

ROMFORD
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
JULY 2025



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ROMFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1.0 Introduction



1.0 Introduction

This section provides information about what conservation area designation means and its implications for development. It also gives an overview of the Romford Conservation Area, sets out the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) and outlines the consultation process that has been undertaken to prepare it.

1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is defined as an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'⁰¹

Designation of a conservation area recognises the unique quality of the heritage of that area as a whole. This quality is derived not only from individual buildings but also other features, including (but not limited to) topography, grain, materials, thoroughfares, views, open spaces and landscape. These all contribute to the historic character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive local identity and sense of place.

The extent to which a building, or group of buildings or structures, positively shapes the character of a conservation area is derived from its exterior – principally those elevations which are street-facing but also side and rear elevations, the integrity of its historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Open spaces, whether they are public or private, green or hard landscaped, can all contribute to the special interest of an area. Furthermore, the spaces between buildings, such as alleys, streets, paths and yards, all contribute to a conservation area's appearance and character.

1.2 What Does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

The aim of conservation area designation is to preserve or enhance the character and appearance which makes the area special. To ensure this, changes to the external appearance of buildings in a conservation area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority, as certain permitted development rights are curtailed. For example, full or substantial demolition of a building will require planning permission and works to trees within conservation areas must be notified to the Local Planning Authority in advance. There are often further restrictions in place in conservation areas through Article 4 directions, which remove certain permitted development rights.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), conservation areas are designated heritage assets, and their conservation is to be given great weight when determining planning applications.⁰² Further details can be found in [Section 6](#).

The 2016-2030 Havering Local Plan (adopted in 2021) includes Policy 28, Heritage Assets, which sets out the Council's approach to development impacting heritage assets, including conservation areas and their settings.

1.3 Romford Conservation Area

The Romford Conservation Area is one of 11 conservation areas in the London Borough of Havering, each distinctly individual in character and representing a variety of the surviving areas from different periods of the borough's past. It was designated in 1968.

Romford is a historic market town northeast of London with origins dating to initial Roman settlement. It was granted its first Market Charter in 1247, when its tradition of commerce officially began; the relocation of its church to the north side of the marketplace in the early 15th century cemented the importance of the market crossroads as Romford's social and economic heart.

This importance is reflected in the conservation area's historic buildings, erected over the centuries to accommodate local trade and industry, as well as in its street plan, which remains centred upon the crossroads of Market Place, High Street, North Street and South Street. Modern redevelopment from the mid-20th century onward has eroded the character of the area to a degree; this and ongoing development pressures have resulted in the conservation area's placement on Historic England's register for Heritage at Risk. However, its special interest as a historic commercial centre of high local importance remains clearly legible.

⁰¹ Section 69(1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

⁰² *National Planning Policy Framework (2023)*

1.0 Introduction

1.4 Conservation Area Boundary

1.4.1 Boundary Review

Understanding or appreciation of what is special about an area can change over time. Therefore it is important to review and take stock of the boundaries and character of a conservation area at intervals to ensure that the reasons for its designation are still relevant and evident, and that the proper management of change is in place.

A review of the boundary alongside any accompanying guidance and assessments should generally take place every five to ten years or in response to a notable change (positive or negative), including changes in policy or legislation. Until the present review (2025), there had been no changes made to the boundary of the conservation area since 1968.

The present-day boundary encompasses the historic buildings and the ancient crossroads at the centre of Romford where the Market Place, the High Street, North Street and South Street meet.

Following review of the 2008 conservation area appraisal, a subsequent conservation area site inspection undertaken in September 2024 and initial stakeholder consultation, the following extensions to the original boundary of the conservation area have been made. In general, the full plots of buildings within the boundary along Market Place, High Street, North Street and South Street are now included and the boundary extended southward to include the pedestrianised eastern section of South Street to its intersection with Eastern Road and Romford Train Station.

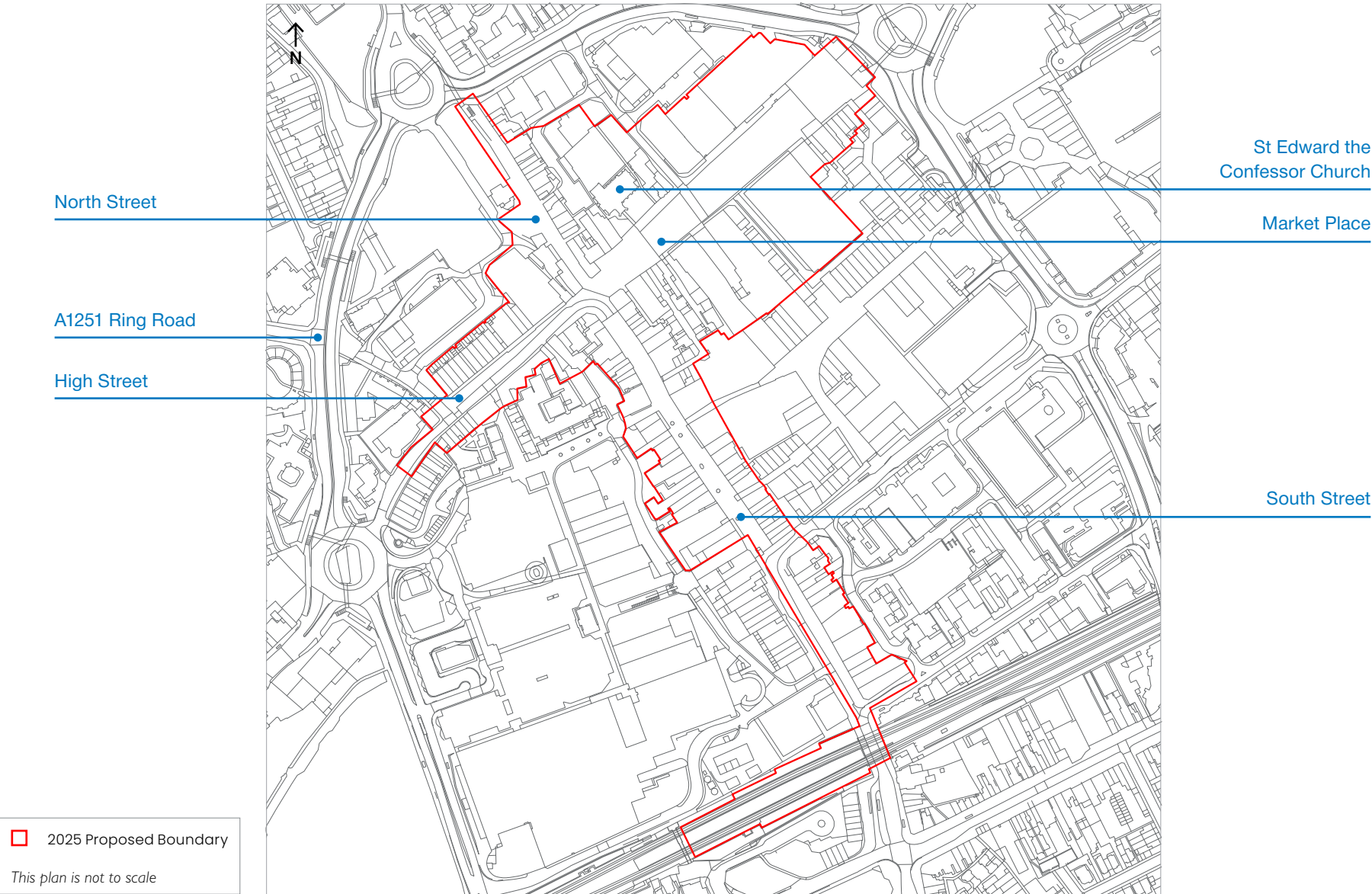
There are a few instances at the fringes of the conservation area where it was not considered appropriate to include full building plots. These include the recent redevelopment along the eastern side of North Street at its northern end, which comprises starkly modern massing and has fully eroded historic plot boundaries. The late-20th century Salvation Army Church along the north side of the High Street at the western end of the conservation area is also not proposed for inclusion due to its lack of historic and architectural relationship with the conservation area, and as it is largely concealed from views from within the conservation area by the Woolpack public house building, which it is recessed behind.

The boundary of the Conservation Area has been extended along its southeastern section, south of Market Place. This extension aims to incorporate the early-to-mid 20th-century shops and department stores within the conservation area. Careful consideration has been exercised in this expansion to include only those buildings that reflect the architectural character of the area. Consequently, the buildings comprising the majority of the Liberty Shopping Centre have been excluded from this expansion. The new boundary is established where the earlier shopping structures meet the Liberty Centre. It is noted that the post-war buildings along this side of the Market Place constitute an opportunity for enhancement, however their inclusion is justified on the grounds of the important frontage they provide to the Market Place, their appropriate scale, some architectural interest and their continued retail use.

It is noted that the scale and materiality of the modern Romford Shopping Hall complex and recent hotel redevelopment along the north side of Market Place are also incongruous to the architectural and historic character of the conservation area; however, these are included within the boundary due to their key position fronting the conservation area's defining and most important historic open space.

These extensions are reflected on the Romford Conservation Area Boundary map on the following page.

1.0 Introduction



Romford Conservation Area Boundary Map

1.0 Introduction

1.5 Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Understanding the character and significance of conservation areas is essential for managing change within them. It is therefore a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that all Local Planning Authorities ‘*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*’ of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, and that conservation areas are periodically reviewed.

These proposals are normally presented in the form of a CAAMP, which defines and documents the special interest of a conservation area (see [Section 2](#)), analyses the characteristics that make it special (see [Sections 3 and 4](#)), its condition (see [Section 5](#)) and sets out a plan for managing change to ensure its ongoing protection and enhancement (see [Section 6](#)).

This CAAMP has been prepared in line with current best practice guidance published by Historic England, the government’s heritage advisor and the public body which manages the care and protection of the nation’s historic environment.

This document is intended to be comprehensive; however the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that the element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. The protocols and guidance provided in [Section 6](#) are applicable in every instance.

The assessments which provide the baseline information for this CAAMP have been carried out using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the Romford Conservation Area.

1.6 Consultation and Engagement

It is a statutory requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that conservation area guidance produced by or on behalf of the Local Planning Authority be subject to public consultation, and for the Local Planning Authority to have regard of the views expressed by consultees.

Initial consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders, including Historic England, members of the Romford Civic Society and the London Borough of Havering Planning Team, at early stages of the CAAMP drafting process to raise awareness of the conservation area review, utilise local understanding of the area’s special interest and gather feedback on opportunities for enhancing this special interest and on the proposed conservation area boundary.

A draft of this CAAMP underwent public consultation from 28th April to 9th June 2025 including a public event. Comments received from this consultation have been incorporated into the final CAAMP as appropriate.

2.0 Summary of Special Interest



2.0 Summary of Special Interest

Romford's special interest is drawn from its ancient crossroads and the historic buildings associated with its position as a commercial trading post, which has been in consistent use since at least the medieval period to the present day.

Special interest is also drawn from the existence of a group of high-quality historic buildings at the western end of Market Place, some of which are listed. These focus on the parish church while also including buildings such as Church House, No.7 Market Place, The Golden Lion Inn, the Lamb Inn and a series of early 20th century bank buildings. This group contributes substantial historic and architectural character to the townscape, visible in part from each of the crossroads' principal streets.

Special interest is also drawn from the representation of the evolving commercial shopping provision in Romford, originating from the historic market on Market Place which formed the crux of Romford's social and economic development, extending through the 20th century. Medieval burgage plots which remain legible in part along the southern side of Market Place and on the High Street add to the appreciation of the area's medieval past.

Victorian industrial and commercial prosperity is represented not only through the rebuilt parish church, but also through the surviving brewery buildings and public houses that were so integral to Romford's economy, mostly concentrated on the High Street. The arrival of the railway at the beginning of the Victorian period served as the stimulus for this growth and prosperity. The importance of the railway continued into the 20th century, especially the inter-war and post-war periods, which saw Romford increasingly becoming the social and commercial centre of the wider area.



View of Market Place, westwards.



View across St Edward the Confessor front churchyard, looking southwest.



View of The Woolpack on the High Street.

2.0 Summary of Special Interest

The Quadrant Arcade remains one of the more prominent signifiers of Romford's commercial development in the Inter-war period, as does accompanying 1930s development along South Street. Architectural detail survives in places such as at roof level, where terraces of commercial plots are appreciable.

1960s arcades similarly represent the continuously evolving commercial offer of Romford's centre.



View east along the High Street. Romford Brewery buildings and The White Hart (The Bitter End) are visible to the right.



View from South Street of the crossroads, the White Lion visible to the centre left, and Lloyds Bank to the centre right.



View of Lloyds Bank, with the church spire of St Edward the Confessor visible to the far right.



View of South Street, looking north. The Quadrant Arcade is prominent on the right.

3.0 Summary of Historic Development



3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.1 Timeline

The following offers a summary of Romford's historic development.

- Settlement originates where the Colchester to London Roman Road forded the River Rom.
- 1247**
A Market Charter was granted, and a town grew up around the common ground beside the Great Essex Road.
- 1410**
Chapel dedicated to St Edward the Confessor built on the Market Place.
- 1465**
Royal Charter formed the liberty of Havering.
- 1670**
c.323 houses formed a linear town around the Market Place and High Street.
- 1709**
A brewery was established behind the Star Inn, the forerunner to the prosperous Ind Coope & Sons Brewery.
- 1839**
The railway arrives in Romford.
- 1849**
The parish church, St Edward the Confessor, is rebuilt.
- 1894**
Romford Urban District Council formed.
- 1937**
The Municipal Borough of Romford formed following rapid suburban expansion and redevelopment of the town centre.

1944

Romford heavily bombed during WWII, including the parish church.

1965

London Borough of Havering formed, incorporating Romford.

1960s-70s

Radical replanning of Romford erodes a large part of the historic town centre, with the ring road built 1970, truncating the market town crossroads.

