boundaries and clearer street-based routes.

The central component of North Shoebury is the large supermarket and shopping parade, presented in a very car-orientated form at the centre of the area. Opportunities should be sought to better integrate this with the surrounding streets and reduce the dominance of the car.

Shoeburyness suffers by being at the end of a very linear urban area. It would benefit from further connections which provide better access to the rest of the borough.







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CONCLUSIONS



# SOUTHEND'S KEY CHARACTERISTICS

During the course of the project a number of key themes and issues have emerged which particularly define the character of Southend. These are important to the ongoing development of the character of the Borough in terms of protecting key features which make the borough special. They also may provide helpful guidance in terms of guiding future policy and design considerations, ensuring that new development proceeds in a way which is consistent with the core character of the Borough and makes a positive contribution to the existing built form.

This section describes the key characteristics and highlights the key issues for further consideration.





# URBAN AND ARCADIAN STYLES

## Key characteristics

The urban forms and architectural styles in Southend can be divided into two characteristic types - the urban and the arcadian. Whilst these exist within a continuum of varied styles rather than as polar opposites they have clear distinguishing features.

**Urban** - The urban elements of the Borough are most likely to be around the historic centres and are characterised by relatively dense development. The key defining feature however is the degree of consistency between plots, defining a rhythm and homogeneity which speaks of pride and identification with the whole rather than the preeminence of the individual plot.

The proportions of the buildings are most likely to be vertical, featuring taller floor to ceiling heights, sash windows and elements such as fanlights above doors. Front gardens are likely to be modest and parking on street.

Areas which fall into this category are most likely to be Georgian and Victorian. Edwardian buildings are also likely to be defined as predominantly urban in character although they hold the origins of much of the arcadian approach at the start of a gradual move towards styles influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement.

**Arcadian** - The garden city movement pioneered a more open and arcadian form of development influenced by the romantic notion of life in the country combined with the best elements of urban life. Although the First World War interrupted the flow of development the spirit of the garden city was taken up with enthusiasm in the following years, clearly influencing the Homes for Heroes movement

and the large areas of public and private housing which followed.

Although many areas which could be included in this category are still based on a regular planned block structure they have many features which demonstrate a return to the rural arcadian approach. These include the use of more complex forms to create individual buildings, the use of weather-boarding, tile hanging and other rural construction techniques, a move to a generally more horizontal proportion of building and a generally lower density of building creating a more open feel and a more generous approach to individual house plots, including significant private and public planting.

Some of the post-war suburban areas conform only loosely to the Arcadian principles, and so do not provide clear precedent or context in this regard.

## Key issues

The balance between urban and arcadian influences in the style and form of an area is a helpful one to understand when considering the appropriateness of any proposals for new buildings. It encapsulates an approach to design, layout and landscape which can inform every aspect of a design and provides an approach which is not explicitly linked to period or style, but rather to origin and philosophy. An understanding of this should assist in the delivery of appropriate modern contextual development without necessarily falling back on simple pastiche which can often create an unsympathetic building that is a poor replica of the traditional form.





# URBAN STRUCTURE

## Key characteristics

The major urban structure of the Borough has developed over a long period of time, but in a few clearly distinguishable ways.

Firstly, the main network of principal routes is largely inherited from the historic network of roads and lanes which existed prior to the urbanisation of the Borough. These linked the existing settlements of Prittlewell, Leigh, Southend and Shoebury, and in the case of examples such as London Road continue to provide a significant link.

With few major settlements to the north of the Borough the principal movement structure has always been east-west, following the landscape.

As development areas were planned out in the Victorian and Edwardian periods the first major phases of development were laid out as regular grids, running north south between these routes. As later phases of development were planned there was a gradual move away from very regular grids towards more organic and irregular layouts. However, the north-south grid remains a strong defining feature of much of the Borough.

Later development, including the cul-de-sac plans of North Shoebury and Eastwood and the open plan high rise and low rise forms break with this approach and as a result feel less place specific to Southend and more generic in their approach.

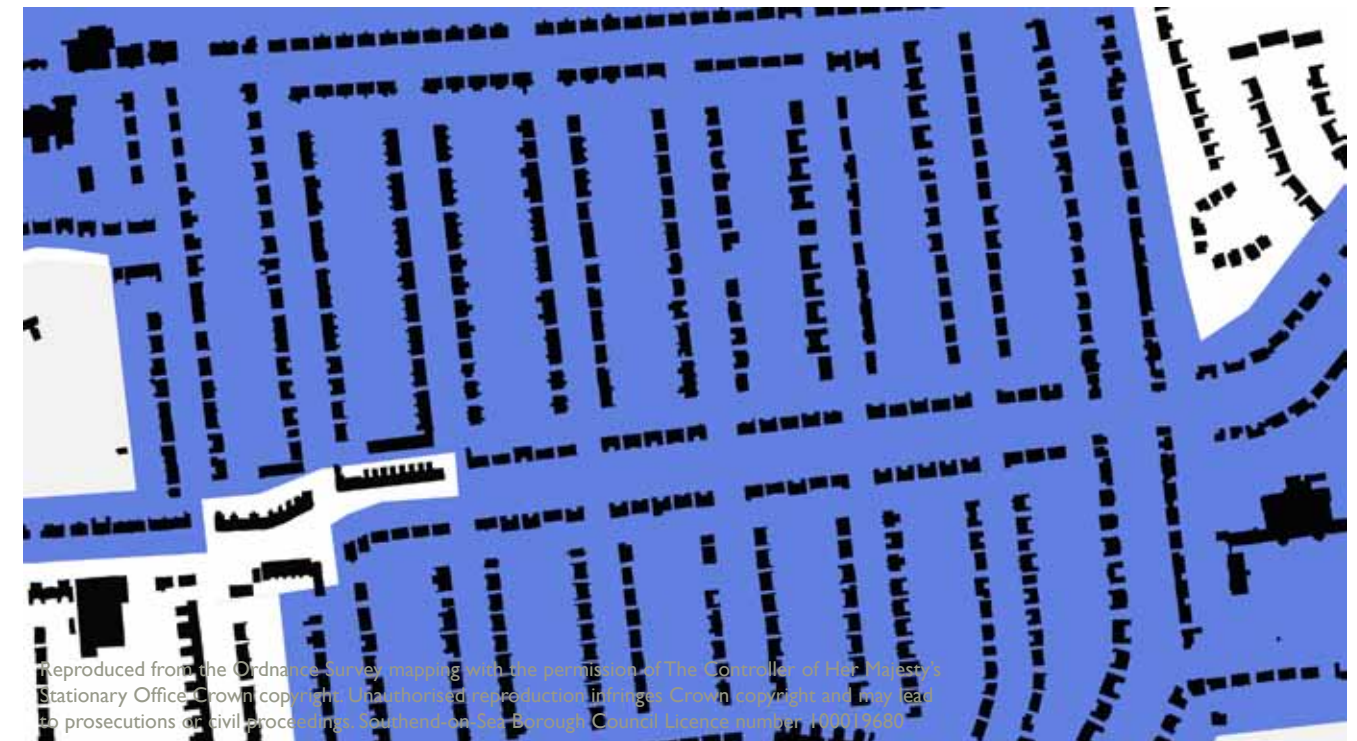
## Key issues

The perimeter block form is an integral part of many areas of the Borough, ranging from tight and regular grid blocks through to more organic structures. They provide an environment which

is generally easy to navigate and which provides a high degree of permeability, promoting greater use of sustainable transport modes. It is also a very flexible form, able to accommodate a wide range of building formats and dwelling sizes.

The nature of the perimeter block is also to make connections with the surrounding urban area wherever possible. This promotes integration between new and existing development rather than the creation of insular pockets of development.

This approach of using perimeter block structures should be advocated in new developments, establishing a clear sense of continuity and integration with the existing Borough character and street network. The scale and grain of the grid used should reflect that found in the immediate context, along with an appropriate approach to plot scale and format.





# VARIETY

## Key characteristics

As has been noted early in this study, one of the key distinguishing features of the development of large areas of Southend is the high degree of variation found from plot to plot. This is a feature which has arisen as a direct result of the way in which streets were laid out and then individual plots or small groups of plots were developed by different builders. These would either be developed on a speculative basis or to the requirements of a particular purchaser.

This approach is clearly visible in the historic maps of the time which capture moments at which a patchwork of plots was developed, but before everything in the area had been built out (see plans on page 39).

