



The Character Areas

The choice of character areas in Dunmow is in practice quite difficult. After much deliberation the simple approach of basing it on building phases has been adopted as it is this in general that can be said to determine the character.

The obvious exception is the town centre which we have taken to be the conservation area. In addition to the built areas there are very significant areas of green space both within and forming the setting of the town which have been briefly described in the preceding section. The point was made there that the importance of some of these cannot be overstated. They will be touched on where relevant in the character areas section following but will be given their own section in the guidelines that follow.

The description and analysis of the character areas follows the structure outline below:

- The main types of building and materials
- Key features
- Trees
- Open space
- Floorscape – paving etc
- Signs
- Boundaries
- Building types
- Building height
- Materials
- Roof
- Walls
- Windows

The issues – change / no change / improvement / deterioration. Suggested design principles for:

- New development
- Changes or extensions
- Enhancements

The character areas chosen are as follows:

- High Street – Stortford Road – New Street
Mill Lane – The Close
- North Street – The Causeway
- Church End
- The Downs – Beaumont Hill
- The Avenue – Station Road
- Oakroyd Avenue – Highfields – St Edmunds Lane – Millfields – Newton Green
- Tenterfields – High Stile – Woodview – Normansfield
- Lukins Drive – High Meadow – The Maltings – Harris Green – Granary Court – Haslers Lane
- Woodlands Park
- Industrial Estates



High Street

This part of the character assessment relates to High Street from Station Road in the south to and Market place in the north then extending to Stortford Road as far as Rosemary Lane and North Street as far as its junction with the Downs / Rosemary Lane.

It makes up a large part of the conservation area and represents the early modern town as it existed at the end of the 19th Century. The underlying structure as we have demonstrated above is more ancient and it reflects both the roman and mediaeval origins of Dunmow.

This is a linear and interconnected series of spaces with Market Place, not a formal space but an enlarged street, at its centre. The space is created by buildings for the most part two storeys high built at the back of a footway. The proportions of the space created – the ratio of building height to width of street – is important. The space curves this way and that so that there are few if any vistas. Views are closed by the curving façade of building or as in the case of Market Place by buildings projecting at right angles. This meandering pattern reflects the pre urban routes and the gradual evolution of a multitude of plots.

Within this overall pattern there is very great complexity. This comes from the variation in heights, façade materials, features such as windows and doors, roof shapes and roofing materials. There is no dominant style from any period. Whilst the majority of building structures are probably 17th or 18th century there are numerous examples of later fronts being applied and there are a few more modern buildings; none of which, it has to be said, distinguish themselves. The diversity in style and appearance is of course multiplied by the mix of uses. This is the town centre and there is a variety of commercial and retail frontages with a number of surviving residential properties. This in turn produces the activity and movement. Pedestrians on the one hand and vehicles serving the commercial premises much of which takes place from the main routes.

There are no outstanding architectural buildings in the centre but a number of prominent and highly attractive buildings nonetheless. The Old Town Hall, Starr Inn, Saracens Head and the Dunmow Club for instance. Other buildings of great value such as the hall on the west side of High Street and the priest houses and chapel referred to above are harder to appreciate as they are hidden behind modest and altered facades.

The two storey buildings form the frontage of narrow plots that run backwards from the street. The system of burgage plots is very distinctive in some medieval market towns. In Dunmow it would not appear to have been so dominant. Nevertheless this plot structure is also an important aspect of the character. However, whilst some of these survive, in the period since the late 19th century the plots have been successively developed and this plot structure has become less obvious. This has been due to new buildings or the creation of car parks. The result is that the narrow and simple Y shape of the centre has been progressively 'in-filled'.

This is a typical process seen in many old towns.

In view of the diversity described above it is difficult to come up with a dominant set of materials and style and to arrive at clear recommendations.

Nevertheless the following appraisal attempts to identify key aspects and design features as one moves through the centre from the south end to the north.

The predominant architectural form is a two storey rendered building with a relatively wide frontage and shallow in depth parallel to the street with either casement horizontal windows or vertical sash window, a handmade tiled roof and invariably a number of chimneys, some very large. The roof shapes can be plain and as above parallel or have projecting gables or, in the case of some corner or end building a hipped roof. The eaves heights vary, sometimes subtly, sometimes quite markedly and this together with the curving of facades gives the street much of its 'rhythm'. The Starr Inn is a perfect example of this range of details in one building and the Saracens Head a good example of a wide frontage with a simple plan roof and vertical sash windows.