1972

The Liberty Shopping Centre was completed, replacing historic townscape southwest of the crossroads

1993

Ind Coope & Sons Brewery was closed and demolished, replaced by a shopping centre called The Brewery to the southwest of the crossroads

2006

Tollgate House built at the western end of Market Place

2013

Romford Shopping Hall completed



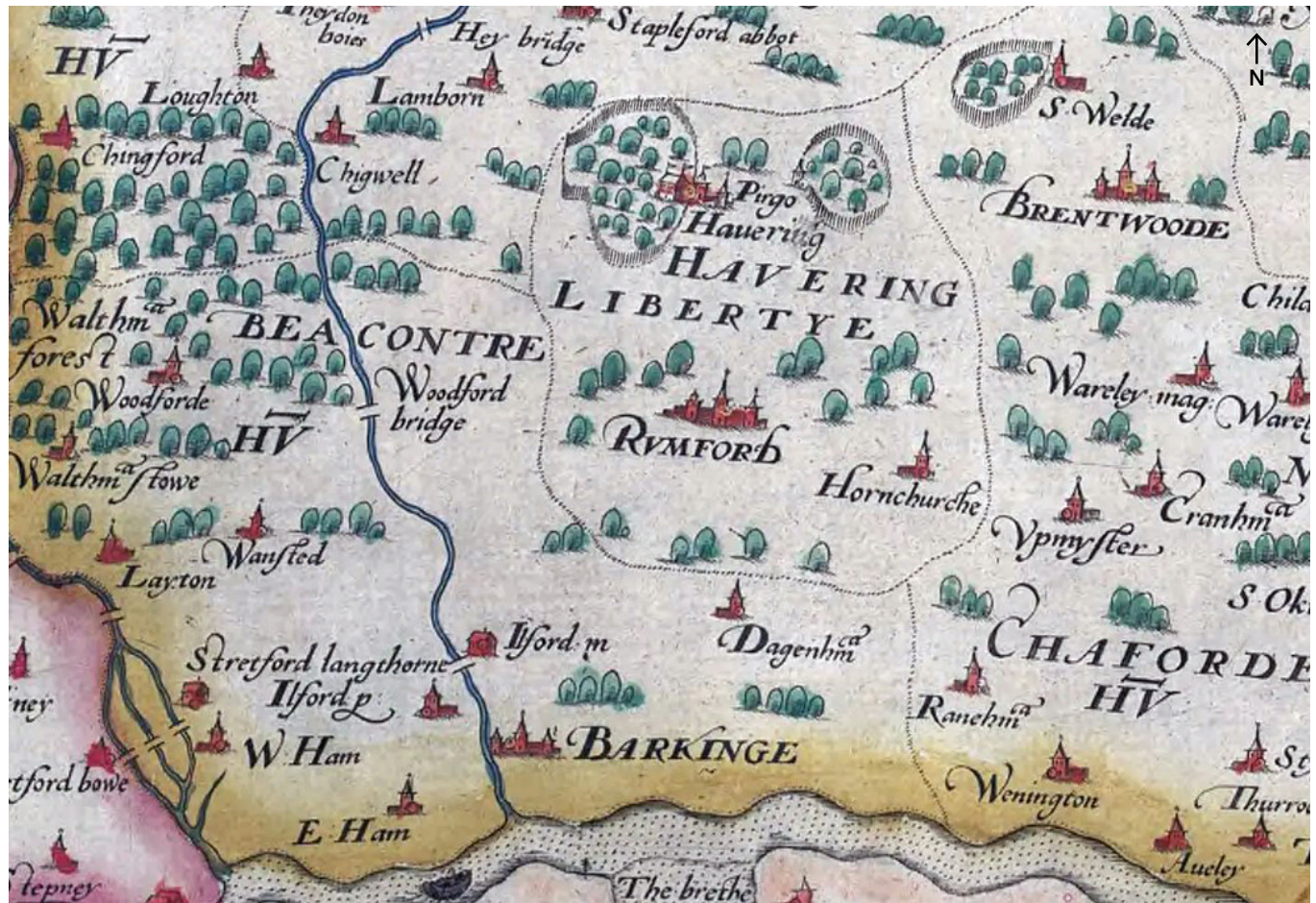
A view of Market Place in 1898, looking west. The old Bull Inn is visible to the far left, the church spire to the right. (Havering Libraries Local Studies)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.2 Early Development

The settlement of Rumford (later Romford) grew up where the River Rum (or Rom) crossed the Roman road from London to Colchester. It grew into a natural trading post before the city of London, with a market held on the common ground straddling what had become known as the Great Essex Road, known today as Market Place. In 1247 Romford was granted a Royal Charter to hold a weekly market, and another to hold annual fairs in 1250. Its position as a principal trading centre between Essex and London was by this point firmly established.

A substantial town grew up along the market core, buildings lining the Market Place and High Street. The chapel of St Edward's was built on The Market Place in 1410. A Royal Charter of 1465 formed the liberty of Havering, independent of the County of Essex and governed from a courthouse in the Market Place. By the 1600s Romford was being described as the 'great market town for corn and cattle', with an estimated 323 houses by 1670.



Extract of Christopher Saxon's map of Essex, 1579 . One of the earliest maps recording Romford, labelled here as "Rumford". Copyright: British Library

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.3 Romford in the 18th Century

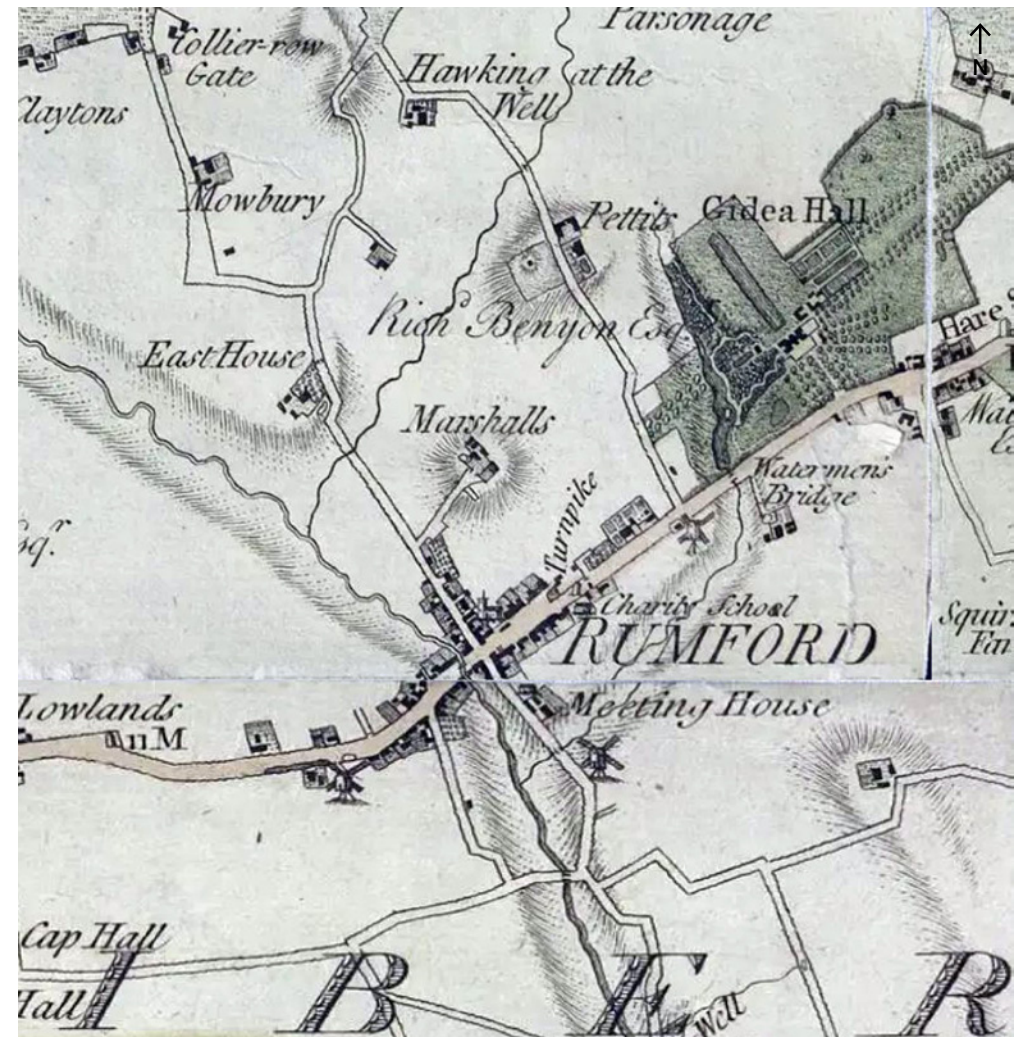
The plan form of the town continued to be principally linear by the start of the 18th century, formed of narrow burgage plots along either side of Market Place and the High Street. Inns and similar premises dominated, catering to the high volume of trader traffic, each of which had arched passageways leading to long rear service yards. Of 22 pubs recorded in 1762, three surviving today are recorded: the King's Head on Market Place; the Golden Lion at the corner of North Street; and the White Hart on the High Street.

One of Romford's oldest industries was founded in 1708 when Benjamin Wilson opened a small brewery behind the Star Inn on the High Street beside the River Rom.⁰¹ It was purchased by Edward Ind in 1799 when it became part of Ind Smith, from 1845 known as Ind Coope. The brewery went on to supply not only the cluster of local inns, but public houses across London and the southeast of England, the premise growing to encompass a 20-acre site south of the High Street by the 1970s, ultimately closing in 1997.⁰²



High Street, Romford, 1895, Ind Coope brewery in middle ground on right (Havering Libraries Local Studies)

Romford's linear development began to expand north and south, creating a town centre of four quarters around a crossroads, with Market Place to the west, the High Street to the east, and building along comparatively narrower roads extending north and south.



Chapman & Andre's 1777 map, showing linear development expanding into a four-quartered settlement around a crossroads (British Library)

⁰¹ Thames Chase (2024) 'The Old Brewery'. Available at: <https://www.thameschase.org.uk/about-thames-chase/places-of-interest/the-old-brewery>

⁰² Thames Chase (2024) 'The Old Brewery'. Available at: <https://www.thameschase.org.uk/about-thames-chase/places-of-interest/the-old-brewery>

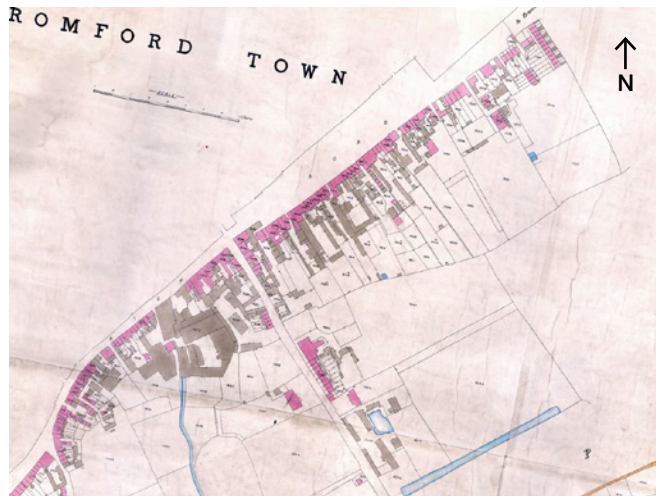
3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.4 19th Century Growth

The arrival of the railway and the opening of Romford train station in 1839 brought a corresponding growth in tourism, trade, and local prosperity. South Street quickly developed as the principal link between the town center and the station, while plots flanking the High Street and Market Place remained narrow, with deep rear yards.

The prosperity of mid-19th century South Street is evident in the 1871 Ordnance Survey map, where substantial detached and semi-detached houses line the southern end of the street, set far back from the road. Many of these houses feature large, expansive garden plots. The location of the county court further exemplifies the growth and prosperity of Romford during this period.

Development extended around the well-established quadrant structure, with the central crossroads of the Romford town centre as the nucleus. Market Place became fully hemmed in by coaching inns and later development, though its function as an open-air livestock market remained active. The southwest was dominated by industry, chiefly the brewery.



1844 Tithe Map showing the southern part of Romford, the Ind Coope brewery indicated by group of large buildings along the River Rom (The Genealogist)



1845 Tithe Map showing the northern part of Romford (The Genealogist)



1871 ODS map showing the southern end of South Street.

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

The chapel for St Edward the Confessor on Market Place pulled down after being deemed unfit for purpose and was rebuilt in 1856 by the architect John Johnson in a gothic revival style. Using rubble stone and ashlar dressings, it included a 162ft spire and interiors that incorporated older monuments.

Over the latter half of the 19th century a range of shopfronts and pubs replaced existing buildings on the High Street around the established brewery offices. The White Hart was built in 1898 by Ind Coope Brewery as the Tap House on the site of a 15th century coaching Inn, and would continue to be used as a major venue for clubs, society and civic events until its closure in the early 2000s. The range of shopfronts with flats above at 25-35 High Street, as well as the Woolpack public house to the northwest were also built in the late 19th century, indicative of the commercial growth of the town centre to the northwest.



1895 (Surveyed) OS map of Romford centre. Indicative conservation area boundary shown in red. (National Library of Scotland)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.5 Romford Centre 20th Century

At the turn of the 20th century, the quarter to the southeast of the crossroads still retained open plots to the rear of its Market Place and South Street frontages, accessed via narrow alleys between buildings and via Western Road to the south, while the relentlessly growing Ind, Coope and Co brewery, by this point supplied with its own railway line, dominated the southwestern quadrant. The Rom continued to flow freely across the northwest quadrant to the rear of High Street and North Street frontages, while a network of subdivided plots extended to the northeast.