Areas developed in this way contain a wide range of building types including terraces, semis and detached houses and a huge mix of dwelling formats including deeply stepped front elevations and a mix of bungalows in amongst the two and sometimes three storey houses.

A number of common features do bind these areas together to create a cohesive sense of place. Firstly, they tend to be built with a reasonably consistent approach to the building line, creating a unified elevation to the street. Secondly, the prevailing fashions of the time mean that although buildings may have a very different underlying form they are often finished in similar materials and with similar details and motifs. Finally, although plot widths do vary, they tend to be reasonably consistent, given a steady rhythm to the street in terms of front doors and roof line.

## Key issues

The nature of these streets and the variety they embody is a distinctive feature of southend, unlike many of the more planned and homogenous areas of development found in the London suburbs for example. The variety means that they are generally able to accommodate gradual change over time, including the additional relatively strong contemporary architecture providing the overall sense of scale and grain remains.

Some concern has been expressed at the loss of bungalows in the Borough, redeveloped as larger houses to take full advantage of the development potential of a site. Some areas of the Borough have areas which comprise large areas of bungalows, creating a consistent scale and defined character which might be easily broken through insensitive redevelopment. However, in more mixed areas where a bungalow is clearly part of a varied scale it may be possible in some cases to consider redevelopment to a larger house which respects the character and scale of the area.





# THE SEAFRONT

## Key characteristics

The seafront plays defining role in the character of Southend, but has several distinct facets:

**Leigh Port and Old Town** - Old Leigh is an example of an historic estuary town which has largely weathered the impact of modern development. This is perhaps due to the arrival of the railway line in the nineteenth century which isolated it from the rest of the town, effectively quarantining it from intensive development, and the strength of the local fishing industry. It remains an attractive village, with a significant body of historic buildings and a strong relationship to the waterfront. It benefits from the comprehensive coverage of the conservation area designation and now combines its role as a working harbour with local tourism.

**Pleasure and leisure** - The central part of Southend is characterised by Adventure Island and a surrounding cluster of leisure buildings, most notably the listed Kursaal, the location of the first ever theme park, predating Coney Island in America. Along with Clifftown this area is described as the Central Seafront Area in the Southend LDF.

The Golden Mile is particularly recognisable for its garish architecture, gaudy signage and dense concentration of leisure uses, although this masks a good deal of valuable historic fabric. Interestingly, both the neon and the underlying historic fabric have substantial elements which would merit some form of conservation protection in order to maintain the grain and character of the area. The public space along the seafront has recently been the subject of major streetscape investment.

**Hotels and larger buildings** - in the areas of the seafront around the central sea front (Chalkwell Station to Palmeira Avenue and Jetty to Thorpe Hall Avenue) there is a varied scale and pattern of use. This includes the presence of numerous guest houses and small hotels. More recently the development of larger hotel buildings and the development of retirement flats and apartment buildings has had a noticeable impact on these areas, resulting in a general increase in building scale and the loss of historic character and urban grain.





**Residential** - at the extremities of the Borough, the sea front reverts to a largely residential character, with large individual houses facing onto the water. Of particular note is Thorpe Esplanade (from Thorpe Hall Avenue to Ness Road) where the houses are set back some distance from the beach head, behind gardens and tennis courts. Here the buildings are typically very large, reflecting the premium commanded by such an attractive location and its views.

Cliff Parade and Marine Parade in Leigh-on-Sea also feature houses facing towards the estuary across large areas of green space. However, here the steep gradient of the cliffs gives a much more elevated position.

There is continued pressure for bulkier and taller development in these areas.



**Cliffs** - Whilst the eastern half of the Borough is largely flat the western half has a heavily modelled topography, resulting in a very distinctive landscape of steep escarpments. In some instances, such as Cliffs Gardens these are landscaped and provide a pleasure garden as a local amenity. In other instances, such as the eastern approach to Leigh-on-Sea, the steep landscape has been developed with bespoke houses configured to be accessed from the top of the hill and taking advantage of the unusual but attractive setting.



## Key issues

The main concern for the character of the seafront is the gradual increase in scale of new buildings and the loss of historic grain as a result of pressure for hotels, flats and retirement development. Whilst this may be appropriate in more central locations, provided the design is of high quality and sympathetically relates to the historic grain, it is seen as having a generally detrimental effect on the integrity and character of the Borough.

Many recent developments have been based on amalgamated sites. This has allowed the creation of buildings with a strongly horizontal emphasis and often considerable bulk in place of original buildings which were based on regular, relatively narrow, plots and were generally limited in overall height.

As a consequence the council may wish to consider introducing design guidelines which limit the potential for large format buildings, controlling height and restricting the opportunity for plots to be amalgamated to create bulky forms of development that don't reflect the fine grain character of the Borough.





# TALL BUILDINGS

## Key characteristics

Southend has a number of tall buildings. These are found in small numbers throughout the Borough, but with a clear focus on the central urban area and along the seafront. With tall buildings context is particularly important - a six storey building will feel tall in a low-rise suburban area or on the sea-front but will feel relatively standard in the main urban centre. They can be described in the following categories:

**Central area** - The centre of southend is the focus for a significant cluster of tall buildings, both in the core of the town centre but also Along Victoria Avenue to the north of Victoria Station. These buildings provide civic and office accommodation, along with elements including hotel and residential accommodation. The defined cluster reinforces the importance of the central urban area and aids legibility in the wider area. However, in some areas, such as Victoria Avenue the predominance of tall buildings contributes to a somewhat hostile environment for pedestrians due to the lack of activity at ground level.

**Sea front** - A number of tall and bulky buildings have been developed along the seafront, particularly in recent years. Whilst some of these, such as the more historic Palace Hotel, have graduated to the point of general local affection, many of the more recent examples are regarded as having a detrimental effect on the character of the seafront. This is based on a number of issues including:

- Loss of historic grain and character;
- Potential for tall and bulky buildings to affect views and daylight of properties in land; and
- Tall buildings being constructed in locations which neither require a significant landmark,

nor offer the services and transport infrastructure to be classed as sustainable.

**Residential towers** - A number of residential towers exist dotted around the Borough, mainly in the central and eastern half. These are typically the product of public sector housing development in the 1960s and are located amongst conventional low rise development. A further detailed description of these buildings is included in the preceding typology section of this report.

## Key issues

Tall buildings can play an important role in the character of an urban area. They speak of an intensity of function, creating a sense of importance and dominance. They also act as a physical landmark, aiding legibility and wayfinding. However, this suggests that tall buildings should be located in areas which warrant definition in this way and hence some locations will be better suited to landmark structures of this nature than others.

As is noted in the previous section, the council may also wish to consider defining a policy approach to the issue of tall buildings along the seafront outside the central area, particularly considering their appropriateness as landmarks or otherwise.

Finally, many of the public sector residential buildings in other parts of the Borough are expected to have a limited life span before either major refurbishment or redevelopment is required. In these instances, consideration may be given to whether they should be replaced by new buildings more in keeping with the wider character of the area.





# PARKING

## Key characteristics

Although the forms of parking vary considerably across the borough there are few areas which not significantly affected by it.

It has a major visual impact on the streets, spaces and gardens with large areas being taken up by cars but also has a noticeable impact on the design of the environment itself.

In higher residential areas it is very common for the main form of parking to be on-street, as gardens are too small to provide space for a car. However, moving to larger plots it is very common to see some or all of the garden laid out as hard standing for parking. It is only with the largest of plots where there is sufficient space to restore a balance of green space to hard surface.

The inclusion of parking in gardens not only reduces the amount of greenery, affecting biodiversity and water run-off, it also changes the relationship between the private and public realm as gates are rarely used and so the delineation of a front boundary hedge, wall or fence is lost. This can noticeably change the character of streets, making them feel much wider and more barren than previously.

Street greenery is also significantly affected by parking, with verges, verge hedges and street trees all potentially lost to either create on-street parking bays or even simply to provide cross-overs to enable people to access on-plot parking.

Later, post-war, developments have sought different ways to address the issue of parking in suburban areas. For housing built by the private sector this has often resulted in cul-de-sac development dominated by hard standing

and garage doors. Public sector housing has often grouped garages together into parking courts away from main routes and overlooking. Whilst both solutions have their problems, most modern developments in suburban areas continue to feature integrated garages as the principal solution.

## Key issues

Given that cars, or personal transport of some form, are likely to be a feature of our streets for some time to come, ways need to be established to minimise their impact on the design of the streets and spaces. This may involve guidance firstly to discourage or limit the conversion of gardens to parking and then perhaps to demonstrate how it can be done with minimal hard standing so as to retain as much greenery as possible.