The commercial premises tend to be larger and more imposing as befits their purpose and may be converted from other uses such as the Chapel that now houses the art gallery. Banks on the whole tend to occupy quite modest buildings. Shop fronts vary enormously. The typical Victorian shop front is quite common – a fascia and pilasters (or columns) at either side. Earlier survivals such as the Delicatessen are uncommon. There are a number of very elaborate and impressive door cases.

There are a number of more prominent buildings. The Council offices and Post Office stand back and are large in scale. They differ in style and materials. The Old Town Hall on the corner of Market Place is prominent and can be seen from a number of viewpoints.

To the south end the structure is not so strong and there are a number of modest domestic buildings on the west inside, set back somewhat. To the east now on the corner of the Braintree Road a new façade has been established in a vernacular style with a residential block. This has created a precedent since this plot was not built up previously. The facade to the north on the east side has also been redeveloped in recent times introducing a three story mixed use block and the demolition of the Dunmow Inn and redevelopment of the White Street site will bring further significant change.

Moving north, there is a prominent building at the corner of New Street but it is followed by a gap in the façade made by the car park of the Dunmow Club.

New Street – new in the 16th century that is – has a very narrow opening and has modest two storey frontages at the back of narrow footways making a very confined street, curving gently.

Our aim is to ensure that new development respects valued features and where possible strengthens the landscape structure of the town.

To the east of High street is the White Street / Mill Lane area. White Street, once known as Back Lane appears to have delineated the original Market Place – fascinating if true. Nowadays it merely gives access to the frontages in High Street and to a few retail outlets but more problematically to the White Street car park and the Coop store. The redevelopment of this area will radically alter its appearance and the traffic circulation. The opportunity therefore exists to achieve a much higher standard of environment and it is to be hoped that the entrance to White Street and the ‘square’ in front of the proposed library are designed and built to a very high standard giving priority to pedestrians.

The Co-op store whilst providing valuable food retailing in the centre makes absolutely no concessions to its setting. It is hard to see how this situation can be improved in the short term and the visual impact and the servicing problems will continue to detract from the town centre environment.

The entrances to Market Place are one of the key delights of Dunmow. From each direction, but especially from North Street the space is dynamic and appealing. The obvious rejoinder to this is the volume of traffic that uses it and the very poor quality and high risk of the public realm. There is enormous scope here to enhance the buildings, to improve pedestrian safety and to produce a space that is a credit to and a symbol of Dunmow.

The narrow neck of Market Place is one of the key design features closing as it does the view northwards. The effect on traffic can be said to be beneficial by slowing it down but a lesser volume of traffic would produce more benefits. The pedestrian (and a few cars) can opt to take Starr Lane to leave Market Place and will enter the beautiful and unique environment of the Downs and Doctors pond. Taking North Street the road is built up on the west with two storey houses hard to the footway whereas on the east modern development is set back with a wide and poorly designed and maintained verge. Doctors Pond and the former brewery to the east side provide a gap in the street which then narrows again and beyond the Library is linked with attractive two storey houses, some of great charm. The restoration of the Kings Head is a welcome step after what seemed like a threat to this important building.

Leaving Market Place along the Stortford Road the street narrows perceptibly and is lined with two storey buildings, houses and businesses that line a very narrow footway as far as the Chequers Inn where Chequers Lane has effectively destroyed the frontage that existed on the west side. The possible redevelopment of the car park presents a valuable opportunity to reinforce this side of Stortford Road. Further north the Foakes Hall and the garage are set back and the intervening car park allows views over the Downs. The Foakes Hall is an invaluable and treasured building made more useful with the tennis courts behind. Nevertheless perhaps more could be done to integrate the building and site more successfully into the street scene. The garage building is art deco in style and attractive in its own right but the conglomeration of cars around it detract somewhat. This kind of use in the town centre poses real dilemmas and is vulnerable to redevelopment.

The environment of Stortford Road is seriously undermined by the volume and speed of traffic. Some buildings, no doubt due in part to the above, are in poor repair. Nevertheless it houses a number of well used businesses and had a number of attractive frontage building with significant historic merit in some cases.

Spaces and the public realm in the town centre

The quality of the public realm – that is, the footways and surfaces and public spaces between the buildings – has been touched on. However it is a vital element in the appearance and character of the town. By any standards and with very few exceptions the quality of the public realm is very poor and seriously detracts from the quality and image of the town centre. The materials used in the surfaces are at best utilitarian and are in places sub standard. Angel Lane and the White Street car park are good examples. The use of high quality materials would go a long way to enhancing the experience of walking around and using the town centre. The Angel Lane car park which houses the market could be included in such a scheme. Throughout, the use of standard concrete tiles should be reconsidered and wherever possible stone and more natural materials introduced.