Inter-war Development

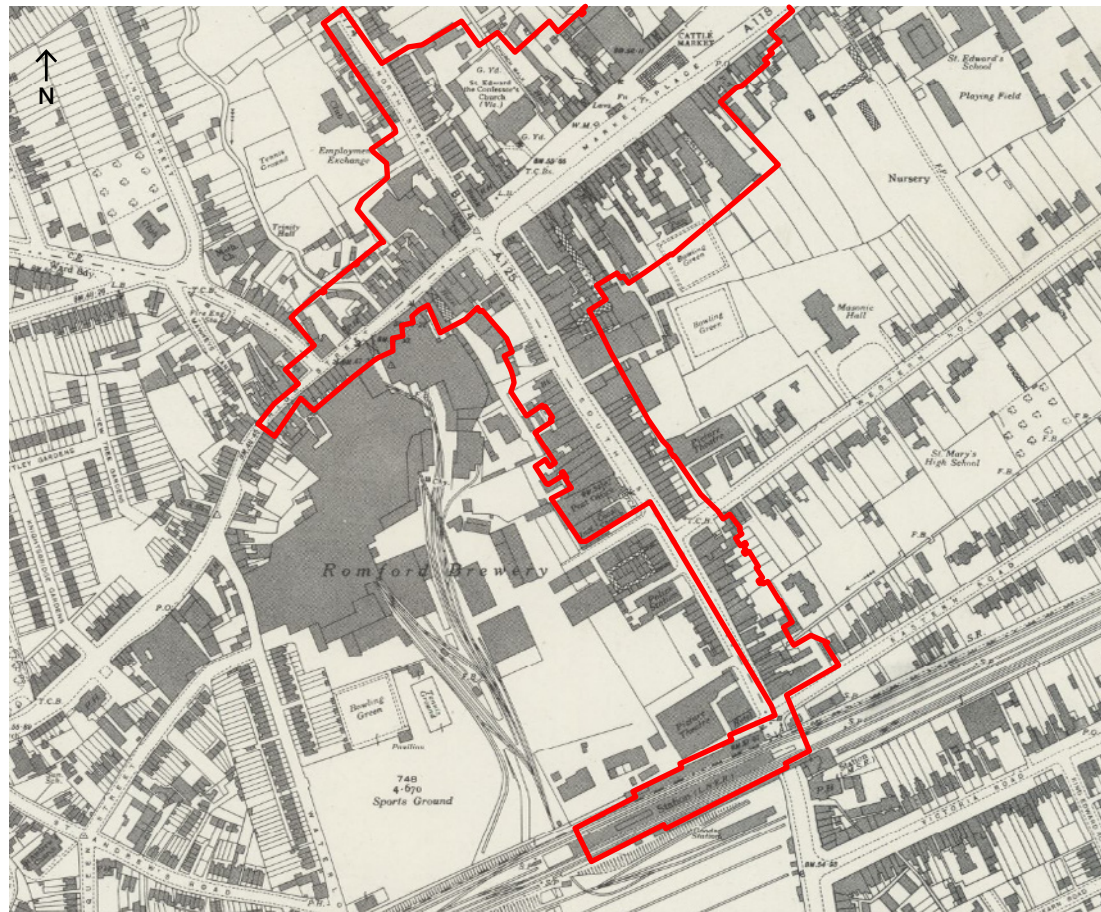
The suburban expansion of London over the 1930s soon reached Romford, and the town modernised rapidly at the expense of many Victorian or older buildings, replaced by Art Deco, Neo-Classical and Queen Anne designs. This is particularly evident along South Street, where the once-large plots of houses set back from the street have been replaced with denser, larger commercial buildings that follow a consistent street line..



Photo of Quadrant Arcade 1938 (Havering Libraries Local Studies)

The Quadrant Arcade, a state-of-the-art covered shopping centre, was opened in 1935. This was concurrent with the widening of South Street, resulting in a substantial amount of Inter-war redevelopment, the architectural character of which remains legible today within this part of the centre. The new Bull Inn was opened on the site of its early 17th century or 18th century predecessor in 1929, one of six marketplace pubs at the time, alongside The Lamb. The nationwide building boom of high street banks saw to the construction of three

competing branches on three of the four corners of the market crossroads in quick succession over the 1930s, including: The Prudential Building; Lloyds Bank; and the Co-op, while HSBC had taken over a 1905 building nearby at No.9 Market Place in 1920. By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the replacement of much of the narrow townscape grid of earlier centuries with large retail halls and civic buildings had drastically changed the streetscape, with small burgage plots displaced in many places by large retail plots.



1939 (surveyed) OS map of Romford centre, indicative conservation area boundary is shown in red. (National Library of Scotland)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

Post-War Development

The closure of the cattle market in 1958 signalled the end of Romford's function as a traditional market town. Postwar rebuilding transformed the north side of High Street following bomb damage, and there was further development at the town periphery. Rapid population expansion continued, and in 1965 the municipal borough was abolished and absorbed into the London Borough of Havering.

Over the 1960s and 70s the town centre was part of a radical replanning that replaced a large degree of historic fabric with new retail precincts and laid out a tight ring road around the town centre. This road truncated and pedestrianised the four arms of crossroads, severing Romford's historic core from the wider town, but also improving its shopping experience through the removal of vehicular traffic through Market Place. The only surviving pre-20th century fabric within the ring road were the centre's historic inns, the 19th century brewery, St Edward's Church and the neighbouring Church House.

The 1969 Ordnance Survey map shows this redevelopment in progress, the swathes of open land and plots just beyond the historic crossroads swept away for large scale commercial development.

The former brewery site by that time known as Star Brewery, was closed in 1993 and replaced by an expansive retail development known as The Brewery; it extends to the rear of frontages along the west side of South Street alongside a substantial car park.



1969 (surveyed) OS map of Romford centre, indicative conservation boundary shown in red. (National Libraries of Scotland)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.6 New Additions in the 21st Century

The Havering Museum was opened within the redeveloped former brewery buildings along the south side of High Street in 2010. Shortly thereafter, a mixed-use scheme known as Tollgate House, loosely designed in the character of a Neoclassical market hall, was completed in 2006 on the site of a former turnpike tollgate. Sites along the east side of Market Link have been redeveloped as hotels in recent years, with one overlooking Market Place.

New housing has also been introduced to the area via a mixed-use block with ground floor shops and offices and residential units above erected on the site of the Edwardian Rumford Shopping Hall along the north-east side of Market Place, noticeably taller than neighbouring development. High-rise residential development has also been erected in the immediate setting of the conservation area to the north-west and east, some still under construction, all visible from the historic crossroads.

4.0 Character Assessment



4.0 Character Assessment

4.1 Location, Topography and Geology

The Romford Conservation Area is within the centre north of the London Borough of Havering, and falls within the area of the London Basin. It is approximately 20 kilometres east of London city centre, and 8 kilometres north of the River Thames. The town centre is located at the point where the Great East Road, a highway dating back to the Romans, crossed the River Rom, and where a weekly market has been held since at least 1247. The River Rom is now mostly culverted, flowing beneath Angel Way and the modern Brewery shopping complex, towards the River Thames.

Romford is about 30 metres above sea-level, and the town centre and conservation area is level throughout. The geology of the area is complex, with alluvial and head deposits to the west associated with the River Rom and gravel terraces overlying London Clay to the east. These characteristics played a key role in Romford's prehistoric use, as the watercourses and terraces would have been appealing places for human settlement.⁰¹

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

Romford Conservation Area

Gidea Park Conservation Area

Romford Train Station

South Street

Market Place

Havering Town Hall

St Edward the Confessor Church

North Street

A1251 Ring Road

High Street

This plan is not to scale



Aerial image of Romford centre's location in its wider surrounding context. The conservation area is outlined in red. Base plan ©GoogleEarth

⁰¹ Oxford Archaeology (2024) 'Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal: London Borough of Havering'. Available at: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.havering.gov.uk/downloads/file/6708/havering-archaeological-priority-areas-report](https://www.havering.gov.uk/downloads/file/6708/havering-archaeological-priority-areas-report)

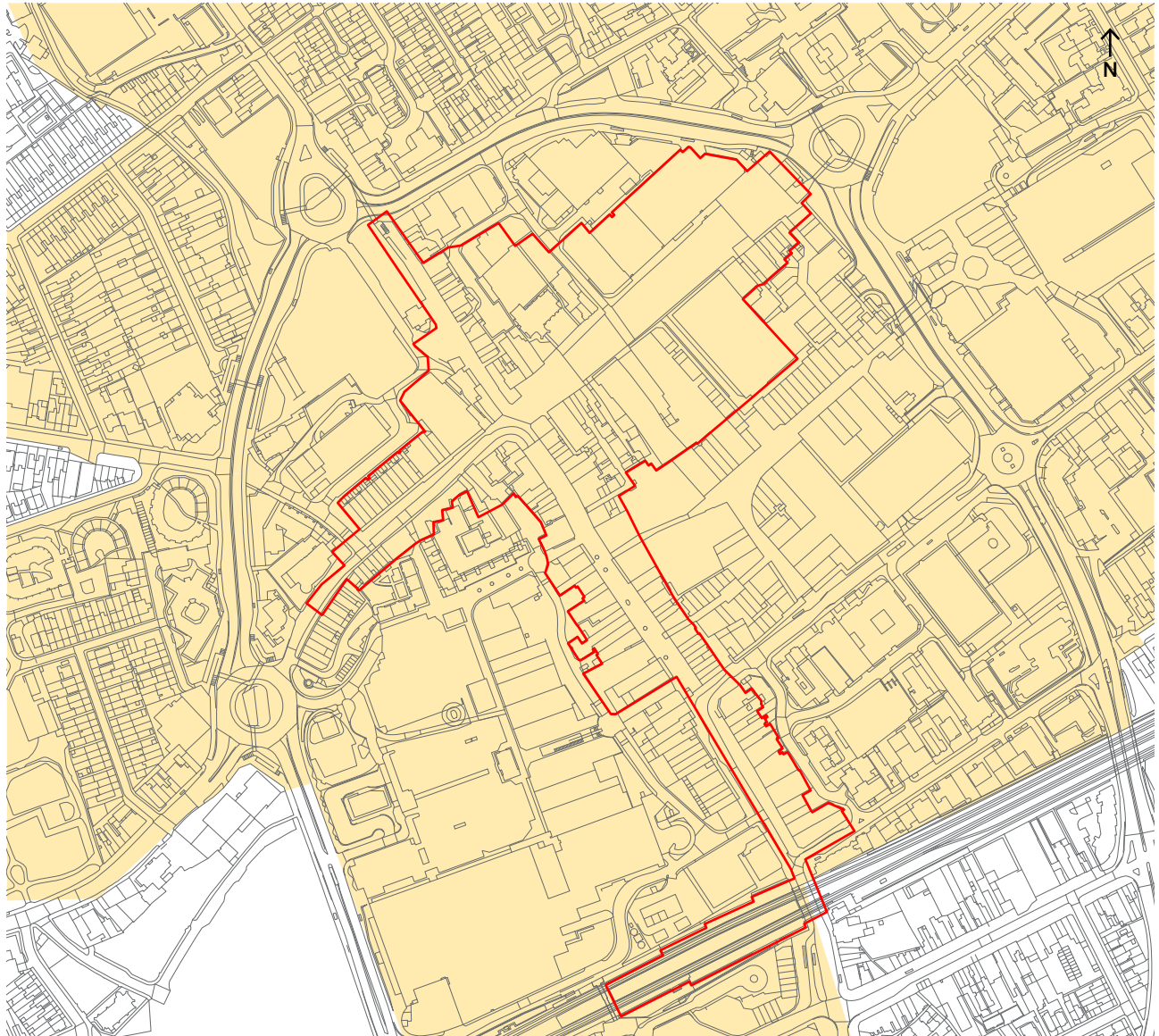
4.0 Character Assessment

4.2 Archaeology

The conservation area covers two of Havering's Archaeological Priority Areas (APA); 2.11 and 2.19. 2.11 is a Tier 2 APA that is centred on the Roman and medieval settlement and market town of Romford. A small section of the southern end of the conservation area reaches into 2.19. 2.19 is a Tier 2 APA that incorporates a historic settlement known as Oldchurch, a precursor settlement to Romford. In addition, APA 2.24 covers the course of the London to Colchester Roman road which is presumed to follow the path of High Street; this is also classified at Tier 2. Due to Romford's long history and the finds gathered by prior archaeological investigation, there remains a strong potential for further discoveries of archaeological material from Prehistory onwards.⁰²

There are no scheduled monuments within the conservation area or its near setting.

Further information can be found by consulting the Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal written by Oxford Archaeology in 2024 for the London Borough of Havering.



Map showing the distribution of Archaeological Notification Areas in Romford.

⁰² Oxford Archaeology (2024) 'Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal: London Borough of Havering'. Available at: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.havering.gov.uk/downloads/file/6708/havering-archaeological-priority-areas-report](https://www.havering.gov.uk/downloads/file/6708/havering-archaeological-priority-areas-report)

4.0 Character Assessment

4.3 The Setting of the Conservation Area

The setting of the conservation area has been considerably shaped by infrastructure and new development, particularly by the railway line to the south, and the mid/late 20th century ring road which encircles the conservation area and points south. The latter truncated the conservation area roads to the east, north and west, creating a definitive boundary of a busy main road, though in turn this has removed busy traffic along the historic byway of Market Place and the High Street.

Development to the north and west of this ring road is dominated by later housing, while a cluster of borough civic buildings including the Havering Town Hall are to the east, all accessed from the conservation area by pedestrian subways, concealed from conservation area views.

There is extensive mid-20th century and later building within the ring road and the immediate setting of the conservation area to the north of Market Place and the High Street, including large, mixed-use, residential and office developments of five or more storeys. These are visible in northward views, including along North Street from South Street and the historic crossroads, from the St Edward's churchyard and also from Market Place northward along Market Link, and generally fail to relate to any historic context. There are two places of worship to the northwest and west within the ring road, the 19th century Trinity Methodist Church and a late 20th century Salvation Army Church to the west, both only partially visible in mid-range views from the west end of the High Street and generally inconspicuous. The former is mostly obscured by a large, late-20th century multi-storey car park with a dull, utilitarian frontage just beyond the conservation area boundary which detracts from its setting.

The area to the southwest of the conservation area behind the High Street and South Street is dominated by The Brewery shopping centre, a large late 20th century retail park mostly

of two to three-storeys with an extensive open car park to the west. There is pedestrian access to this from the High Street via the historic former entrance in through the brewery frontage, though the historic urban grain here conceals the development from the High Street. Its visual impact is greater from South Street in views along Exchange Street and Arcade Place.



The A1251 ring road encircles the conservation area to the east, north and west.



New development lining the east side of North Street.

Redevelopment here also includes Malt House Place and Logan Mews, which comprise four to five-storey residential blocks arranged to the rear of buildings along the south side of the High Street. There are service yards and back-of-house spaces interwoven amongst the modern development; these have an unkempt character and generally detract from the setting of the conservation area.



Approach to conservation area & Market Place via pedestrian subway.



View of setting from South Street, looking west along Exchange Street.

4.0 Character Assessment

The area to the southeast beyond the ring road includes recently redeveloped residential high rises which overlook the conservation area and are highly visible from the eastern end of Market Place. The conservation area's immediate southeastern setting within the ring road is largely occupied by the Liberty Shopping Centre, a predominantly two to three-storey shopping complex that in part falls within the conservation area boundary, but does little to relate to any historic context. Its flat roof accommodates car parking and services; these roof units, some of which are two-storey brick extensions, are visible intermittently from the main thoroughfares of the conservation area, creating a cluttered roofline.

The Liberty is accessed from the conservation area via pedestrian entrances in from Market Place and South Street which generally blend in with their commercial surroundings apart from the access in from the southeast side of Market Place, where the entrance and adjacent, utilitarian late-20th century development substantially detract from conservation area character.

To the south the conservation area ends at the terminus of the pedestrianised segment of Eastern Road. The Conservation Area thins as it runs south Along South Street to include only the eastern half of the Road and Romford Train Station. The opposite side of South Street has mid/late 20th century commercial and office buildings with nondescript facades of low aesthetic value.