Loss of street greenery to parking should be resisted and opportunities sought to re-introduce trees and greenery into spaces wherever possible.

For future development, the visual impact of parking should be a key concern, particularly the effect of including integrated garages within the ground floor of modern 'town-houses'. These deaden the ground floor, removing active frontage and diminishing the quality of the relationship between the public and private space.





# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

## Key characteristics

Southend is an extremely green Borough and benefits from both good quality street greenery and excellent parks. The key features include:

- Verge hedges, typically used in early inter-war areas, giving the street and exceptionally green feel;
- Grass verges, widely used in other areas of the Borough, although not commonly found in higher density areas due to pressure on street space;
- Street trees, found across the borough and ranging from large broad-leaf trees such as London Planes to smaller ornamental species;
- Large central reservations exist in a number of key routes through the borough as a legacy of former tram routes which were planted up when the tram lines were removed;
- Parks and gardens, including excellent award winning gardens;
- Escarpments in the western part of the Borough which feature a range of formal and semi-natural spaces and which boast an attractive range of trees; and
- Planting in private plots, particularly front gardens which has a very significant beneficial effect on the greening of the public realm.

## Key issues

As with any area, a key issue for the green infrastructure of Southend is the burden of upkeep and ongoing renewal. As a Borough which draws a significant part of its economy from being a visitor destination Southend has

been more willing than some boroughs to invest in parks and gardens and they continue to present a real asset. Away from the main public spaces the high levels of maintenance associated with verges, hedges and trees might seem harder to justify but is an integral part of the character of these areas.

The greenery within the public realm also plays a wider role in terms of adaptation to climate change and biodiversity and so has a much wider role in terms of the sustainability of the Borough. Large trees provide shade whilst verge hedges provide habitat and food supplies for wildlife and an element of sustainable urban drainage.

These hedges, like grass verges, are under threat of removal to free up space which can be used for parking. This approach should be strongly resisted and every opportunity sought to reinstate verges, hedges and street trees where they have been lost to ensure that the streets of the Borough are as well suited as possible in the face of climate change.

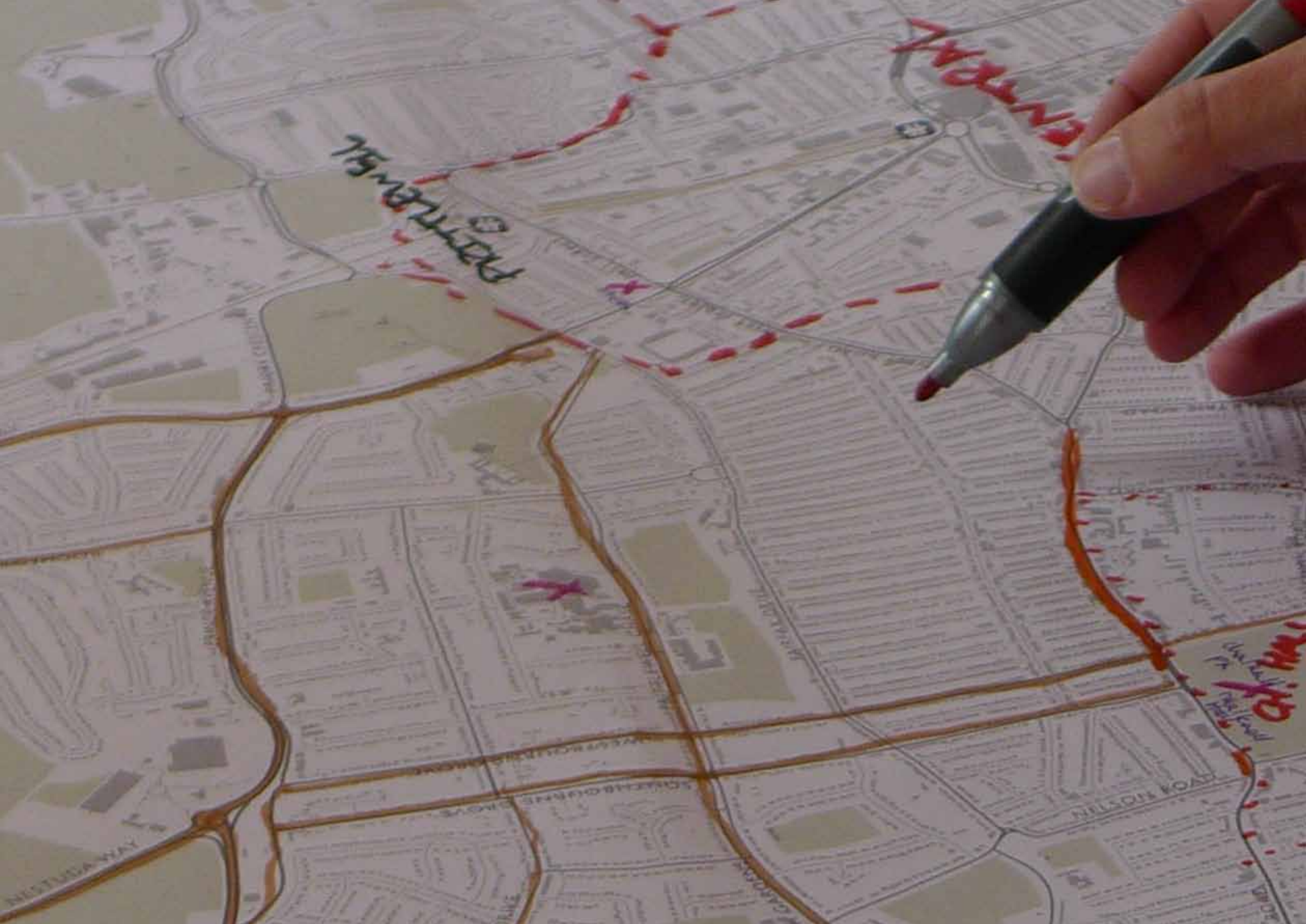
A notable distinction between the areas of private housing and those built by the public sector is also the lush quality of the front gardens in the private areas. As with street trees and verges, efforts could be made to assist communities to reintroduce greenery to their gardens, restoring the appearance and making gains in terms of climate change and habitat adaptation.