Lighting is general unsympathetic and there are a plethora of signs and posts that detract from the street scene.

Market Place is as has been suggested the one place where a coordinated sympathetic and high quality approach would reap dividends.

There are a few trees in the centre but consideration should be given to introducing more in order to re establish the former appearance.

Above all, in adopting an entirely new and more design led approach to the public realm in the town centre, is the need to address the traffic volumes. Suggestions have been made in the recent traffic study that have the potential to achieve significant improvement. This reduction should be capitalised on to create a much more pedestrian friendly environment and to reduce traffic speeds throughout. Whilst pedestrianisation is probably unwise an approach that gives pedestrians more priority whilst enhancing safety has the potential to be win-win. Win for business as more people local and visitors are persuaded to use the centre and win for people.

Recommendations for HIGH STREET – policy, funding and design

- An audit of the street scene should be carried out with a view to identifying short and long term improvements, especially improved street furniture.
- Investigations should be made urgently into the implementation of the re-routeing proposals in the Traffic Study so that greater pedestrian priority can be achieved in High Street and Stortford Rd and the pedestrianisation of Market Place considered. A scheme for resurfacing High Street in whole or in part should be developed in consultation by skilled and experienced designers.
- Design standards should be urgently adopted for all street maintenance and alterations.
- A street tree strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency.
- An assessment of the accessibility of the various parts of the town to the centre should be carried out with a view to a strategy for foot and cycle access being enhanced.
- Funding should be sought to support improvements and repairs to properties.
- Any redevelopment in the centre should make a financial contribution to the enhancement of the public realm.
- A shop front design guide should be produced to guide new shop fronts and to guide alterations and improvements
- A property survey should be carried out to establish the amount of and further scope for residential use of upper floors.
- Design briefs should be prepared for potential development and redevelopment sites.
- Any redevelopment proposal should submit a detailed contextual study that comprehensively identifies materials, plots, heights and access for pedestrians.
- Any redevelopment should make provision for safe pedestrian access and cycle access and storage and should minimise the exclusive use of routes by vehicles where safety can be ensured.

- Any new buildings should incorporate a wide frontage and narrow plan that is typical of the town centre, be pitched roof and should be two storeys in height or where justified, through the context assessment a maximum of three storeys.
- Further redevelopment of rear plots should only take place where the existing boundaries and any re usable existing buildings are maintained.
- Further redevelopment should be mixed use and make provision for commercial or retail space.
- The historic study of Great Dunmow should be up-dated and published and interpretative information should be provided at accessible and important locations in the town to inform residents and visitors of the evolution of the town.



Our aim is to ensure that new development enhances people's accessibility by walking and cycling to the town's services and amenities.

North Street - The Causeway - Beaumont Hill

North Street is narrow and fronted by two storey mostly terraced houses with rendered walls and slate roofs. The buildings are probably Victorian.

The library and former school adjoining Doctors Pond are distinctive, in brick but not outstanding. There are a few former shops, now residential denoting the fact that this street with its brewery was once far livelier. Opposite the school is the Kings Head pub an outstanding building still under renovation.

The brick terrace extends northwards on one side of the Causeway. These brick houses are charming and well preserved on the whole. Causeway overlooks the recreation ground and views outwards over the Chelmer Valley. Further north there are a number of fine large detached houses including the Clock House, the oldest house in Dunmow with its historical associations. Otherwise Causeway has a variety of modern and undistinguished houses, mostly detached. The area suffers from heavy traffic and roadside and pavement parking. There is a vet's surgery but otherwise it is residential.

Further north still Beaumont Hill is a ribbon of historical cottages many of which are thatched. These are built at the back of the footway and thus the road is well enclosed; but with parking on the pavements as a result. It leads to the Parsonage Downs one of the most distinctive and attractive spaces in the town formed by an edge of cottages and houses of considerable character if now dominated to an extent by the modern conglomeration of Helen Romanes School.

There is very little development in depth but the Woodlands Park housing estate is sadly encroaching from the west. Amongst the 19th and earlier houses there are a number of modern and undistinguished mostly detached houses.

Better management of parking in the Causeway would be beneficial.

The future of the Library site should be given careful consideration and the highest standards set for any changes that take place. A site brief taking into account the existing buildings, the setting and its community use is essential to secure a high standard of development.

Church end

Church End is the site of the original medieval town. It is dominated by the tower of the church which can also be seen from many points in Dunmow.

The ancient road pattern can still be seen and there is a diverse range of building types with a particularly attractive and complex range of buildings at the elbow bend in Lime Tree Hill.