Insensitive late-20th century development within and in the setting of the conservation area at south east end of Market Place.



Modern high-rise housing to the southeast is visible from Market Place.



Interior photos of the Liberty Shopping Centre, showing some of the shopfronts that form the southwest boundary of the conservation area



View south from conservation area boundary, along South Street.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.4 Important Views

The combination of low-lying topography and the truncation of the crossroads by the 1970s ring road impedes long-range views into and out of the conservation area. Internally, the conservation area is experienced via established views along the four principal thoroughfares of Market Place, North Street, South Street and the High Street, and though kinetic views glimpsed whilst moving through the conservation area.

All views which take in heritage assets, whether or not they are designated, are considered important and contribute to the understanding and experience of the conservation area. Consequently, the views considered in this section are only an indicative selection and are not intended to be a comprehensive set.

Views of the St Edward the Confessor Church Spire

At the time of writing, one specific view within the conservation area has been identified within the Romford Masterplan, the view of the spire of St Edward's church along South Street from Romford Station. Incidental views of this prominent vertical landmark from all parts of the conservation area, as well as from the outside-in, are an important feature of the area's character, and help identify a local sense of place.

Street Views

A number of historic public houses and banks enjoy prominent corner positions within the streetscape at the conservation area's historic crossroads, and characterise the commercial character of the conservation area. These include the Golden Lion on the northwestern corner of the crossroads, and the Neo-Georgian bank buildings forming the crossroad's other three corners. Views of these buildings up and down streets and across key townscape spaces contribute to the understanding of the conservation area's history as a market town and later evolution as a commercial hub.

Likewise the views of and from the railway station and bridges from the southern end of South Street assist in demonstrating the sense of arrival to the town centre from the railway



View of St Edward's spire & adjacent historic commercial frontages from South Street.



View looking northwest across Market Place, featuring St Edward's & historic commercial and public house frontages.



View of Market Place from the crossroads, featuring prominent historic commercial frontages & spire of St Edward's.



Incidental view of the spire of St Edward's (Grade II*), from the north-western boundary of the conservation area, Angel Way

4.0 Character Assessment

Views toward and away from the crossroads along its four historic streets illustrate help make its importance as one of the area's oldest and most important elements of historic townscape legible. Views west down the High Street taken in the 19th century frontages of the former brewery buildings and the Woolpack public house building on the corner of Angel Way and the High Street, with which they share a historic relationship.

Eastward views comprise Market Place. Whilst this terminates at the 2006 Tollgate House and is flanked by modern redevelopment in places, views of Market Place as a historic open commercial space are key to understanding Romford's early history.

North Street and South Street are key historic routes within Romford, and offer longer-range views into and out of the heart of the conservation area. These help to define the area's historic context and approaches.

Views along ancillary streets and into rear yards, particularly from Market Place, are experienced in kinetic views as one walks past. These tend to be of spaces of a more intimate scale, and, where they survive, illustrate the area's historic market town layout across narrow plots.



View west along High Street from crossroads.



View toward crossroads from South Street.



View into alley east of The Bull public house from Market Place illustrates historic townscape pattern.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.5 Key and Landmark Buildings

The special interest of the conservation area is often best experienced visually by taking in its historic buildings and spaces, as the majority of these contribute to the understanding of its special interest. However, there are individual buildings and spaces which play a more important role in establishing the character of the area, and are considered to be landmarks.

In Romford's case, landmarks are generally either statutorily or locally listed buildings, while several others also make a **positive contribution** to the area's historic or architectural character. These are identified on the plan opposite, as well as the conservation area's key views.

A number of buildings or spaces within the conservation area boundary are identified as **opportunities for enhancement**. These are buildings or sites that comprise elements which detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area; their improvement or replacement is encouraged.

→ Key Views

■ Listed Building

01 Church House (Grade II)

02 Parish Church of St Edward the Confessor (Grade II*)

03 The Lamb Public House (Grade II)

04 The Golden Lion Public House (Grade II)

■ Positive Contributor

■ Opportunity for Enhancement

■ Locally Listed Asset

A The Bull Inn

B 9 Market Place (HSBC)

C Lloyds Bank

D 28 Market Place

E Quadrant Arcade

F The Co-op Bank

G Prudential Building

H The White Hart (The Bitter End)

I Romford Brewery, High Street, Romford

J 25-35 High Street

K The Woolpack

L Quadrant Arcade

M 64 South Street (Façade is old post office)

N 97 South Street

O 97 - 101 South Street

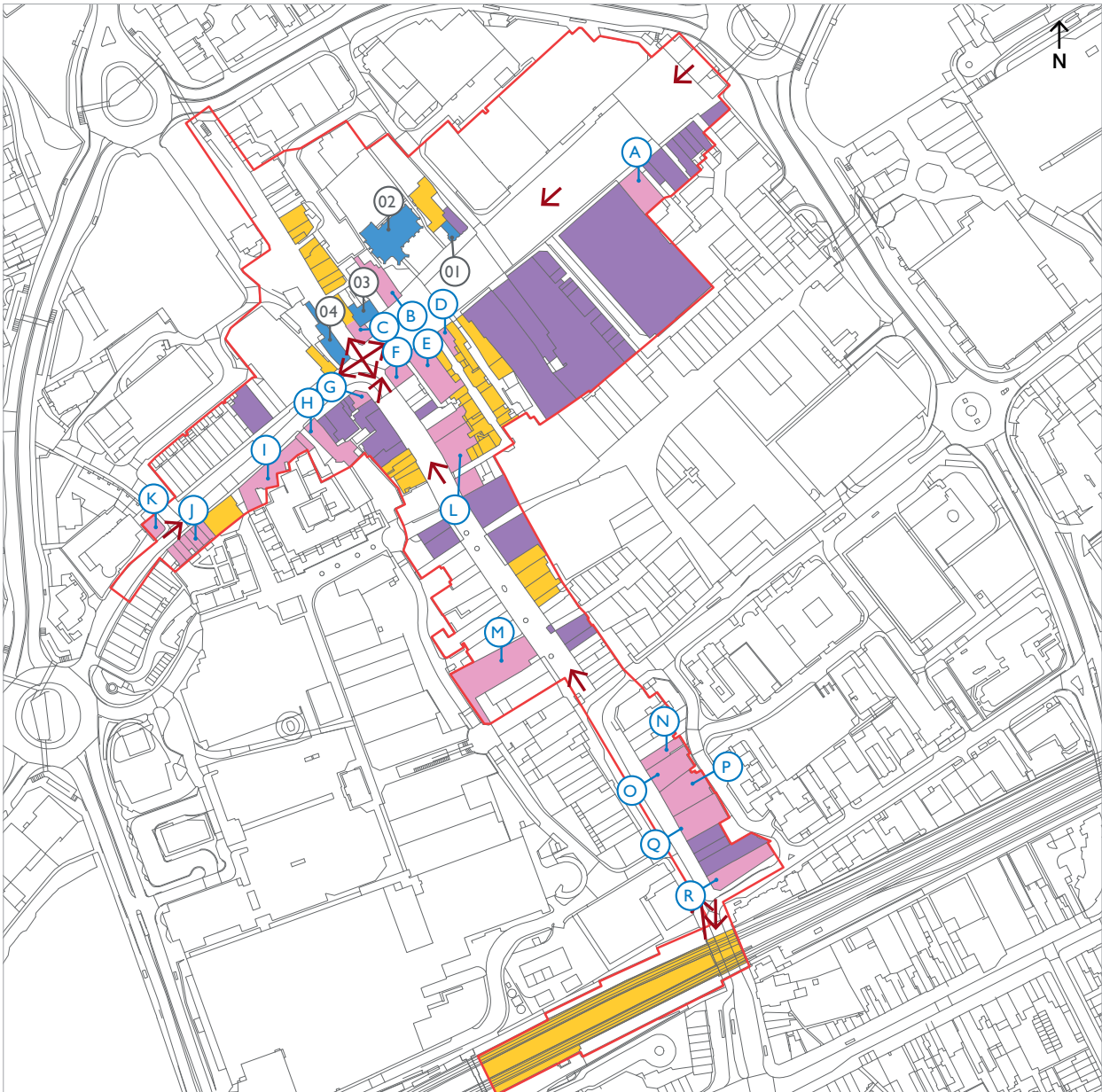
P 103 - 111 South Street

Q 113 - 117 South Street

R 131 South Street

Note: Details of the locally listed buildings in the conservation area are included as Appendix A.

This plan is not to scale



Map indicating the location of key and landmark buildings, key views & opportunities for conservation area enhancement.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.6 Townscape and Spatial Analysis

The layout of the conservation area is densely urban, formed by the meeting of four, partly truncated principal roads to the north, east, south and west. These roads dominate the town plan, and nearly all of the conservation area's buildings front one of these roads.

The area to the north of Market Place and the High Street is interspersed by several smaller ancillary streets and access roads serving the large mid-to-late 20th and 21st century developments on the conservation area fringe. There are noticeably fewer breaks in built form along the south side of High Street, but some narrow alleyways and pedestrian routes provide access to rear yards to the south of Market Place, as well as into the shopping centre beyond. However, commercial infill within the southeast quadrant of the conservation area has eradicated most of its historic street pattern.

There are also few breaks within the building frontages lining either side of South Street, apart from two access routes into the retail and residential complex associated with the Brewery redevelopment to the southwest of the conservation area.

Some traditionally narrow plots remain in places; these are articulated in street views somewhat sporadically in Market Place and in sections along South Street. More commonly, broad building façades incorporate numerous ground floor shopfronts, as is found along the south side of High Street and the east side of North Street.



Individual plots remain legible in stretches of South Street.



Larger frontages incorporate multiple ground floor units in High Street.

4.7 Boundary Treatments

As the conservation area comprises a historically commercial area, boundary treatments generally do not form a prevalent part of the historic townscape. The exception to this is St Edward's church in Market Place, where the churchyard is set back behind a rubble wall with a striking pointed arch entrance gate in stone which forms a prominent part of the Market Place streetscape. The plot to the rear of the church is demarcated by a tall brick wall to the west and railings to the north and east; the latter also line the pathway between the front and rear churchyard. The other exception is the strong boundary to the south of the conservation area formed by the railway embankment, the brick arches of which form the elevation of the railway station.

Other existing boundary treatments include modern brick walls and railings to parking areas north of Market Place, and the rear boundary wall in Angel Way which encloses the rear plots to the mid-20th century mixed use block along the north side of the High Street. The latter marks the edge of the conservation area and comprises a mix of doors, security deterrents and brickwork which detracts from area character and appearance.

4.0 Character Assessment

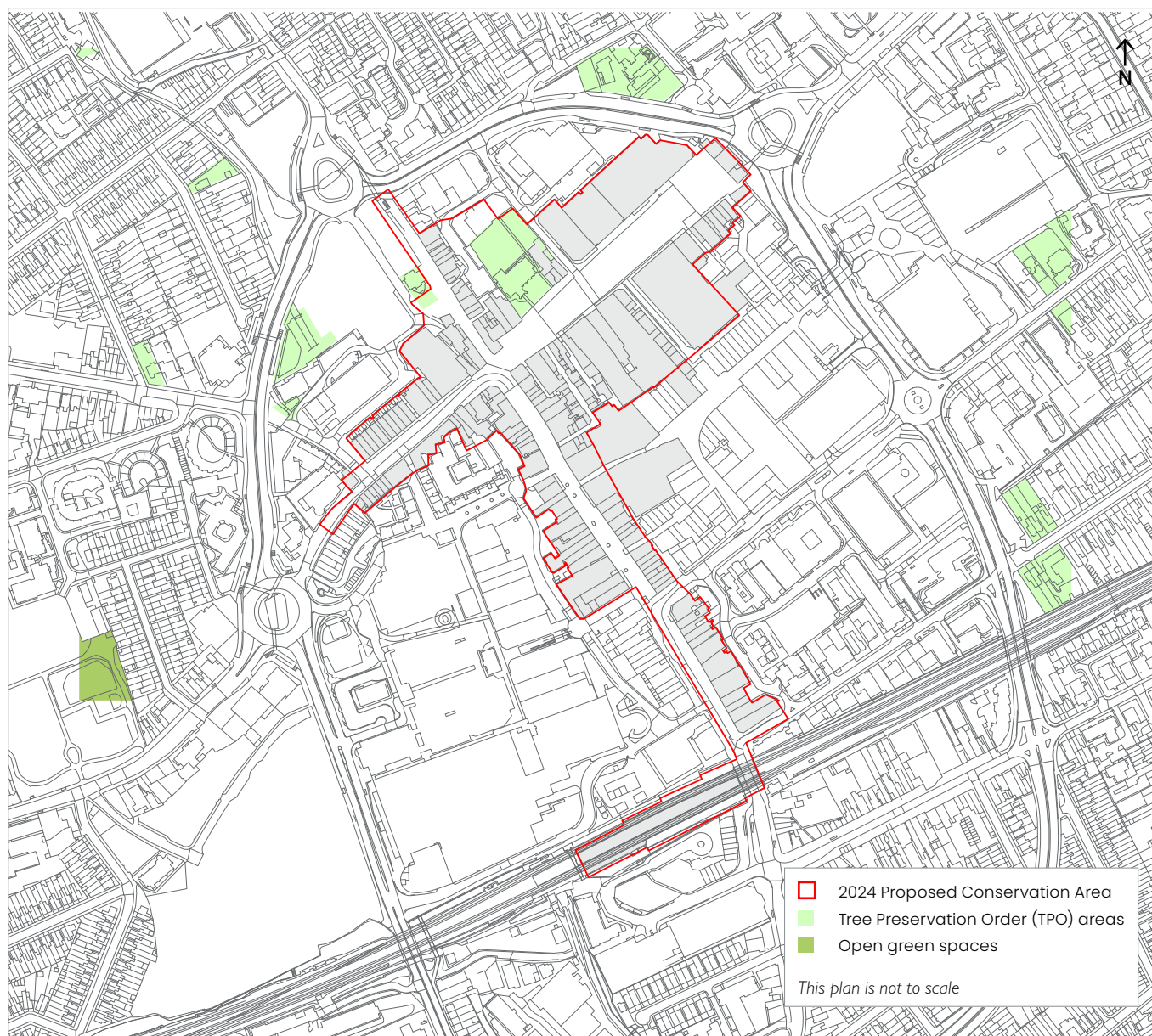
4.8 Open Spaces and Trees

The Romford Conservation Area is dominated by the large open space of Market Place, the historic centre of the town. It is an expansive space which dominates the historic townscape, and its continued active use as an open-air market is integral to the special interest of the conservation area and makes a strong contribution. Use of pavement space by cafes or shops around the edge of this open space contributes activity and encourages footfall on non-market days.