CONSULTATION



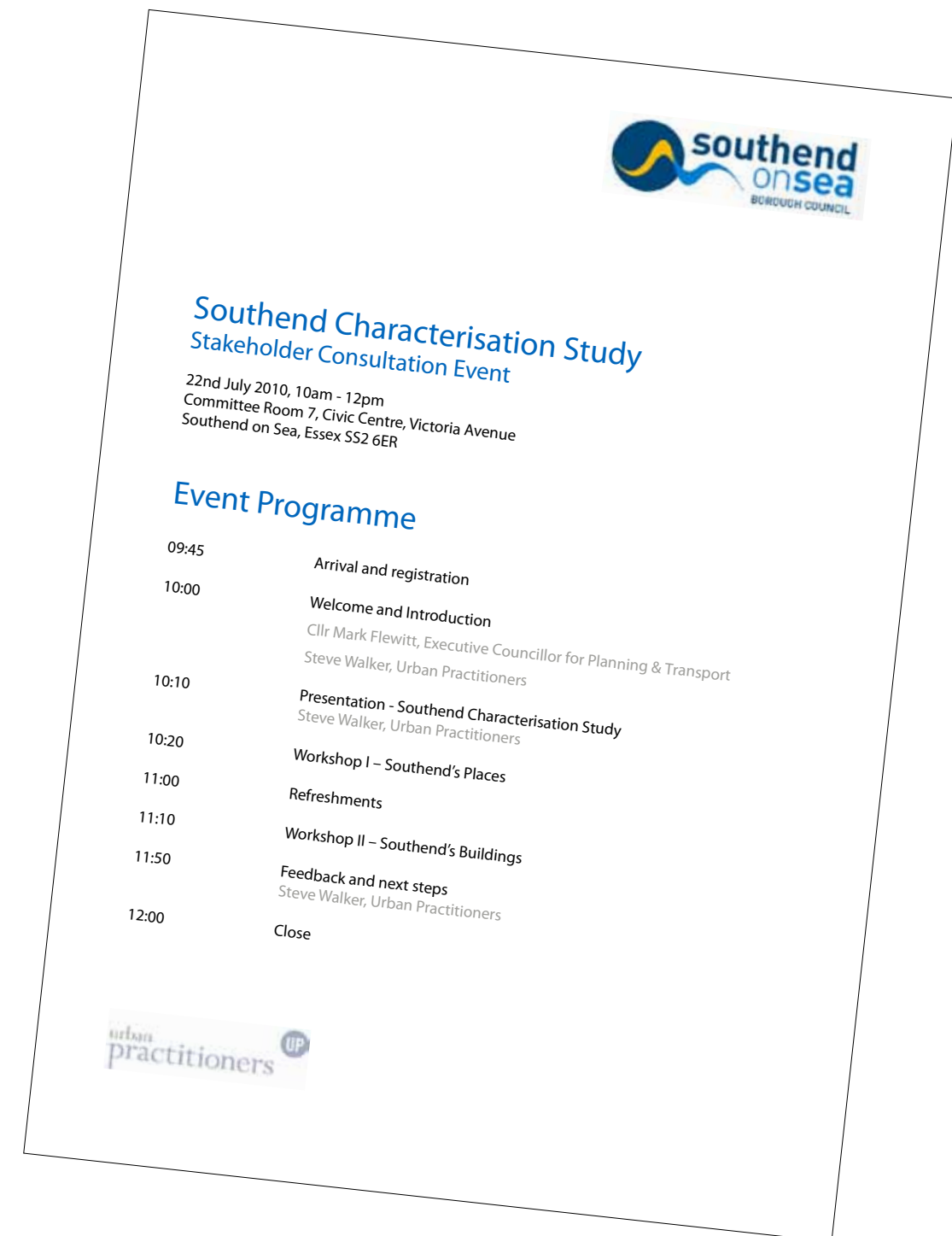
# INTRODUCTION

To test early the characterisation study methodology and build it upon local knowledge, Urban Practitioners held a stakeholder consultation event at the Civic Centre on Victoria Avenue. The workshop was well attended with approximately 40 attendees (the attendance list is reproduced overleaf).

Councillor Mark Flewitt introduced the event and was followed by a presentation by Steve Walker of Urban Practitioners. The event was split into two workshops. For the first workshop, participants were split into four groups for a discussion based around large

maps of the Borough. The second workshop invited participants to move freely and annotate worksheets on tables at the perimeter of the room.

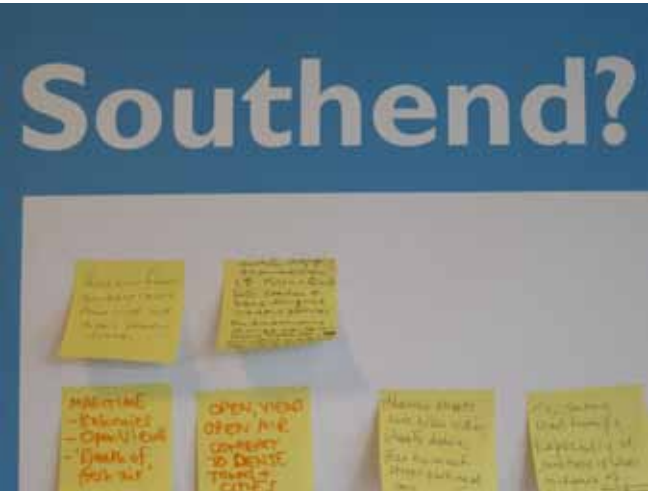
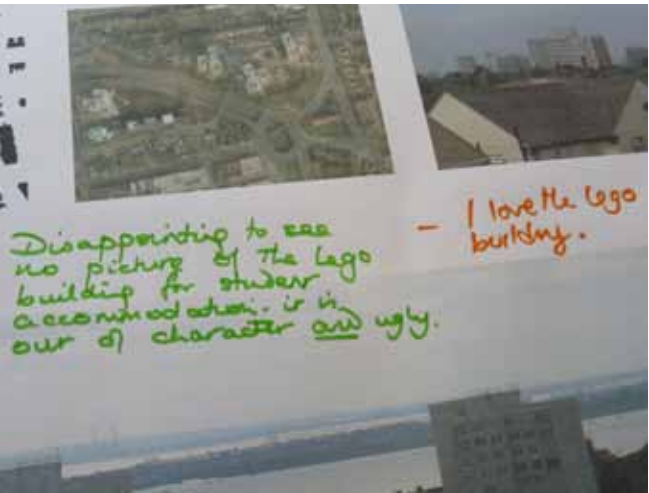
Throughout the event, participants were also asked to use post-it notes to record the key characteristics of Southend and attach these to a sheet on the back wall.





Workshop attendees

Barbara Armitage	Belfairs Residents	Jamie Lees	Renaissance Southend
Paul Beckerson	Leigh on Sea Town Council	Alistair Macdonald	Urban Practitioners
Keith Binnie	Urban Practitioners	Mehmet Mazhar	NAP Westborough
Ian Brown	Southend Borough Council	Tania Painton	Leigh on Sea Town Council
Tony Brown	Milton Conservation Society	Caroline Parker	Southend Borough Council
Viv Burdon	Southend Borough Council	Lee Ramsey	Southend Borough Council
W G Chesworth	East Milton / Queens Residents Association	Amy Roberts	Shoebury Society
Mark Churchward	Love Southend	Brian Sandford	Westborough Residents
Roger Coombs	Southend Society	Les Sawyer	
Eddie Cornish	West Leigh Residents Association	Brenda Smith	
Michael Dedman	Shoebury Society	John Sneyd	Southend District Pensioners Association
Andrew Dodgson		David Stansfield	SAEN
Peter Dolby	Leigh-on-Sea Crime Prevention Panel	Kiti Theobald	Southend Borough Council
Cllr Mark Flewitt	Southend Borough Council	Matthew Thomas	Renaissance Southend
Charlotte Galforg	Southend Borough Council	Giles Tofield	Herbert Grove Residents Group
Abbie Greenwood	Southend Borough Council	Steve Tomlin	Southend District Pensioners Association
Pamela Hauderdale	SAEN	Rita Wiess	Urban Practitioners
Derek Theobald	Southend Borough Council	Steve Walker	Chalkwell Residents Association
Tony Handfield	Leigh Society	Albert Wallace	Hedgehog Development
Sally Hayes	South Westcliff Community Group	George Webb	Hedgehog Development
Peter Hawkins	Chalkwell Residents Association	Peter Wislocki	South Essex Natural History Society
John Hendry		Patricia Wortley	





# WORKSHOP ONE

Workshop One followed a presentation of Urban Practitioners' Borough-wide analysis. This included highlighting the lack of consistency of the locations of some place names across the Borough on different maps.

Participants were asked to work in four different groups, of about ten people each, to mark the areas which make up the Borough of Southend on a large scale map. They were also asked to identify any key landmarks, routes and nodes.

The plans created by each group are presented here alongside the key findings.





# WORKSHOP ONE

## Key findings from Group One

Group One found it difficult to define Leigh-on-Sea and could not agree the boundary. Eastwood Parish is marked to the north of the Southend Arterial Road, but is not defined as inside or outside of Leigh. The Historic centre of Leigh is drawn and includes the area from the waterfront to the western half of Broadway.

Chalkwell is thought to be relatively small compared to neighbouring areas, encompassing Chalkwell Park and Chalkwell train station but not stretching far east or west. Westcliff is drawn as being east of Chalkwell Avenue but

also wrapping westwards around Chalkwell Park to Nelson Road before stretching north to either Prittlewell Chase or Fairfax Drive. There is uncertainty as to whether the area between these roads is in Westcliff or Prittlewell, which borders Westcliff to the north. Prittlewell extends north to Prince Avenue and is drawn as being from Westbourne Grove in the west to Prittlewell train station to the east.

The centre of Southend is seen to start at the London Road / Queensferry roundabout to the east and near Queensway to the west. North to south it starts at the waterfront and ends near Prittlewell train station.

Southchurch stretches from central Southend to Thorpe Hall Avenue and includes the whole north-south boundary of the Borough. Within Southchurch, Southchurch Village is drawn along Southchurch Road near the train station.

Thorpe Bay is drawn as being between Thorpe Hall Avenue and Maplin Way, although there is some confusion as to whether it stretches across the railway line, with the area to the north labelled 'Thorpe Bay (II)?'.

Shoebury is drawn as the whole area east of Maplin Way, with 'Shoebury Village' focused on High Street and the area south of the train station.





# WORKSHOP ONE

## Key findings from Group Two

Group two found it difficult to define the boundary of Leigh with confusion over Westcliff School being in Leigh rather than Westcliff. There was further uncertainty as to whether Eastwood is part of Leigh or a separate place. In general Leigh, including Leigh-on-Sea, was seen to stretch from the southern to northern boundary of the Borough west of Westcliff.