While the area's predominantly urban character limits open space and permanent greenery, there are spaces which soften the townscape and improve the pedestrian experience. The churchyard of St Edward the Confessor includes a modest green facing Market Place and a large green to the rear, connected by a pedestrian path, both make a strong contribution to the conservation area. The space facing Market Place is actively used by passers-by as a place to dwell and makes a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area. The rear part of the churchyard is kept private by metal railings and as it is not publicly accessible, which slightly tempers the contribution it makes to the conservation area. Its mature trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and contribute positively to the character of the conservation area and setting of the historic church.

A modest public seating area planted with mature trees is located north of the Golden Lion Public House. This space historically formed part of the vicarage garden, and its trees are also protected under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). However, the character is very municipal and its contribution to the character of the conservation area is limited in its present condition.

There are a series of mature trees planted within pavements along the High Street, Market Place and South Street. These are prominent features of the public realm and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within Romford Conservation Area, indicated in green.

4.0 Character Assessment



View westwards across Market Place, lined by trees.



View of St Edward's churchyard, looking southwest towards Market Place.



Trees and public realm in North Street.



Street trees along High Street, looking towards Market Place.



Pathway north of the church, flanked by mature planting.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.9 Public Realm

4.9.1 Street Surfaces

Street surfaces across the conservation area vary considerably due to its mix of pedestrianised or part-pedestrianised spaces. Pavements are generally surfaced with large concrete pavers and mostly granite kerbs.

The High Street is paved in granite setts at its eastern end where it is pedestrianised, and surfaced in tarmac to the west where it is open to vehicles. Market Place is surfaced in a variety of pavers and granite setts, stretches of which are historic, arranged to indicate wayfinding routes. Parking spaces and plot markers for stalls within Market Place have been indicated in places by paver patterns and paint. South and North Street are both pedestrianised, though access for service vehicles is maintained, and laid in concrete pavers which are varied in colour to indicate different pedestrian zones. Broader concrete pavers indicate pavements that are flush with the street. Ancillary streets are generally in tarmac.

Paving is used across the conservation area to accentuate entrances or points of interest for pedestrians. The most notable of these instances is the circle arrangement at the crossroads, where a stone marker indicating the names of its historic streets is embedded at its centre.



Street furniture and surfaces used on the High Street.



Surface detail on the North Street square.



Surface detail on Market Place

4.0 Character Assessment

4.9.2 Street Furniture, Lighting and Wayfinding

Outdoor seating is provided in several locations within the conservation area, with a concentration on South Street, Market Place and within a pedestrianised seating area on North Street. Seating in South Street and Market Place comprises fixed metal benches of a modern profile, on occasion wrapped around tree planters. Low-level planters introduce greenery to pedestrian areas, such as on North Street, where their presence helps to soften the appearance a public recycling station. However, the design of planters throughout the conservation area is haphazard and lacks visual consistency. Public seating provisions promote active footfall and dwell time, contributing to the positive active character of the spaces. Several cafes in spaces along all four streets provide outdoor seating in warmer months.

South Street has notably higher volume of street furniture than other streets within the conservation area. In addition to seating and planters, there are also free-standing advertising units, telephone boxes, defibrillators and public toilet facilities installed.

Bollards are used in places such as the central crossroads to control traffic access and delineate between pavements and shared use roadway. A pair of robust stone markers remain on the crossroads and indicate a vehicle access point from the crossroads through to Market Place.

Black plastic public bins are used across the conservation area. Racks of bicycle hoops are installed on South Street and the western end of the High Street.

Streetlamps are consistent throughout the conservation area, and comprise lanterns in a traditional profile and banner rails. These generally demarcate the conservation area's location, as design changes immediately to utilitarian profile outside of the conservation area's boundary, notably at the western end of the High Street.

Street signage principally relates to traffic control and wayfinding; this adds congestion to the street scene in places. A-boards, banners and other freestanding advertising placed on the pavement by local businesses also adds a degree of clutter at times.



Streetlamp detail on South Street, the old Post Office in the background.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.10 Building Uses

Conservation area buildings remain principally in commercial or retail use; a number of buildings in mixed-use include residential units or offices at upper floors. There is also an array of ground-floor restaurants and cafes, and ground floors or full buildings occupied by banks. The historic provision of trader and tourist accommodation in roadside inns has been replaced by late 20th and early 21st century hotel developments, the latest a Premier Inn on the northern side of Market Place.

The former Brewery buildings at 19-21 High Street have been converted for cultural use by the Havering Museum. St Edward's Church and neighbouring Church House remain in use as a place of worship along the north side of Market Place.

4.11 Scale and Massing

The width, height and volume of buildings within the conservation area is highly varied, with buildings of two to three bays and three to four-storeys alongside large units with upwards of seven bays and three large storeys. Massing at the southern side and eastern end of Market Place is generally larger due to late 20th century development. There is a particularly appreciable variety of massing along South Street, where a mix of Inter-war commercial buildings hold their own alongside larger modern redevelopment.

Roofs vary between pitched, mansard or flat forms, which, together with varying building heights offer a lively roofscape indicative of the diverse array of building types and periods. Building heights within the conservation area generally remain deferential to the spire of St Edward the Confessor church, which remains appreciable throughout most of the streetscape.

4.12 Materials

There is no predominant material used across the conservation area, indicative of its evolution as a rapidly changing commercial centre.

Stock and red brick is used extensively on 19th century buildings and several prominent 1930s commercial or public buildings, employed alongside stonework, metal work and decorative brick details.

Render or stone cladding is also evident across pre or early 19th century buildings and 1930s commercial architecture. This frequently incorporates fine decorative detailing, particularly on 1930s façades.

Concrete, glass and red or brown brick is dominant on the southern side of Market Place to mid to late-20th century commercial often to frontages.



View of South Street, showing a variety of building massing.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.13 Architectural Styles and Periods

There is a range of architectural styles and periods found across the conservation area consistent with the area's historic evolution as a commercial centre.

4.13.1 Georgian and Earlier Buildings

The conservation area's earliest surviving buildings include Church House, a modest 15th/16th century building adjacent to St Edward's, and the Golden Lion, which retains characterful features such as its rear coachyard entrance, pedimented front entrance, corner quoins and window dressings, all appropriate to its prominent corner position. The Lamb public house in Market Place dates to the early-19th century; its frontage employs traditional massing but generally lacks detail.



Georgian detailing to the southern façade of the Golden Lion pub, High Street.

4.13.2 Victorian Buildings

Several prominent buildings within the conservation area are excellent surviving examples of Victorian commercial, industrial and public building type, indicative of this period of extensive local redevelopment. St Edwards the Confessor church is representative of the significant investment made by the townspeople in their town in the mid-19th century, while the range of Brewery buildings and shopfronts along the High Street are indicative of how mid/late 19th century development industry and commercial activity shaped the town.

The Romford Brewery was built in 1851, a vast complex that occupied most of the land between the High Street, South Street and the railway line, of which the range of buildings on the south side of the High Street are all that remain. This range is typical of Victorian industrial design; stock brick, with a central section of three-storey, six bays in stock brick articulated with red brick piers and window arches at ground floor, and a three-storey, gabled extension added to the East in a similar style later, and a coach passage in through the principal façade, which now provides pedestrian access into the Brewery retail complex.

A series of red brick, commercial high street buildings were erected near to the brewery on the High Street in the late 19th century, characterised by brick ornamentation and steep pitched tiled roofs. The Woolpack is directly associated with the Brewery, a purpose built, corner plot public house with details such as mock Tudor timbering, decorative

barge boards and a projecting moulded cornice along both frontages. The White Hart public house at 7-13 High Street is typical of the English Domestic Revival Style, three-storeys, four bays with large oriel windows with timber frame and leaded lights at first floor. The range of buildings at Nos.25-35 retain a well detailed brick façade, with details such as stucco pilasters, decorative terracotta detailed gables, and tall hexagonal chimneys.

The HSBC building at 9 Market Place dates to 1905 and is a surviving example of the Free Renaissance style, a four-storey, red brick building with decorative stonework and canted bays, diluted to some extent by a subsequent eastern extension.



View of the Victorian Romford Brewery buildings on the High Street.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.13.3 Inter-War Buildings

The most prevalent historic style is from the Inter-war period, illustrative of London's suburban expansion and development of high streets in the 1930s. Three of the four corners of the crossroads are occupied by 1930s Neo-Georgian banks, which feature entrance bays, symmetrical elevations, red brick façades and dressings in Portland stone. The surviving façade of the post office on South Street shows similar use of an earlier form of Neo-Georgian design, from 1912. There are also a series of fine commercial art deco frontages, the most prominent being the three-storey Quadrant Arcade, but others are at two-storeys with strong linear features carried through red brick and stucco or stone coursing. Groups of frontages can be identified as relating to the other based on projecting brick and cornice or balustrade design, despite subsequent

changing of ownership and different surface treatments, such as No.49-57 South Street, and No.71-83 South Street.

The Bull Inn on Market Place is another example of post WWI design; a two-storey, Neo-Georgian public house with a symmetrical façade articulated in red brick and stucco pilasters overlooking Market Place. This is a 1927 rebuild of the public house that preceded it.

4.13.4 Mid-20th Century and Later Buildings

Modern commercial and mixed-use development dominates a large proportion of the conservation area, generally to a lesser degree of architectural quality. This includes modern infill occupying narrow historic plots on South Street, the prominent mid-century slab block of the former Debenhams

department store which projects forward into Market Place, and a broad, three-storey mid-century range of flats over an arcade of shopfronts at ground floor which lines the northern side of High Street. Whilst these often fail to respond to the context of their historic environment, some employ interesting materials or massing typical of their period.

Buildings to the eastern and northern sides of Market Place represent more recent redevelopment. These include the 2006 Tollgate House, a pastiche Neo-Georgian mixed-use building with a frontage in red brick, render and ashlar stone, as well as the redeveloped Romford Shopping Hall with flats above, which towers over Market Place at six-storeys in a range of materials.



The Bull Inn façade of 1927, Market Place.



The Neo-Georgian Co-operative Bank Building at the corner of Market Place and South Street

4.0 Character Assessment

4.14 Architectural Details

Historic architectural detail survives to principal elevations across the conservation area, particularly at upper floor level.

4.14.1 Windows

A large proportion of historic windows have been replaced with uPVC. Where they have not, a variety of types can be seen, such as small leaded windows within the Church House, tall, multi-pane timber framed casement windows within the three bank buildings overlooking the crossroads, and Crittall windows within the northern elevation of the Quadrant Arcade.

4.14.2 Decorative Brickwork and Relief

Rich brickwork and relief details survive across a series of commercial buildings on South Street and the High Street on Victorian or 1930s buildings respectively, a tangible indicator of Romford's pattern of historic development. These patterns and forms add material depth and interest to front and return elevations.

Relief tilework to the east façade of The Woolpack public house records proudly displays its origins as an Ind Coope public house.



Detail of timber casement windows and stone detailing within the corner façade of the Lloyds building.



Detail of Woolpack decorative façade and signage, recording its origins as a Ind Coope public house.



Detail of west facing doorway of Church House, one of the conservation area's oldest buildings.

4.0 Character Assessment

4.14.3 Roofline Details

Distinctive balustrades or corning on a series of 1930s commercial terraces on South Street indicate a once unified ranges of shopfronts. These simple decorative elements add architectural and historic interest to the roofline along the southern part of South Street.



Detail of the balustrade No.83 South Street, part of a longer range that features at the southern perimeter of the conservation area.

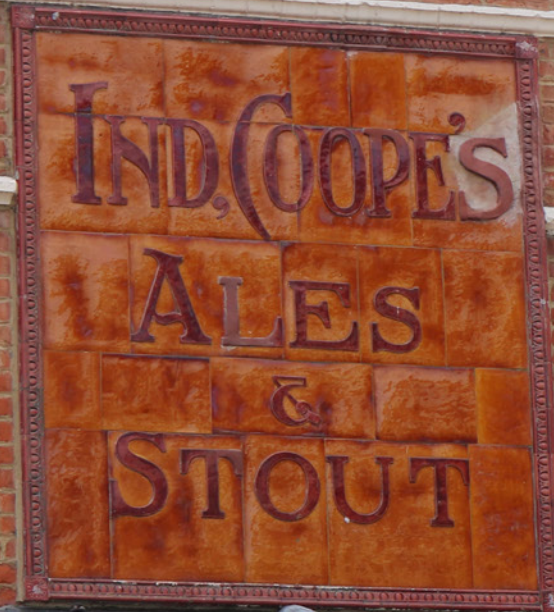
4.14.4 Shopfronts

Ground floor shopfronts are largely modern replacements. Most situated within historic frontages do little to relate to the context of their buildings. Where historic shopfront features do survive, they are generally limited to corbels pilasters which separate individual units, though it is possible that historic shopfront features survive behind modern fascias and external finishes. The shopfront at 29 High Street employs proportions and materials appropriate to its Victorian context, including timber stallrisers, a recessed entrance, vertical elements between shopfront windows, and an appropriately-sized fascia beneath a moulded cornice.



Shopfront at No.29 High Street.

5.0 Issues and Opportunities



5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

This section of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides analysis of the current issues and opportunities facing the Romford Conservation Area and reflects the findings of a detailed site survey and initial stakeholder consultation. It will be reviewed and updated following public consultation to ensure holistic coverage.

The analysis is set out around the below themes:

5.2 Detracting Buildings, Elements and Additions

5.3 Shopfronts and Advertising

5.4 Open Spaces and Public Realm

5.5 Maintenance and Repair of Buildings

5.6 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

5.7 Development Opportunity

5.8 Interpretation and Raising Awareness

5.2 Detracting Buildings, Elements and Additions

The quality and appearance of buildings throughout the conservation area is mixed. Whilst many historic frontages contribute positively to appearance and character of the area, there has been a considerable amount of insensitive redevelopment from the mid/late 20th century onward. Vacant buildings or retail units particularly detract from the area's special interest, as do unsympathetic accretions to street frontages. However, a number of these elements, from whole buildings to smaller-scale alterations, present opportunities for conservation area enhancement.

5.2.1 Detracting Buildings

Detracting buildings are identified as opportunities for enhancement on the area map included in [Section 4.5](#). These buildings comprise massing, scale and/or materiality which do little to relate to the area's historic character and detract from the street scene. Some buildings are inappropriate modern and even very recent insertions; whilst others may be historic, they have undergone such extensive alteration that their former character no longer is appreciable. However there are also examples of modern commercial buildings comprising materials and massing which remain sensitive within the context of adjacent historic frontages.

If the opportunity arises to replace or alter detracting buildings, there is potential to enhance the conservation area by ensuring that proposals are sensitively designed and respond better to the area's historic context and the character and appearance of the townscape.

Any development within the setting of the conservation area should take into consideration its special interest, and be of high quality, sensitive design.



The projecting Liberty entrance pavilion in South Street clashes with adjacent historic character



Various approaches to modern redevelopment in Market Place

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.2.2 Unsympathetic Additions and Accretions

Modern accretions to historic building exteriors across the conservation area are largely unsympathetic. These elements, and particularly the cumulative impact of incremental additions, can detract from the appearance of historic elevations and, as a result, from the character of the conservation area. These include:

- **Surface-mounted services** such as cables, conduit and security systems; there is opportunity to reduce visual clutter across frontages by removing or rationalising these elements, or by relocating them to more discreet locations. It is recommended that installation of any new external devices or technology be limited to rear elevations or rerouted internally so that they remain concealed from the public realm. Opportunities should also be taken to remove redundant wiring.
- **Pigeon deterrents** including spikes over doors and windows and netting are visible across several frontages. These have an unsightly, detrimental visual impact and there are opportunities to explore alternative, more humane deterrent methods whilst raising awareness amongst building owners of the negative effects of such forms of deterrent.
- **Television aerials and satellite dishes** are modern and highly conspicuous elements which are visually intrusive within historic streetscapes; these are found throughout the conservation area atop roofs and fixed to frontages, including to listed buildings. Often dishes and aerials remain fixed to buildings after they become redundant. There is opportunity to remove the latter, and ensure that any new devices are located along rear elevations, concealed from the public realm. Planning permission is required for the installation of telecoms equipment on walls and roofs visible from the public domain, and listed building consent is required for installation on listed buildings.
- Elements of **rooftop service and plant fixtures** are visible from street level in longer views across Market Place, and **handrails for roof access** are also visible in Market Place and South Street, in some cases atop buildings within the immediate setting of the conservation area; these are generally unsightly, utilitarian elements which add clutter to rooflines and clash with the historic character of the area. There is opportunity to rationalise the amount and location of rooftop plant and maintenance access when new or replacement plant fixtures are proposed and set handrails away from parapets so that they remain concealed in views from the street and wider conservation area.



Pigeon spikes & netting, South Street



Cumulative impact of modern accretions to upper floors, Market Place

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.2.3 Windows, Doors and Rain Goods

There are examples of the insensitive replacement of historic timber or metal windows in uPVC throughout the conservation area, particularly at upper floors where their impact is highly visible. uPVC doors and plastic rain goods have also replaced original and traditional versions in places.

Plastic windows in particular negatively affect the appearance of buildings, but all plastic features are modern, alien additions to the historic environment and have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their installation often constitutes the loss of the original or historic features and profiles, which incrementally reduces the special interest of the area. In addition, the use of plastic windows and doors reduces the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings, by preventing moisture from egressing the building; this can cause wider damage to building fabric. There are opportunities to return windows to traditional materials and appearance where they have been altered.

There are a few instances of visible rooflight installations to front facing roof pitches within historic façades in the High Street, North Street and South Street. These are particularly modern insertions which break up the appearance of historic pitched roofs and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is potential for an Article 4 direction to be implemented to better control proposals for window changes in the future.



Insensitive uPVC window replacement, South Street



Visible rooflights to front roof pitches in the High Street

5.2.4 Ancillary Spaces

The conservation comprises a series of ancillary alleyways and yards behind principal frontages, many of which are remnants of the area's former burgage plots. Whilst less visible from street views, they form an important element of the conservation area's historic character and aid in the understanding of its evolution over time.

However, their typically back-of-house use has led to a number of unsympathetic additions and accretions which detract from the character, appearance and use of the spaces. There is opportunity to review the approach to these spaces, and generate a strategy for how they might be better incorporated into active use, and become attractive, intimate spaces in their own right.



Historic rear yards and alleys have the potential to enhance the character of the conservation area

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.2.5 Boundary Treatments

As the conservation area comprises a principally commercial area, boundary treatments are relatively few. The rear boundary wall along Angel Way that provides access to the upper floors of the mid-20th century block lining the north side of the High Street is in very poor condition, with highly-visible security deterrents and mismatched brickwork, gates, doors and garage doors. There is opportunity to improve this frontage with a streamlined design for its doors, gates, garage doors and signage that would replace unsightly elements and help unify the boundary treatment.

Some cafés, restaurants and public houses occupying ground floor units offer outdoor seating on a seasonal basis, and there is potential for this to expand; there is opportunity to ensure that the design of any boundary treatments such as railings, planters or temporary fencing is of a high-quality design in appropriate materials that remains sensitive to the historic context of the conservation area, and does not obstruct or add clutter to the street scene. Any boundary treatments introduced in Market Place should ensure that the boundary wall to the St Edward's churchyard remains prominent and unobstructed in street views.



Utilitarian rear boundary treatments at conservation area edge in Angel Way

5.3 Shopfronts and Advertising

Commerce has shaped the conservation area at the heart of Romford from its origins. Few if any intact historic shopfronts survive within the conservation area, though individual historic shopfront components remain legible in places and some modern shopfronts comprise elements of traditional design. Given the range of dates and types of buildings present throughout the conservation area, there is no appropriate one-size-fits-all approach to improved shopfront design and implementation, though a degree of visual continuity which could enhance the character of the conservation area is possible to achieve through high quality design. Universally unsympathetic alterations and additions which detract from the character of the conservation area are noted below.

Oversized, poorly positioned and internally-lit fascia signs and the use of metal or plastic materials are particular issues. Overlarge fascia signage obscures the legible proportions of historic façades and neighbouring façades, and often conceals historic fabric or architectural details. The colour, design and branding of some shop signage does not respect the character of either the building or of the historic street scene as a whole.

Most shopfronts have had traditional glazing and stall riser arrangements replaced with larger windows without subdivision and stall risers of inappropriate proportions and materials. In some cases, shopfronts extend across multiple units or buildings, obscuring the legibility of historic frontages.

Planning permission is required for alterations or changes which materially affect the external appearance of shopfronts. When opportunities arise, shopfronts and shop signage should utilise design features or patterns that are generally in keeping with historic shopfront proportions and materiality where appropriate; it is noted that a historic shopfront profile may not be appropriate for a Postwar or modern building. Guidance on shopfront design is included in [Section 6.5](#).

Additional standalone pavement signage is often employed by local businesses; this generally adds clutter to the street scene and there is opportunity to rationalise the approach to their implementation.



Original shopfront pilasters surviving in the High Street



Overlarge fascia signage in plastic & metal, South Street

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.4 Open Spaces and Public Realm

Market Place retains its prominence as the conservation area's key open space. On market days its important historic function, which forms the foundation of the conservation area's significance, remains appreciable and attracts high footfall, while recent hotel and residential redevelopment within the area has the potential to increase market patronage. However, its market use is generally limited and at other times it is used as a car park, when it loses its sense of place historic legibility. There is opportunity to map out and execute a clear strategy for the sympathetic and dynamic use of Market Place moving forward which would enhance the important historic character and use of the conservation area as a commercial hub.

Street furniture is employed throughout the conservation area by way of seating, planters, bins, bollards and cycle racks. This has the potential to enhance the pedestrian experience, but the amount and design of street furniture in places causes congestion within the street scene, particularly in South Street. This is compounded by the insertion of freestanding wayfinding and advertisement signage and security cameras, and defibrillator stations. There is opportunity to rationalise the design and placement of these elements; any proposed street furniture should be of high quality design and materials which remain sensitive to the historic character of the conservation area.

Recently renewed streetlamps across the conservation area effectively help to demarcate it from its setting. Lampposts should undergo regular maintenance and inspection, and repair when needed.

No historic paving remains within the conservation area apart from granite kerbs and stretches of granite setts which survive in places. Existing paving finishes help to delineate pedestrian areas from mixed-use surfaces. As an array of pavers and patterns have been applied and there is opportunity to rationalise pavement treatments throughout the conservation area to unify its appearance. New public realm surfaces would need to complement area character and be of high quality, durable materials.



Active weekday market in Market Place



An array of street furniture in South Street

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.5 Maintenance and Repair of Buildings

The area as a whole remains in active commercial use, with high footfall and commercial tenancy. Individual listed historic buildings are overall in good condition and play an active role in the public experience of the conservation area.

The condition of other historic buildings varies considerably. There are a number of buildings which are suffering from a lack of maintenance or are in need of repair; this is particularly visible at upper floors. Issues include peeling paint to render, deteriorated render, vegetation growth, peeling paint to metal and timber windows, water damage and staining to stone and brickwork, and loss of glazing. It is critical that the causes of these issues are resolved to prevent reoccurrence and further damage.

While they await redevelopment, poorly maintained or closed commercial sites on Market Place dominate the street scene along its southern side and contribute an accordingly greater degree toward a character of decline than smaller vacant shopfronts. There is opportunity for these buildings to take on meanwhile uses to keep their frontages active, pending safe access.

As well as having an impact on physical building fabric, these maintenance and repair issues harm the appearance of both individual buildings and the wider conservation area. There is guidance on good practice maintenance and repair methods in [Section 6.4](#) and additional sources of guidance in [Further Information and Sources](#).



Degrading façade condition in North Street



Vacant frontages in Market Place considerably detract from area character



Brickwork and glazing damage to locally-listed White Hart façade on the High Street

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.6 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The London Borough of Havering intends to be carbon neutral by 2040, and in March 2023 declared a climate and ecological emergency recognising the threats of climate change to the borough. This issue interacts with the conservation area in a number of ways, including changes to buildings and the way people move around the area.

Havering Council have embedded climate change mitigation and minimising carbon emissions throughout the Local Plan, including within its Strategic Objectives and in Policy 12, Healthy communities and Policy 36, Low carbon design and renewable energy.

5.6.1 Energy Efficiency Upgrades

Whilst the maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable, there is likely to be both a desire amongst residents and tenants and pressure from government over coming decades to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of Romford's historic building stock. Reducing heating requirements combined with using more sustainable sources of heat and power are the two main aspects to consider.

There are many opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of historic buildings which will have no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. These include improving the thermal performance of the building stock through insulating roofs and suspended ground floors, draught exclusion and introducing secondary glazing. Historic and traditionally constructed buildings were designed to be breathable, allowing moisture to naturally exit building fabric. Care needs to be taken to make sure buildings of this type remain breathable, rather than air-tight, through choosing appropriate materials as retaining moisture will harm the fabric of the building.

Care also needs to be taken if external changes are proposed, to ensure they remain sensitive to their historic context. This could include the addition of solar photovoltaic panels on south or east/west facing roofs as an additional heating or hot water source. However, these must not detract from the historic character of the building and are likely to be only acceptable when positioned on rear roof slopes not visible from the public realm. Planning permission will be required for such additions.

5.6.2 Upgrades within the Public Realm

As noted on previous pages, much of the conservation area is already partially pedestrianised, though the parking offered in Market Place regularly brings in a considerable amount of car traffic. Reducing petrol and diesel car use is critical to reducing carbon emissions and there is government commitment to phasing out their sale over the next decade. Petrol and diesel car use will be replaced by a combination of electric (or other carbon-free) vehicles and active, car less travel. Both will require infrastructure changes that will need to be considered in the context of the special interest of the conservation area to ensure they are implemented appropriately.

Electric vehicles require charging points which can be installed within existing car parks and adjacent to street parking bays. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be considered alongside other reductions in street furniture clutter. However, lamppost charging points and wireless charging may become viable in the future which and are likely to be compatible with a conservation area environment.

Encouraging active travel, cycling, walking and the use of e-scooters is also key to reducing carbon emissions. Reducing vehicle movement in the conservation area will improve air quality and make active travel more pleasant and safer; this would in turn have a positive impact on the character of Market Place, the conservation area's most important open space. There is a cycle lane along the High Street already in place, and improved signposting for cycling and walking routes could be introduced elsewhere whilst taking care not to add to visual clutter through excessive increased signage. There are clusters of cycle stands located at the north end of South Street, the west end of the High Street and the east end of Market Place, though their form and colour vary. There is opportunity to rationalise this, and ensure that new stands remain sensitive to area character.



Cycle stands at the west end of the High Street

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.6.3 Trees and Open Green Spaces

Maintaining existing trees and replacing lost or dying trees are an important part of the strategy to tackle climate change and trees also contribute considerably to the special interest of the conservation area. Street trees help to soften the area's urban grain, and contribute to its sense of place.

Permission is needed for any works to trees above a certain size in the conservation area (see [Section 6.3](#)) and justification is required for the loss of any street trees, which should be also be replaced with new trees. A succession planting strategy would be beneficial to ensure existing tree coverage is maintained into the future and opportunities for new trees should also be considered. There is currently a deficiency of green space in the conservation area. Whilst there are limited opportunities for new green public spaces there are opportunities for linking green corridors and pocket parks as well as the greening of existing routes with new street trees.



Trees add to the character of the conservation area in South Street

5.7 Development Opportunity

As a suburb of greater London, Romford has been identified as a strategic site for new housing by the Mayor of London, and schemes must include strong pedestrian links to area railway stations in an effort to promote sustainable travel. This means that there is considerable pressure for new development in Romford, both within the conservation area and its immediate and wider setting.

This can present a challenge in historic areas such as Romford, where the historic character of buildings and townscape is especially sensitive to change. There are a limited number of sites which have been identified as detracting from the special interest of the conservation area in [Section 4.5](#); these present opportunities for the enhancement of historic character through sympathetic redevelopment.

Any proposals for new development both within the conservation area and within its setting should be carefully considered and well designed to ensure that the special interest and character of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset are preserved. Particular attention should be paid to the placement, height, massing and materiality of any proposed development within the conservation area or its setting, also taking important views and the potential impacts of accompanying infrastructure changes into account.

5.8 Interpretation and Raising Awareness

Whilst there is a good level of local appreciation for the historic development of Romford, there are opportunities to increase awareness of the special interest of the conservation area, of the responsibilities and benefits of owning a building in the conservation area and the implications of proposing changes to buildings. There are also opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of building maintenance to prevent degradation amongst local owners and occupiers.

6.0 Managing Change



6.0 Managing Change

6.1 Introduction

Section 6 provides a framework to guide change within the Romford Conservation Area, based on the understanding of its special interest set out in earlier sections of this document. The overarching ambition for the conservation area is to preserve and enhance what is special about it, and thus this is the statutory duty of the Council. This is achieved by ensuring that change and development take place in a considered and sympathetic way, and by raising awareness of and promoting shared responsibility for looking after the conservation area.