Southend Central is seen to be bounded by Milton Road to the west, Bournemouth Park Road to the east and to include Prittlewell train station to the north. Prittlewell itself is seen to

be the area immediately to the west and north of the station.

The boundary between Southchurch and Thorpe Bay is seen to be blurred, whilst Southchurch is considered to only stretch as far north as Central Avenue. This leaves an area north of Central Avenue which the group found difficult to name and left blank. The railway is viewed as a major barrier in Southchurch, Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness and has a significant impact in cutting areas off from each other.

Whilst Southchurch and Thorpe Bay are classified as the same north and south of the

railway line, Shoeburyness is split into North Shoebury and South Shoebury. There is further distinction in Shoeburyness with the garrison, New Ranges, Old Shoebury, Cambridge Town, and the 'Bird' and Painters Estate identified.





# WORKSHOP ONE

## Key findings from Group Three

Group three focused on the western side of the Borough and identified the blurred nature of boundaries between different areas. The group indicated that Leigh is often mis-used as a place-name and suggested the Southend Arterial Road is the absolute northernmost boundary for Leigh. Beyond this point, is Eastwood. Within the overall area of Leigh, there are a number of smaller sub-sets or neighbourhoods. For example, Belfairs in the vicinity of the secondary school and golf course of the same name, and “The Highlands” around Highlands Boulevard. The group indicated that the area south of

London Road is Leigh-on-Sea with the area south of the c2c railway line best described as Old Leigh. The exact edge between Leigh-on-Sea and Chalkwell is not distinct and the transition occurs roughly midway between the railway stations of the same name.

The group remarked that usage of place is inherently loaded and relates closely to the perception of different areas and relative prestige attached to them. For example, the popularity and wide extent of Leigh relates to positive perception of the area in terms of Census statistics, deprivation rankings, quality of schooling and property prices.

Moving east, Westcliff (without an ‘e’) defines a wide area including the distinctive terraces south of Fairfax Drive and the area around Hamlet Court Road. Areas become more specifically defined closer to the town centre with Milton occupying the area east of Westcliff, south of the London Road and north of the c2c railway line. Clifftown is associated with the streets south of the railway line and north of Western Esplanade centring on Prittlewell Square.

The group highlighted the seafront’s identity as a ‘gem’ and indicated the need for a tall buildings strategy for the seafront. The group emphasised that the seafront is defined by a

range of different characters. Moving from west to east, they defined the following sequence of seafront areas:

Old Leigh;  
Undercliff;  
Chalkwell;  
Cliffs Gardens (Western Esplanade);  
The Golden Mile;  
Eastern Esplanade;  
Thorpe Esplanade; and  
Shoeburyness





# WORKSHOP ONE

## Key findings from group four

Group four worked across the borough, but was more confident about the central and western areas than the eastern areas. The group was able to draw clear distinctions between most areas and was confident about the various areas of Leigh, Chakwell, Westcliff and the central area of Southend.

The group was less sure about other areas of the borough:

It did not specify a definitive boundary between Eastwood and Prittlewell;

It was not able to add any subdivision to the area of Southchurch, which varies significantly across its area;

There remained an undefined area on the northern side of the borough between Southchurch and Thorpe Bay;

The group was not clear about whether the area of Thorpe Bay extended north of the railway line; and

With the exception of the Garrison, the group was unclear about the detailed areas within Shoeburyness.





# WORKSHOP ONE





# WORKSHOP TWO

Workshop two followed a presentation which outlined the methodology used to classify the typology of character areas used in this study. Participants were asked to move freely around the room and annotate sheets arranged at the edge of the room dedicated to each typology. The sheets largely focused on photographs of buildings but also included aerial photography and figure ground plans.

The annotated sheets on each typology are reproduced here, along with a summary of the comments made.





# WORKSHOP TWO



## Residential - Free form - Open plan - High rise

- Mixed opinion on new 'lego' building;
- Need to protect vistas, particularly sea views;
- There is fear generated nowadays by high rise;
- Existing high rise buildings identified as ugly and designed by people that will never live in them;
- Need for better designed landscaped areas; and
- 'Don't get vertical community' - tall buildings lead to isolation.



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Mixed use - Sea front - Hotel / residential

- Poor quality materials and lack of detail
- Too chunky
- Imposition on the streetscape
- Dated - so what!
- Barrack like - and completely out of scale with others
- Out of scale - Industrial look (prison)
- Not in context - poor development
- Ugly roof extension - agree
- 'Office block'
- Extension out of character with original building
- Preserve me! - agree
- Need conserving properly
- This is awful - planners responsible should be sacked!
- Terrible mistake, too massive, too high - and in a Conservation Area too!
- Overscaled
- This building is too high and dominates the front
- Poor
- Group value
- Key seafront sites should be retained - seafront architecture - agree fully - landmark
- Poor copy of good concept - modern twist on seafront traditional towers that did not work!
- There was a pleasing house on this site - this building wears badly



# WORKSHOP TWO

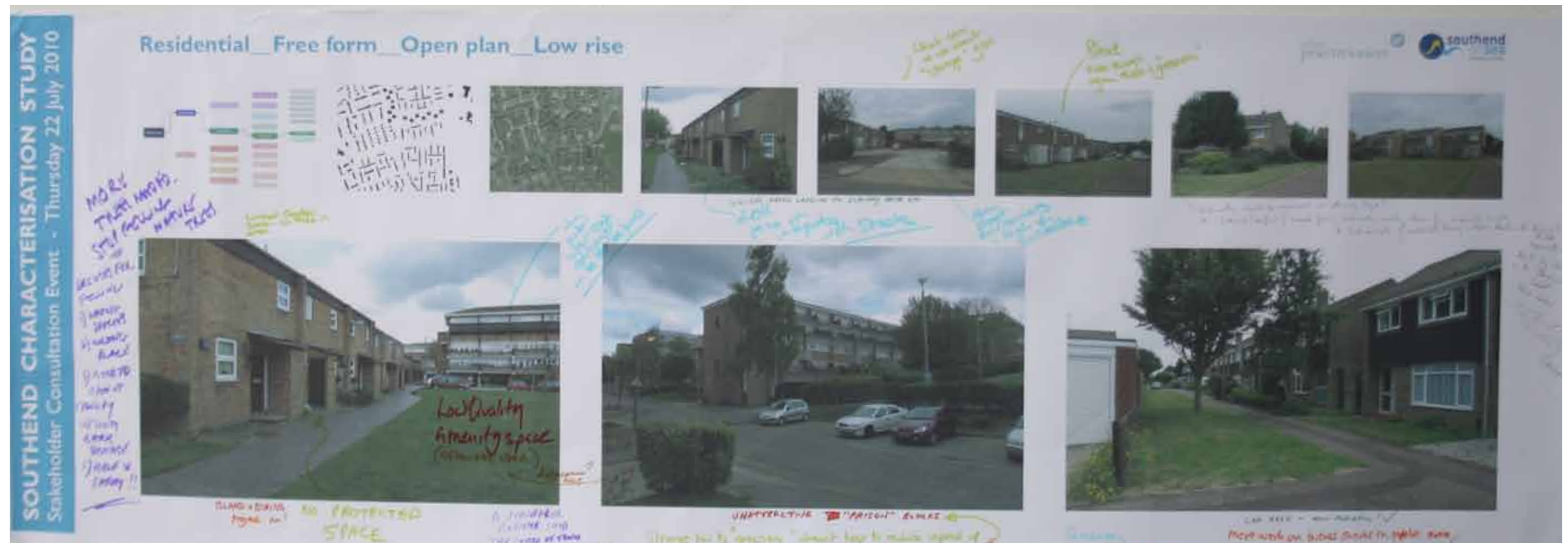


## Mixed use - Sea front - Leisure

- Unique but at odds with other neighbouring buildings
- Regency
- Lots of good buildings mixed in here (a few Georgian ones too)
- Hopefully City Beach will reduce the impact of cars on the sea front - how?
- Character lost except parapet
- Put the road underground
- Preserve all seafront towers (list!). Listed
- Landscaping needed
- Upper floors need protecting / hugely improving
- Fun (?!)
- Part of the character of Southend
- What a mess! - All those barriers



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Residential - Free form - Open plan - Low rise

- More trees needed - stop felling mature trees. Excuses for felling: 1) wrong species 2) wrong places 3) need to open up canopy 4) 'sooty bark' diseases 5) health and safety!
- Limited garden space - no pride in area
- Bland and boring - agree - no!
- No protected space
- Low quality amenity space (often not used)
- Different trees?
- Why put later roof editions - better before
- A newspaper reporter said this part of town was from a Soviet Russian film set!
- Unattractive "prison" blocks - strange how the greenery doesn't reduce the impact of it - agree
- Soulless areas leading to scruffy paths, etc.
- Do not face or integrate with the streets
- What can we do about storage gear
- Very poor environments - lack of surveillance
- Bleak, even though again there is "greenery"
- Greenery but boring design
- Car free - how peaceful!
- More work on bushes shrubs in public area would make a stunning change here
- Brick walling should be encouraged at planning stage! i.e Lodwick / Seafront / mixed fencing, brick walling - very poor for perimeter locations. A good example of controlled planning is Ness Road on the Admirals Estate Freemantle etc. built by 'Hardys' in the seventies. Great more needed.