The long-term objectives of conservation area management are to phase out past ill-considered changes and additions, and to ensure that new development is of high quality and responds to the conservation area's special character. This applies to very small changes, such as reinstating lost historic features, to proposals for new development both within the conservation area and its setting. In addition, the regular maintenance of buildings is a vital part of preserving both their special interest and physical fabric. Repairs can often be necessary; ensuring that these are undertaken sensitively is an important part of looking after historic buildings and the conservation area as a whole.

The following sections set out how and why change within the conservation area is controlled, good practice advice on maintenance and repair and specific guidance on alterations, extension and new development. Specific recommendations can be found in [Section 6.8](#).

6.2 Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Planning legislation, policy and guidance is utilised when determining applications for development or other changes within the conservation area. This is to ensure that proposals seek to preserve or enhance the area's special interest including the contribution made by its setting.

The primary legislation governing conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This sets out statutory duties for local planning authorities in managing change within conservation areas. Regional and local planning policy reflect this legislation in the protection and enhancement of conservation areas. See the London Borough of Havering's website for details regarding current national policy regarding the historic environment and the relevant policies set out within the Havering Local Plan.

In addition to legislative and policy requirements there is a wealth of best practice guidance and advice available from Historic England and other heritage organisations. When changes are being considered to buildings within and in the setting of the conservation area, it is often helpful to first seek pre-application advice from the Council to gain early guidance on proposals and discuss any constraints or opportunities; details for this can be found on the London Borough of Havering's website.

Links and details of all the relevant policy, guidance and advice can be found in [Further Information and Sources](#).

6.3 Control Measures Brought About by Conservation Area Designation

6.3.1 Restrictions on Permitted Development

In order to protect and enhance the Romford Conservation Area, any changes that take place must preserve, respect or contribute to the character and appearance which makes the conservation area of special interest. Permitted Development Rights, as defined by *The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, are works which can be undertaken without the need to gain planning permission. Permitted Development Rights are different in a conservation area, meaning that planning permission is needed for works which materially affect the external appearance of a building.

This includes, but is not restricted to:

- The total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures (including walls of over 1 metre in height, gate piers and chimneys);
- Other partial demolition including new openings in external elevations;
- Works to trees with a diameter of 75 mm or greater, measured at 1.5 metres from soil level;
- Changes to the external finish of a building (including rendering, pebble dash or other cladding);
- Changes to the roof shape including installation of new dormer windows and chimneys;
- Any extension other than a single-storey rear extension of 4 metres or less (3 metres or less if the house is detached or semi-detached);
- Extensions to the side of buildings;
- Any two-storey extensions;

6.0 Managing Change

- Erection of an outbuilding to the side of a property;
- Aerials and satellite dishes on chimneys or elevations visible from the street;
- Putting up advertisements and other commercial signage (advertising consent may also be required);
- Changing the use of a building (e.g. from residential to commercial); and
- Installing solar panels that are wall-mounted on a wall or roof facing the highway.

For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a conservation area, see the guidance on the Government's Planning Portal or contact the London Borough of Havering Planning Department. It should be noted that proposals which impact listed buildings, including changes to their setting, may also require listed building consent.

6.3.2 Article 4 Directions

The Council can develop bespoke controls to ensure that specific elements of a conservation area are protected from harmful change. This is done through the application of an Article 4 Direction. These provide additional control by specifically revoking certain permitted development rights, meaning that planning permission needs to be sought before work can be undertaken.

Should the Council wish to do so, the process of implementing any new Article 4 Directions will be undertaken at a future date, separate from the adoption of this CAAMP.

6.4 Conservation and the Repair of Buildings

All buildings require maintenance and repair regardless of their age, designation (or lack thereof) or significance. In conservation areas, it is important that such works are carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of buildings and preserve the established character of the wider area. The following sections provide a summary of best practice advice on maintenance and repair. Historic England and other heritage bodies, including the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), provide a wide range of advice and guidance on how to care for and protect historic places, including advice on their maintenance and repair. See [Further Information and Sources](#) for information.

6.4.1 Maintenance

Maintenance is defined as routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order. It differs from repair in that it is a pre-planned, regular activity intended to reduce the instances where remedial or unforeseen work is needed. Regular maintenance ensures that small problems do not escalate into larger issues, lessening the need for repairs, and is therefore cost effective in the long-term. In general maintenance work does not require consent from the Council, however some maintenance works may require consent.

Regular inspection of building fabric and services will help identify specific maintenance tasks relevant to each building. These could include but are not limited to:

- Regularly clearing gutters and drain grilles of debris, particularly leaves;
- Clearing any blockages in downpipes;
- Sweeping of chimneys;
- Removal of vegetation growth on or abutting a building; and
- Repainting or treating timber or metal windows and other external timberwork.

6.4.2 Repair

Repair is defined as work that is beyond the scope of maintenance undertaken to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use, including minor adaptation to achieve a sustainable outcome, but not involving alteration or restoration. Identification of repairs may arise during regular inspection of buildings or following extreme weather events and could include repairing damage to roof coverings, repointing of brickwork or repairs to windows.

It is important to understand the cause of any damage or defects both to ensure that the repair is successful and to minimise the work that is required. It is also important to understand the significance of the built fabric affected in order to minimise harm when enacting a repair. As with maintenance, consent may be required for some types of repair work; it is advisable to discuss with the Council before any work is undertaken.

The following should be considered when planning repair works:

- Repairs should always be considered on a case-by-case basis. A method of repair which is suitable for one building may not be suitable for another.
- Only undertaking the minimum intervention required for any given repair.
- Use materials and construction techniques which match the existing fabric to maintain the appearance and character of the building. The exception to this is when existing materials or techniques are detrimental to the built fabric – for example, cement pointing on a historic brick building.
- Repair is always preferable over the wholesale replacement of a historic feature.

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- If replacement of a historic feature is required – for example, if it has degraded beyond repair – the replacement should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using the same materials and construction techniques. The replaced element should be the same as the original in terms of material, dimensions, method of construction and finish (condition notwithstanding) in order to be classed as like-for-like.
- Like-for-like replacement should not be applied in cases where a historic feature has previously been repaired using inappropriate materials or techniques. When seeking to improve failing modern features or past unsuitable repairs, a traditionally-designed alternative using appropriate materials is preferable, such as breathable, lime-based renders and paints. In such cases planning permission, and in the case of a listed building, listed building consent, may be required.
- Repairs should, where possible, be reversible, as better alternatives may become available in the future.
- Repointing should always be carried out using a lime-based mortar. Within historic and traditionally constructed buildings, cement-based pointing is damaging to brickwork and stonework as it is an impermeable material. Periodic renewal of pointing will extend the lifetime of building fabric.

6.5 Proposing Change to Buildings

6.5.1 Alteration, Extension and Demolition

The appropriateness of demolition, alteration or extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as what is appropriate in one location will not necessarily be acceptable in another. In all cases it is vital to consider the impact of the proposed change on the special interest of the conservation area ensuring that this is preserved or enhanced.

Demolition of buildings that detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area may be beneficial. However, gap sites can also detract from the character of the conservation area, and therefore demolition of whole buildings may only be permitted in instances when rebuilding is proposed, when the site was historically open and this remains appropriate, or when an alternative suitable future use for the site is planned.

Alterations should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, and changes should be sensitive to its prevailing architectural and visual character. Alterations may comprise of the removal of detracting features such as uPVC windows, and where appropriate, their replacement with more historically appropriate versions. Alterations should therefore use appropriate materials for their context, and ideally those that are typically found within the conservation area. This may include timber for windows and doors and brickwork for structural elements. New materials may be appropriate as long as they are complementary to the appearance of the area.

Extensions should be subordinate to the existing buildings in their scale, massing and design, and should ensure that any existing historic features remain legible. Extension to the side and front of buildings is unlikely to be appropriate as this would change the visual appearance of the streetscape, whereas extension to the rear, where space allows, is likely to be more acceptable. All extensions should be of high quality design and construction. Whilst the design may use materials and finishes which are characteristic to the conservation area, there may be scope for use of a wider, less traditional material palette where these are part of a high quality, sensitively-designed extension that complements or enhances the appearance of the original building and the conservation area setting.

6.5.2 Alterations Proposed in Response to Climate Change

There are many opportunities to make changes to historic buildings in the conservation area which will assist in improving their thermal performance and, as a result, tackle climate change. Internal works in unlisted buildings will not require planning permission; however, for any works which affect the exterior of a building it will be required. Any works to listed buildings, both internal and external, will require listed building consent and those to the exterior will also require planning permission.

Internally, adding insulation to roofs or lofts and below suspended ground floors will improve thermal efficiency, and draft exclusion around windows, doors and vents will also be beneficial. Installing secondary glazing will also improve thermal performance, though it is noted that double or triple glazing may be considered appropriate in some conservation area buildings, pending impacts to the character of the building and wider setting. Care should be taken to ensure that traditionally constructed buildings remain sufficiently breathable to avoid causing harm to the fabric of the building.

6.0 Managing Change

Externally, solar panels could be installed on rear roof slopes not visible from the public realm. Where solar panels are proposed to be installed to listed buildings, even on rear roof slopes, listed building consent will be required. Other renewable energy sources could be considered, such as ground, air or water-sourced heat pumps, so long as they do not detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The installation of electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) will require planning permission, and care should be taken when installing any outlets, conduit, etc. in historic building fabric to avoid unnecessary fabric loss and minimise the visual impact of the EVCP in views from the street. EVCPs often require vehicles to be parked at close range; the impact of this on the character and appearance of the street and wider conservation area should be carefully considered.

6.5.3 Modern Additions to Historic Buildings

Proposed modern additions to buildings should be carefully considered to ensure they are both necessary and appropriate to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The removal of unsympathetic features such as redundant external wiring, satellite dishes and television aerials should be undertaken proactively, as this will remove visual clutter and thus enhance the appearance of the conservation area. The installation of new television aerials and satellite dishes on a wall, chimney or roof slope that faces onto and is visible from the conservation area public realm (generally to front and side elevations) requires planning permission and is discouraged. The visibility of such features detracts from the appearance of the conservation area; therefore care should be taken to locate these items discreetly, ideally to the rear of buildings.

6.5.4 Windows, Doors and Drainage Goods

There have been instances in which uPVC units have been used to replace historic windows. uPVC doors and plastic gutters and drainpipes also found on historic buildings in places throughout the conservation area. Plastic or uPVC elements are not in keeping with the appearance or character of a historic building, and thus detract from the special interest of the conservation area. Therefore, replacement of historic or traditional windows, doors and drainage goods is discouraged unless they are damaged beyond repair. Where such replacement is necessary this should be in materials and styles appropriate to the building. Where inappropriate replacement has already been undertaken, returning these features back to their traditional appearance is encouraged. The proportions and type of window will be dependent upon the age and style of an individual building.

Doors and window frames should be painted in appropriate colours. Changes in colour beyond a shade lighter or darker of the existing colours will likely require planning permission, with decisions based on surrounding context and appropriate historic precedent. Drainage goods would have historically been painted cast iron or lead; however other metals may be appropriate subject to their detailed design.

6.5.5 Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments are applied sparingly throughout the conservation area. Inappropriate or low-quality existing boundary treatments should be replaced when opportunities arise. When new boundary treatments are proposed, these should remain sensitive to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and avoid introducing clutter to the street scene.

6.5.6 Shopfronts and Signage

Retail is an important function at the heart of the conservation area, and therefore the design and appearance of shopfronts is important to preserving and enhancing its character. Changes to shopfronts will require planning permission, and, if part of a listed building, listed building consent. Changes to signage and advertising will require advertisement consent.

A shopfront is part of a building as a whole, rather than being a separate entity. The design of shopfronts therefore needs to reflect the style, proportions, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailing of the rest of the building, particularly the principal elevation. This is the case for both buildings which historically contained retail at ground floor and where a shopfront has been a later insertion.

Where historic or existing shopfronts contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, they should be retained and enhanced where possible. Any historic shopfront features which survive should be retained, repaired as necessary, and incorporated into new schemes, rather than being replaced or concealed. It would be desirable to reinstate historic features, such as corbels and pilasters where these have been lost and the placement of them, or vestiges of their original design, remain.

6.0 Managing Change

Where it is appropriate to replace all or parts of a shopfront, traditional styles and materials are likely to be most appropriate in historic buildings, but non-traditional, sympathetically designed shopfronts would be appropriate in modern and new buildings. The replacement of inappropriate modern alterations to shopfronts with suitably-designed traditional alternatives is encouraged. The use of plastic and metal is not considered to be appropriate in historic contexts.

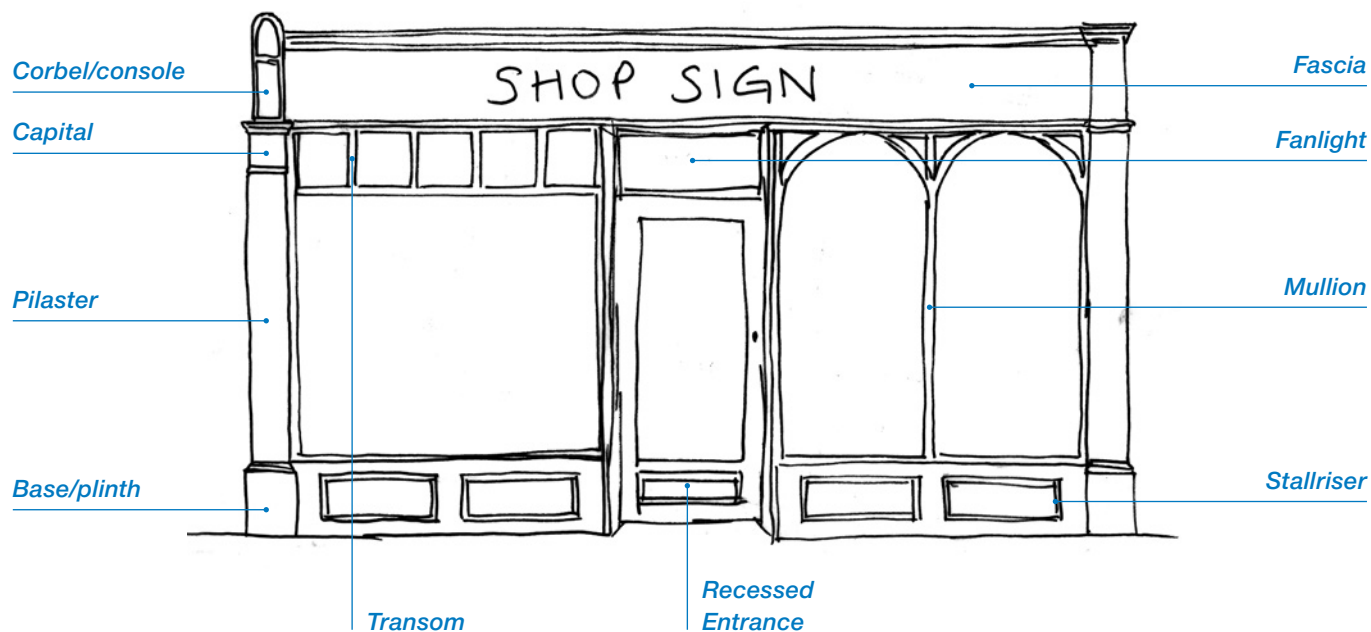
Pilasters, cornices, fascias and stall risers are all important elements in creating the visual proportions of traditional shopfronts within historic buildings; please see sketch opposite for a diagram of these features. Fascias are of notable importance and should be in proportion to the rest of the shopfront; they should not be overly large or extend above cornice level or beyond the corbels on either side. Full height glazing is a modern feature and does not reflect the character of historic buildings, though may be considered appropriate in more recent buildings.

The design and detailing of advertising and signage content, both on fascias, hanging signs and any free-standing signage, are also important in the conservation area. The signage should complement the design of the shopfront and building, conveying a sense of permanence and quality. Colour palettes, lettering style and illumination need to be considered in the design of a complementary shopfront. With regards to illumination, internally lit signage is generally considered inappropriate within the conservation area context; subtle external lighting is more appropriate. Careful consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of free-standing signage such as A-boards as these can cause visual clutter and physical impediment to pedestrian movement.

There are examples of fabric canopies within the conservation area and such features can add interest to the street scene if they are of an appropriate design which also considers impacts on neighbouring shopfronts and longer street views. Canopies should avoid obscuring historic features, should be retractable and be made of canvas. Dutch-style canopies, which are visible when retracted, are not appropriate.

Canopies would have traditionally been positioned above fascia signage and this is therefore the most appropriate position for replacement or new canopies; projecting hanging signage will allow the shop name and advertising to remain visible when the canopy is down. Installation of canopies will require consent from the Council.

Components of a Traditional Shopfront



6.0 Managing Change

6.6 New Development

6.6.1 New Development within the Conservation Area

Some sites comprise detracting buildings, the sensitive replacement or redevelopment of which could enhance the conservation area's appearance. There may also be opportunities to redevelop buildings which make a neutral contribution to the conservation area. Any new or replacement development needs to take account of, and remain sensitive to, the following:

- The significance of any building proposed for demolition;
- The significance of the relationship between any building to be removed and adjacent structures and spaces;
- The potential to draw inspiration from the historic use and character of a site;
- The significance or contribution of any gap site; is it a historic gap within the street frontage or does it detract?;
- The potential impact of proposals on known or potential archaeological remains;
- The potential impact of proposals on the setting of any neighbouring listed buildings;
- The materials and architectural detailing characteristic of the area - these should be a key point of reference in the choice of materials and detailing for proposed new development;
- The scale and grain of the surrounding area, including historic plot boundaries;

- The proposed height of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the surrounding context; and
- The potential impact of proposals on important views and the prominence of landmark buildings within the conservation area.

The above list is not exhaustive; each location will present its own unique requirements for sensitive and appropriate proposed development. In all cases, new development must be of high quality design, construction and detailing. The principal aim of new development should be to preserve or enhance the character of its immediate setting and the conservation area as a whole.

6.6.2 New Development in the Setting of the Conservation Area

The setting of the conservation area contributes considerably to its special interest, and it has been identified that there are opportunities for new development within this setting. New development should remain sensitive to its location within the setting of the designated heritage asset and enhance or preserve, rather than harm, its special interest. Proposed new development should be of the highest quality design and execution, regardless of scale, in order to achieve this and, where relevant, help phase out ill-considered and unsympathetic interventions from the past.

6.7 Public Realm

The public realm, namely publicly accessible streets and open spaces, is the area from which the majority of people will experience the conservation area. Preserving and enhancing its character and appearance is therefore of considerable importance for maintaining the special interest of the area. The public realm consists not only of street surfaces, but the street furniture, street signs and interpretation.

A sensitive and holistic approach to change and improvement to the public realm within an overarching strategy is needed, including changes to road infrastructure to encourage cycling and walking. Any additions or amendments to the public realm will also need to take account of highways and other relevant regulations.

There are areas where surface finishes could benefit from replacement with rationalised, high quality surface treatments. Care should be taken to ensure future public realm works are considered for the longer term and materials both for street furniture and surface treatments are durable and of high quality, and remain sensitive to the character of the conservation area.

There are opportunities to alleviate the green space deficit in the conservation area through sensitively-design linking green corridors and pocket parks along with new street tree planting.

In addition to street furniture, road signage, freestanding shop signage, broadband cabinets and items such as inappropriately located café seating can collectively cause excessive clutter within the public realm and detract physically and visually from the pedestrian experience of the conservation area. Applications associated with features within the public realm should be carefully considered to make certain that public streets remain pleasant and attractive places to be whilst ensuring that commercial activities can continue successfully.

Installation of vehicle e-charging points are likely to become a feature of the street scene in the near future. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be considered alongside other elements of street furniture.

6.0 Managing Change

6.8 Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities within the conservation area identified in [Section 5](#), and in light of the guidance on managing change provided in Section 6 over previous pages. These recommendations are designed to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special interest of the Romford Conservation Area.

- 01 The historic environment of Romford, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area, should be maintained to ensure the area remains a desirable place to live, work and visit.
- 02 Strategies for the long-term and sensitive use of Market Place as an open commercial space which enhance the historic character of the conservation area should be carefully considered.
- 03 Proposals for extension, alteration and new development should preserve or enhance the special interest of the conservation area, or where the public benefits would outweigh any harm. New development should integrate contextual design and prioritize the preservation and enhancement of the area's distinctive character.
- 04 The design, construction and materials of any new development, extension, alteration or repair should be of the highest quality and respect their local context.
- 05 Development within the setting of the conservation area should be sympathetic to its special interest in terms of its scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing. Applicants proposing new development in the setting of the conservation area should assess and describe the likely impact of their proposals on the significance and character of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- 06 Trees which contribute to the character of the conservation area should be retained, or replaced as necessary; opportunities for additional tree planting, linking green corridors and pocket parks and other green landscaping should also be carefully considered, ensuring it is sensitive whilst working to alleviate the current green space deficit in the conservation area.
- 07 Enhancement of the public realm is encouraged including appropriate surface treatments and with potential for integration with heritage interpretation.
- 08 Changes to buildings in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 09 Careful removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings and the street scene is encouraged.
- 10 Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as timber or metal windows to upper floors or corbels and stall risers on shopfronts within historic frontages is encouraged, where appropriate.
- 11 Replacement of inappropriate modern alterations to shopfronts with suitably designed traditional or sympathetically designed alternatives is encouraged.
- 12 The condition of the conservation area should be monitored and reviewed periodically.

Further Information and Resources



Further Information and Sources

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Consulted Archives

Havering Library and Local Studies

Historic England archive

Further Sources of Information

For further study, the following archives hold material that may be of relevance to the history and significance of Romford:

- Havering Library and Local Studies
- London Metropolitan Archive
- Essex Record Office
- The National Archives
- Historic England Archive

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation, Planning Policy and Best Practice Guidance

The following legislation, policy documents and guidance have been utilised in undertaking the conservation area review and preparing this report.

- a Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- b Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (specifically Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

- c London Borough of Havering, Havering Local Plan (2016-2031)
- d London Borough of Havering, Havering Character Study (August 2024)
- e London Borough of Havering Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal (May 2024)
- f Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance
- g Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019)
- h Historic England, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008)
- i Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017)
- j Historic England Advice Note 18. Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy Carbon Efficiency (July 2024)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Listed buildings and conservation areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest. Designation gives conservation areas protection as alterations, additions or demolitions are controlled by the need for planning permission, which is required by local planning authorities when change is proposed. Section 69 of the Act details the protection of conservation areas and is reproduced below, of specific reference is section (1):

Further Information and Sources

'Section 69 Designation of Conservation Areas

(1) Every local planning authority:

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as Conservation Areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being designated as a Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a Conservation Area.

(4) The designation of any area as a Conservation Area shall be a local land charge.'

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for new development within England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF 'is a presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The most recent version of the NPPF was published in 2023 and of relevance to the current review is Section 16 – 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', in particular paragraph 197:

'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.'

Also of relevance are paragraphs 212 and 213:

'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.'

Planning Practice Guidance

In 2014 the government launched the Planning Practice Guidance website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>). The guidance is a live document intended to provide further detailed information with regard to the implementation of the NPPF. It includes the section 'Historic environment', which advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition)

This Historic England advice note, published in 2019, supports the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas through conservation area appraisal, designation and management. Of great relevance to the review of the Romford Conservation Area are the following paragraphs:

'10 Conservation area designation is undertaken to recognise the historic character of an area and/or in answer to the impact of development, neglect and other threats, on areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest. The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area and the effect of those impacts bearing negatively on its significance. It will form part of the local planning authority's Historic Environment Record and will be part of the evidence base for the local plan and a material consideration in planning decisions.'

Further Information and Sources

'77 Under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in their districts from time to time. Regularly reviewed appraisals, or shorter condition surveys, identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into a management plan that is specific to the area's needs. In turn, this can channel development to conserve the Conservation Area's special qualities. Both areas in relative economic decline and those under pressure for development can benefit from management proposals that promote positive change.'

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

Conservation Principles was published by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2008. It provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment, wherein 'Conservation is defined as the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations'. The guidance also provides a set of four heritage values, which are used to assess significance. The values are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition)

The significance of a heritage asset is not only derived from its physical presence but also from its setting and the surroundings in which it is experienced. The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) published in 2017 by Historic England provides guidance on managing change within the setting of a heritage asset. It recommends the following staged approach to the assessment of proposals during design evolution under Part 2: Setting and Views:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Contact Details

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APPENDIX A: LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS IN ROMFORD CONSERVATION AREA

ASSET NAME	REFERENCE	AGE	DESCRIPTION	ADDRESS
The Bull Inn	SE18	1920s	Public House in Neo-Georgian design with attractive symmetry. Two storey brick building with Georgian detailing such as strong course, cornice, and pilasters.	Market Place, RM1 3ER
9 Market Place (HSBC)	SE22	1905	HSBC bank in Neo-Jacobean design. Three storeys plus attic, red brick and bath stone construction. High quality decorative stonework and canted bays. Later third bay extension of detrimental impact to building	Market Place, RM1 3AF
Lloyds Bank	SE20	1920s/1930s	Corner building built as a bank. Of brick construction with bath stone plinth and colonnade at ground floor. Attractive example of Neo-Georgian style well displayed on its corner position.	North Street, RM1 3AA
28 Market Place	SE23	1840s-1910s	Surviving eastern gable of a 19th century building. Timber clad exterior with oriel window on first floor. Two storey building with brick ground floor, rear of building of brick construction. Original building of historic and architectural merit although highly damaged by later alterations.	Market Place, RM1 3ER
Quadrant Arcade	SE30	1935	L-shaped shopping centre of three storeys, facing onto Market Square and South Street. Attractive example of Streamline Art Deco design. Brick building with stone detailing.	South Street, RM1 1NJ
The Co-op Bank	SE21	1932	Three-storey corner building of brick construction with Portland Stone ground floor. Good example of Neo-Georgian design with high quality detailing in fenestration and brickwork.	South Street, RM1 4XP
Prudential Building	SE8	1910s-1940s	Four-storey corner building in Neo-Georgian form. Building is in brick construction and with stone dressing and tile mansard roof. Building faces onto South Street and High Street, forming an attractive corner on a historic crossroad.	High Street, RM1 3RA
The White Hart (The Bitter End)	SE10	1896	Two and half storey brick building in English domestic Revival style. Shopfront altered to detriment of building. Eclectic design incorporating brickwork, woodwork and distinctive dormer windows that break the roofline.	High Street, RM1 1JU
Romford Brewery, High Street, Romford	SE9	1851	Now Havering Museum. Large former brewery of yellow brick construction, now Havering Museum. Prominent feature within the conservation area. Attractive example of 19th century industrial architecture with classical motifs.	High Street, RM1 1JU

APPENDIX A: LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS IN ROMFORD CONSERVATION AREA

ASSET NAME	REFERENCE	AGE	DESCRIPTION	ADDRESS
23-35 High Street	SE7	1840s-1910s	A row of 6 late-nineteenth century shops. Of brick construction with shop fronting and classical motifs. Fine 19th century detailing such as terracotta clad gables, pilasters delineating bays, hexagonal chimney stacks, and oriel windows. Shopfront detrimental to building.	High Street, RM1 1JL
The Woolpack	SE11	1890s	Late-nineteenth century pub. Three storeys of brick construction with stone dressings and slate roof. Mock Tudor timber work in gables. Dental string course run along building.	High Street, RM1 1JL
64 South Street	SE24	1912	Neo-Georgian Post Office designed by Albert Robert Myers. Brick construction with fine stone dressing to windows and two flanking stone gables on first storey. Front elevation has fine detailing and a strong example of the Neo-Georgian style.	South Street, RM1 1RB
131 south street	SE29	1937	Neo-Georgian building on prominent corner position. Brick with stone dressings. Large slate roof with deep eaves. Brick quoin detailing at corners. Corner entrance has simple arched pediment.	South Street, RM1 1NX
113-117 South Street	SE28	Post 1947	Three storey brick buildings with white cement pilasters delineating window bays. Shallow fluting in pilasters. Attractive facade with raised central four bays in simple Art Deco style. Ground floor shopfront of lesser quality.	South Street, RM1 1NX
103-111 South Street	SE27	1912-1947	Three-storey, eight bay commercial buildings. Painted cream and white with Art Deco detailing. Ground floor has been altered extensively with Tuscan columns, upper floors of higher artistic design quality.	South Street, RM1 1NX
99-101 South Street	SE26	1914-1947	Three-storey, seven bay-brick building with stone detailings. Projecting central bay with stone pediment at the top. Strong example of early twentieth century commercial design. Shopfront on ground floor altered with modern marble pillars.	South Street, RM1 1NX
97 South Street	SE25	1914-1947	Neo-Georgian style building in gault brick with projecting central window bay on first floor. Two storey, three bay with strong symmetry. Fine Neo-Georgian window surrounds with pediment. Shopfront of lesser and detracting quality.	South Street, RM1 1NX

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