# WORKSHOP TWO



### Residential - Free form - Cul-de-sac

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cul-de-sacs on Astronauts Estate make navigation very difficult - a chaotic legacy</li> <li>• Insert trees please - agree</li> <li>• Wall presents soul-less barrier - agree - softened by trees/planting</li> <li>• Too small plot sizes for detached</li> <li>• Good area for kids to play</li> <li>• Lack of legibility</li> <li>• Dominant garage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overly planned streets</li> <li>• No context 'anywhereville'</li> <li>• Crowded</li> <li>• Avoid this sort of crowding</li> <li>• Walls total barrier but understand need for defensible space - other ways to do it though</li> <li>• Aargh - ruins street scene</li> <li>• Green landscaping required - boring!</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public area a bit soulless - road too dominant</li> <li>• Lacking trees</li> <li>• Runway construction reduces opportunity for street tree planting</li> <li>• Hard standing drainage</li> <li>• Bland streetscape</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Mixed use - Centres - Secondary

- Preserve detail
- Pity you can't restore original fronts - would actually be commercially successful
- Love this detailing
- Flower boxes (arrow to fascia)
- Always look up from the shop in traditional centres
- All parking areas need length demarcation
- Perfect for shared space
- Interesting
- Poor canopies spoil architecture
- Bland and boring
- Awful
- Shame
- Why all these bollards?
- Love the first/second floors - if it didn't use electricity wastefully I would love to see uplighting
- Attractive use of frontage
- Egress on to pavements - good if pavements wide enough



# WORKSHOP TWO

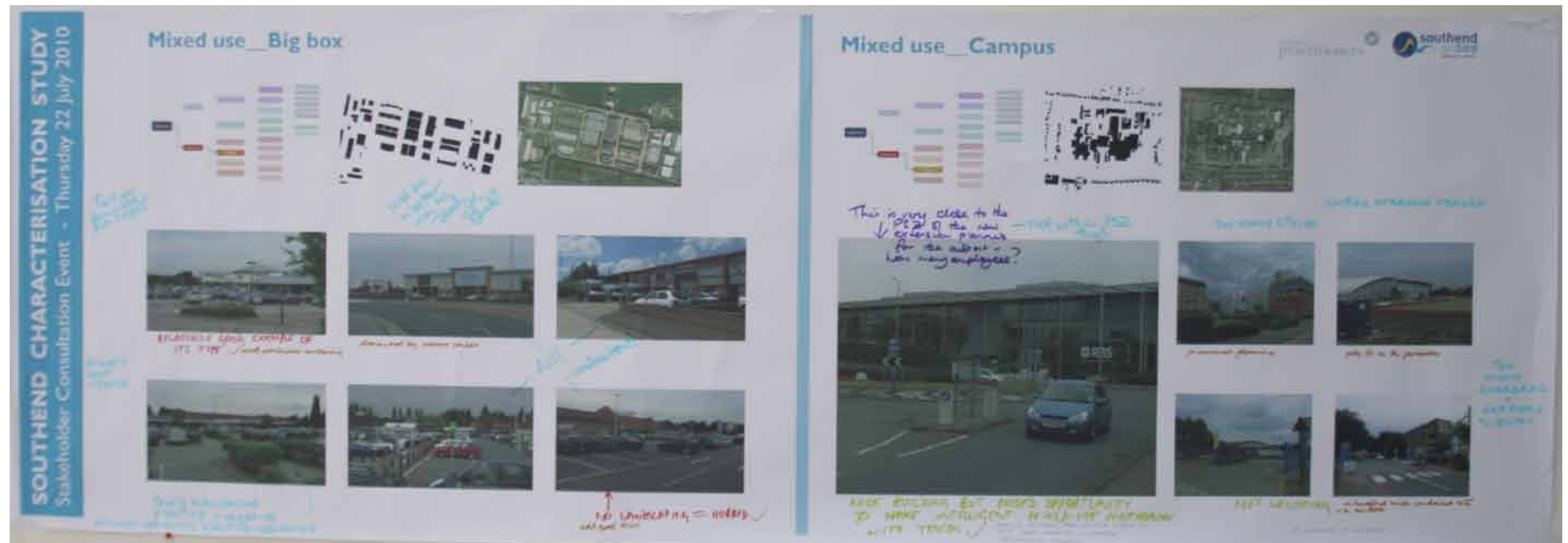


## Mixed use - Centres - Tertiary

- Individual + adds variety
- Original shopfronts should continue to be retained + reinstated = positive
- Good shop sign
- Maintain in-keeping property
- Poor UPVC
- Limit clutter from adverts
- Poor canopy type
- Brash shop sign
- Interesting vista through
- Dormers out of character
- Needs to be discouraged!
- Improve shop signs + shop fronts
- Poor shop front
- Regenerating ground floor units and shopfronts would uplift the area
- Tacky shop sign
- Why allow parking on pathways and access to shops?
- Nice canopy style
- Why only allow parking for 1 hour? Not long enough time to shop/coffee or lunch. 2 hours would encourage local shopping away from town



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Mixed use - Big box

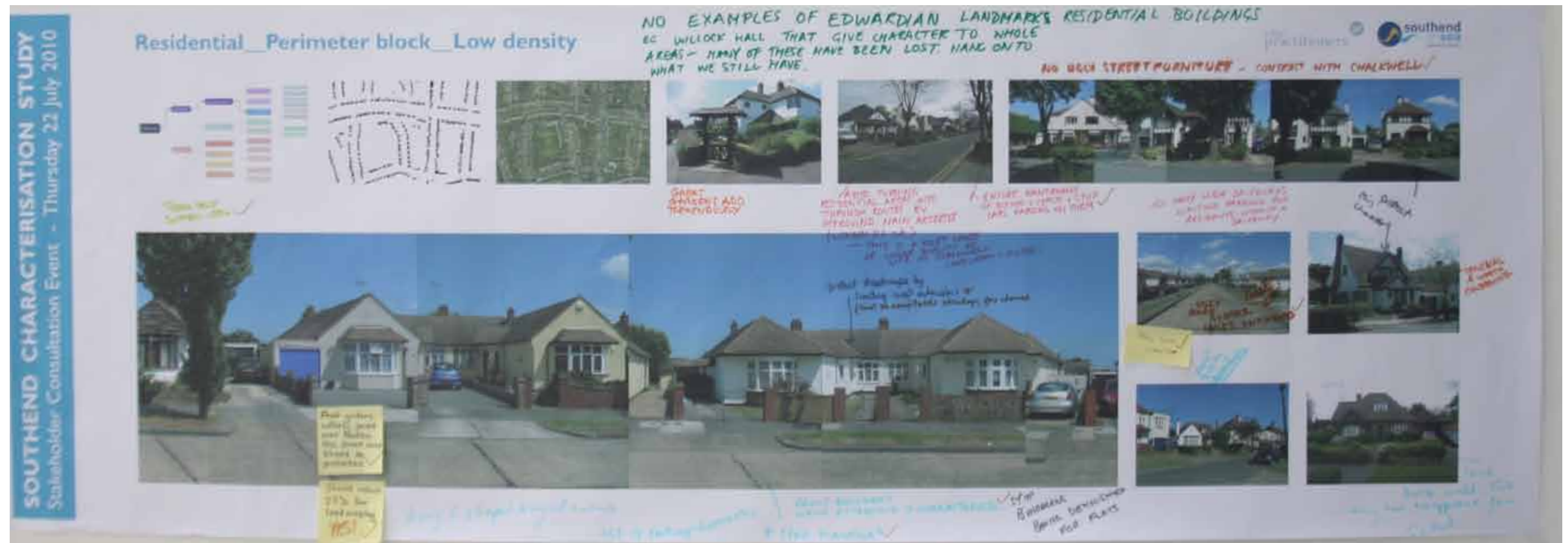
- Parking dominates frontages
- Designs lack interest
- Relatively good example of its type - good perimeter greening
- Dominated by access routes
- Poorly maintained planting = negative. Although generally planting welcomed
- Dull - unadventurous
- No landscape = horrid. Add more trees

## Mixed use - Campus

- Too many styles
- Unified approach needed
- Piecemeal planning
- Pity its on the perimeter
- Too much guardrails and barriers to entry
- Not welcoming
- Intensified single condensed site a mistake
- A complete mish-mash!
- Nice building but missed opportunity to make intelligent mixed-use masterplan with Tesco's
- Should provide more free parking for staff to stop them parking in nearby residential streets
- This is very close to the PS2 of the new extension planned for the airport - how many employees? - Not within PS2 though



# WORKSHOP TWO

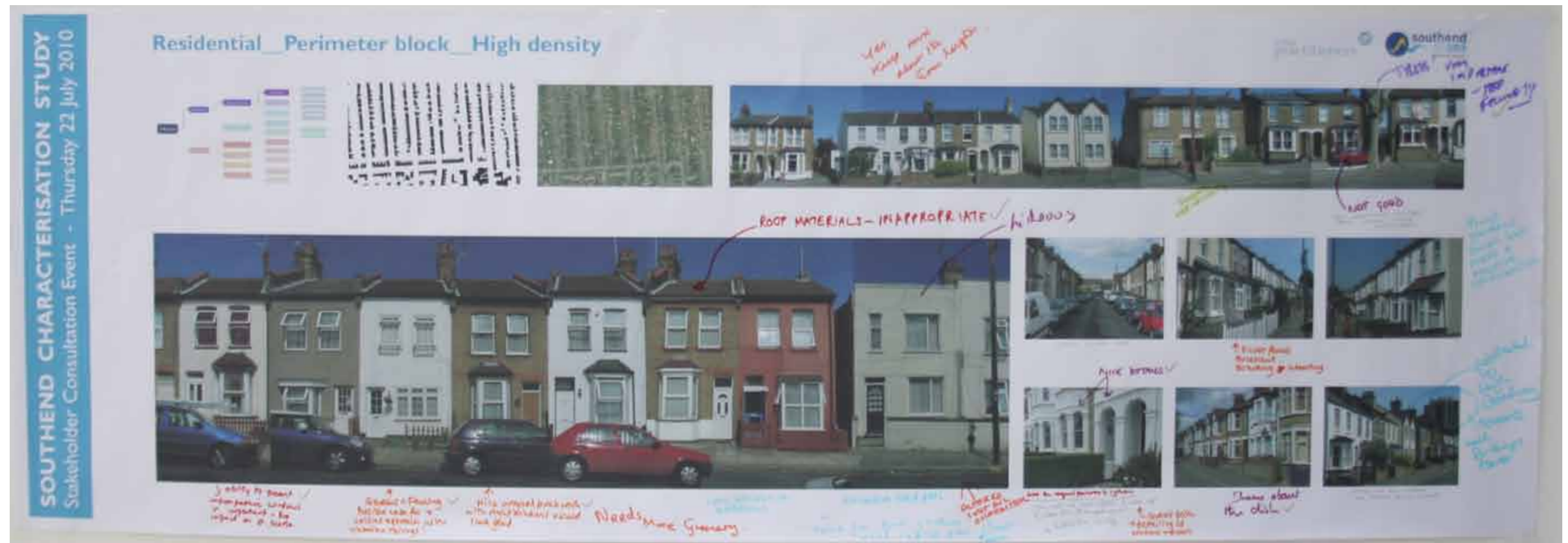


## Residential - Perimeter block - Low density

- Trees help soften the view
- Front gardens entirely paved over hardens the street scene – should be prohibited
- Should retain 25% (of front gardens) for landscaping
- Boring L shaped bungalows – Off street parking dominates
- Tree planting?
- Great gardens add tremendously
- No examples of Edwardian landmarks e.g. Willock Hall that give character to whole areas – many of these have been lost. Hang onto what we still have left.
- No ugly street furniture – contrasts with Chalkwell
- Avoid turning residential areas into through routes by improving main arteries (London Road etc.) – This is a root cause of lower quality of life in Chalkwell (and Leigh and Milton)
- Ensure maintenance of bushes and verges and stop car parking on them
- Too many wide driveways limiting parking for residents without a driveway
- Protect this character
- Protects streetscape by limiting roof extensions, or find an acceptable strategy for change
- Stop bungalows being demolished for flats
- More trees wanted
- Ugly road surface looks unfinished
- Poor quality extension
- Local brick wall, too many have disappeared from Southend
- Unusual (building) worth conserving



# WORKSHOP TWO

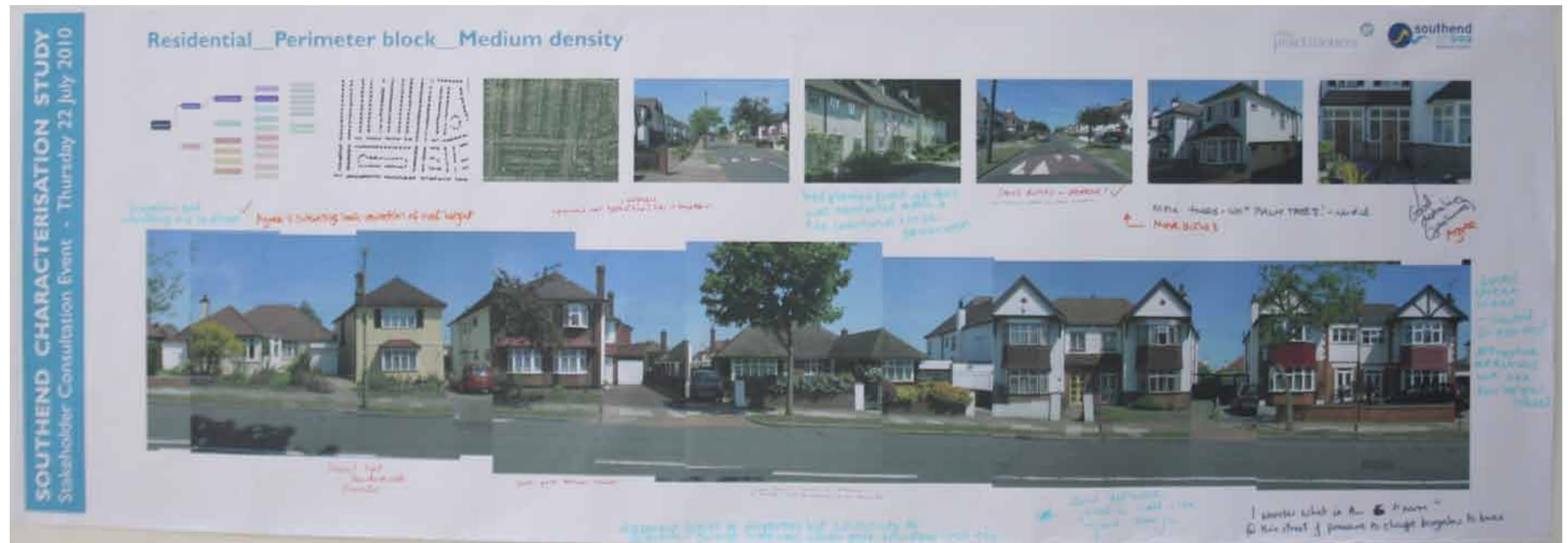


## Residential - Perimeter block - High density

- Ability to prevent unsympathetic windows very important – big impact on streetscene
- Gardens and fencing possible case for a unified approach with Victorian railings
- Nice original brickwork with right windows would look good
- Needs more greenery
- UPVC attractive additions
- Attractive tiled path
- Cared for front gardens would improve plus street trees
- Altered (building) lost all character – hideous
- Roof material – inappropriate
- Keep resi about the same height
- Love the angled features and rhythm – nice details – great path and detailing of windows and doors (building frontage)
- Why can't we replace all same type of windows when old are past repair
- Nothing to like here (streetscene)
- Shame about the dish (satellite)
- Attractive row, marred by hideous block behind
- (Tall building) detrimental to Leigh Broadway – no more tall buildings here
- Picket fence excellent, boarding interesting
- Front gardens are small but make a positive contribution
- Trees! Very important – stop felling!!
- Not good (parking on front garden) – but where else can they park, yellow lines everywhere
- Gardens add individuality



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Residential - Perimeter block - Medium density

- Bungalows add interesting mix to street - Agree very interesting look variation of roof height
- Original light standards adds character
- Good gaps between houses
- Consistent roof type and materials (hip) ties it together
- Different scales of properties but continuity of character through materials, window style, boundary walls, etc.
- Well planted front gardens, well maintained make a positive contribution and to be encouraged
- Speed bumps – horror. Long straight roads encourage speeding
- More trees – not palm trees! – needed
- More bushes
- Good detailing features (building front entrance) – agree
- Small street trees – limited shade etc? – Attractive additions but opp. for larger trees?
- I wonder what is the 'norm' for this street if pressure to change bungalow to house
- Semi detached joined on hall side – a good design
- Lower density housing is attractive and provides spaces for landscaping and car parking etc.



# WORKSHOP TWO



## Mixed use - Centres - Primary

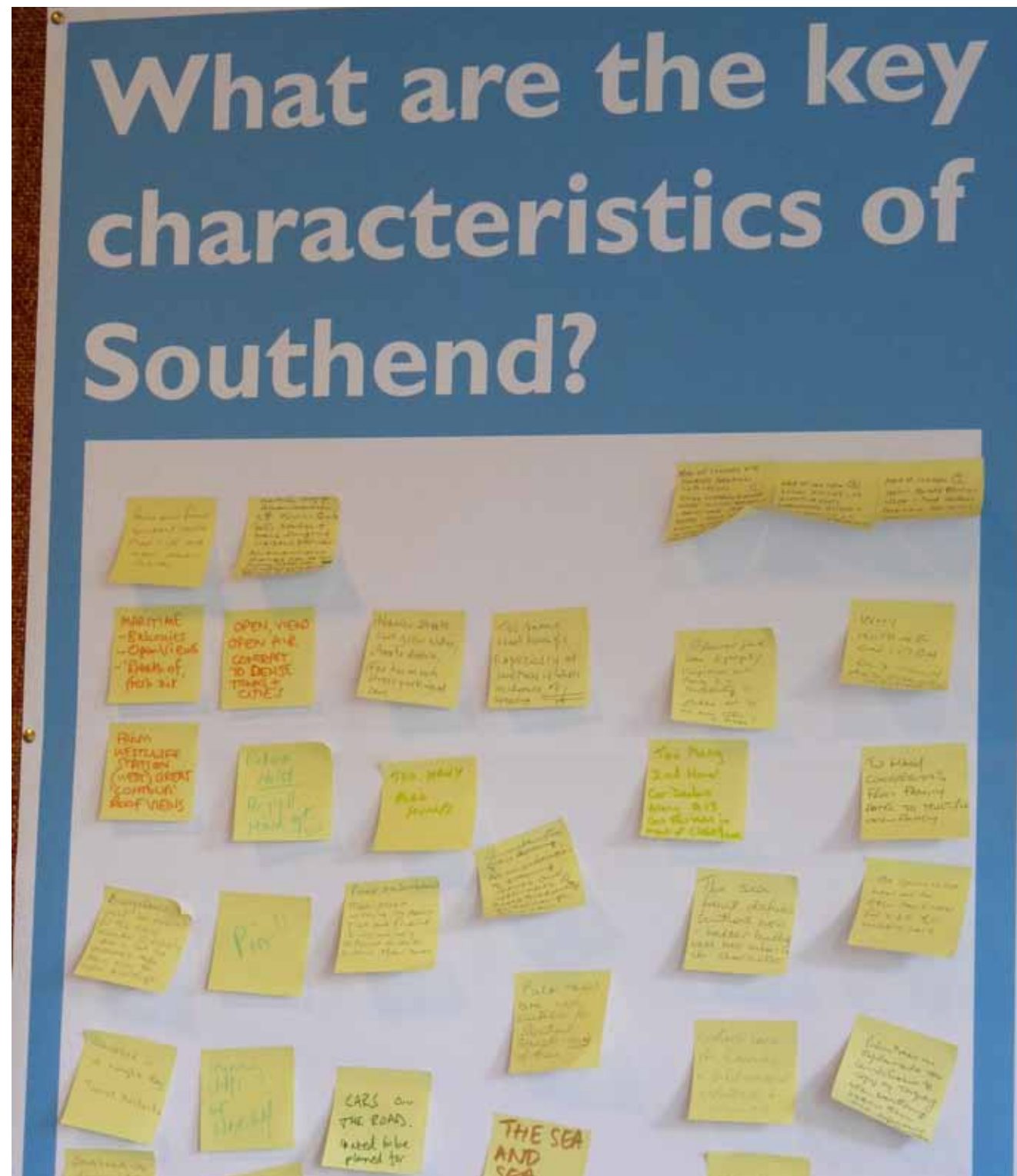
- Ugly mix of styles
- Upper levels of shops with great character should be enhanced and protected
- Demolish and redesign top part
- Redundant 1960/1970 blocks should be pulled down - regeneration
- Come to beautiful Basildon-On-Sea
- Awful in every degree (shops and office building)
- Uninteresting building
- Moor greenery, it soothes the atmosphere and calms the shoppers and young people
- Dug up three times - and still looks grey - over patterned paving - poor landscaping - seriously ugly at a key part of town - bad 70s infill destroys continuity
- Nice - preserve (upper level of Hog's head)
- Dozens of mature trees dug up for this? (High Street landscaping) - Harsh manmade environment, no shade/softness
- Demolish all tower blocks as they create wind tunnels which are not pedestrian friendly
- Interesting architecture needs preserving - but ugly (shop) fascias!







# KEY CHARACTERISTICS COMMENTS



The key characteristics of the Borough as recorded on post-it notes during the consultation event were:

- Varied seven mile seafront;
- Too many road humps, especially at junctions where no chance of speeding;
- Too many second hand car dealers along A13, cars parked in front of shops;
- Area of concern one with planning permission implications - Milton, Victoria and Bursar Wards - multiple deprivation - bedsit land - Private rented - many inappropriate HMOs - overcrowding - lack of open spaces for children - reduced life chances and health;
- Area of concern two social housing - eg. quanto (sic) in flats, Woodgrange Estate - very high density and very small areas of recreation - known to result in anti-social behaviour;
- Area of concern three 1800's - pre war housing stock - poor garden provision for young families;
- Complete lack of planning and enforcement expertise and continuity;
- Stunning cliffs at Westcliff;
- Planners giving way to people/companies with money and contributing to 'public-art' is no more than a bribe;
- Narrow streets, cars grew wider, streets didn't;
- Far too much street parking of cars;
- Character change in accommodation. An enormous change now to new Palace Hotel, etc. but where is the certainty that will be the way forward in reality?
- Paved over gardens cause flood risk and impair street-scene;
- From Westcliff Station (west) great 'contour' roof views;
- Open views and open air contrast to dense towns and cities;
- Maritime - balconies, open views, 'breath of fresh air';
- Palace Hotel - Argyll House art deco
- Too many road humps;
- Old garages are all too often too small for size of modern cars;
- Bungalows will be needed for the rising number of elderly - don't let the planners take them over for higher buildings;
- Pier!!
- Protect all bungalows, older people wishing to downsize are finding it increasingly hard in their area;
- Characteristics showing no consideration of greening studies and application of Essex biodiversity guidelines for planning;
- Palm trees are not suitable for Southend streets - any of them;
- The sea front defines Southend now - taller buildings will not enhance its charcater;
- Palm trees on Esplanade too ambitious to copy Torquay when weathering batters them they are an expensive mistake;
- Southend is a single day tourist destination;



- Southend was designed before the motor car;
- Sea views add £50,00 to house value;
- Mixed character and mix mash identity. Character used to be more distinct;
- Tree lined streets - All had them when built (Victorian anyway!);
- Residential roads are too narrow for today's larger vehicles;
- Enormous recent rise in paved front gardens to detriment of run off and less habitat;
- Southend has great history of horticulture and public displays created by its own nurseries;
- The sea and sea views - don't block them (like 'nirvana');
- Cars on the road - need to be planned for;
- Lots of buildings demolished in the 60's and 70's that should have been retained;
- The river and marine activity; and
- Would have liked to see you before we got less good buildings and more bad ones!