Church Street is lined on one side with 18th century or earlier two storey houses with many historic features. On the west side a new housing development has been built in a traditional style with some success. The churchyard has many mature trees that form a prominent feature in the wider view.

Materials are mostly rendering with slate roofs and sash type windows. However there are a range of materials and a few more modern and far less sympathetic dwellings.

The pub is a significant building but appears not to be commercially viable and hence may be under some threat.

Traffic through the area is dense and sometimes fast detracting from its otherwise calm character.

The Floorscape is mostly modern but with remaining granite kerbs. Overall it detracts from the outstanding character of the houses.

The Angel and Harp plays a very important role in the area. Urgent consideration should be given to improving traffic management and slowing vehicle speeds at this bad bend.

The Avenue and Station Road

Introduction

These two streets were initially developed in the early 1900s by Hasler and Clapham, the millers and seed merchants whose premises were on the opposite side of Chelmsford Road. The land, known as White Post Pasture, had previously been part of Dunmow Park and was used as the town's football field.

The Avenue

The earliest houses in the road, which bear the date 1907, are bay-fronted semi-detached properties, notable for their very tall chimneys. Later development included 1910s-20s terraced and 1930s semi-detached houses. Gaps between these earlier groups have been 'infilled' with detached houses built between 1970 and 2000, together with a group of new bungalows in White Post Field. Unsurprisingly, most of the older properties show signs of modification, in many cases uPVC windows have replaced the original wooden sashes, and original roofing has been replaced.

The most notable feature of the road is the near-complete avenue of pairs of pollarded plane trees, planted when the development began in 1907. Originally these were set in unkerbed grass strips which ran the length of the street. The grass was removed as recently as the late 1980s and replaced with asphalt in response to the demand for parking spaces. The small front gardens have low walls, in a number of cases topped by the original cast iron railings. Apart from the trees, it is now parked cars and the overhead power and telephone lines which dominate the street.

Station Road

Station Road has housing only on the north side, since the street originally overlooked the goods yard and Dunmow railway station.

The buildings are similar to those in The Avenue, beginning with handsome brick-and-stone villas and semi-detached houses, then two terraces, and ending with houses built in the 1960s and 1970s (including a courtyard development of retirement bungalows). Again some of the earlier houses have been modified, in some cases with unsympathetic front extensions.

Telephone poles dominate the street here also.

The station and goods yard have been replaced by an industrial estate, now hidden from the houses by a dense hedge.

The last of the railway-related buildings (a wooden coal-merchants' sales office) was replaced in the 1990s by an attractive, single-storey office building of an interesting, chapel-like, octagonal design in red brick with a leaded slate roof. Consideration should be given to removing the overhead wires in these streets and to the better management of street parking.

High Stile:

High Stile has significant mature trees that make the approach from the main road very pleasant. This is a key feature. The houses are family home size, mainly detached and lay back from the road. A significant building is the 1930's style house on the corner which has now been included in the conservation area. There is adequate parking in the road for the residential properties and the road is wide, however parking problems for the primary school have created a great deal of signage, that out of school hours appear superfluous, but is no doubt necessary.

Access is good from the main road, but only out of school hours, when the road is unable to cope with the traffic. Verges are well kept and most houses have retained their front gardens giving a sense of maturity and space. There are few obvious boundaries with most front gardens bordering onto the footpath with a hedge or planting. The houses are of varying styles and mostly individual with the majority being from a period 1940's to 1950's.

Highfields:

Once one turns from High Stile into Highfields there is a completely different feel.

There are no trees on the verges on Highfields. The verges are well kept and the houses lay well back from the road. The houses are a mix of detached, semi detached and single storey and have mainly been built in the 1950's with some exceptions.

There is good space between them and the majority have retained their front gardens, with hedges and small trees - this is what gives the road a greener feel, given the absence of trees in the public space. Many boundaries are low walls with planting. There are no significant buildings in Highfields. At the end of Springfield where the footpath joins New Street there is a new development of cottages on the site of an old barn/works.

This is a really nice development in keeping with the New Street area and shows what can be achieved in a small space. The door furniture and sash windows reflect the Victorian style of New Street and access and parking in such a small space have been utilised well. The floorscape is pavers and this adds to a light and airy feel in a small space.

A significant building here is the old barn/workshop that has been changed into a residential property having been empty for years.

Springfields / Woodview Road.

Blocks of 1960's housing – the majority two storeys, semi detached and detached (in Woodview Road).

There are no trees at all in Woodview Road and the houses are all in regimented rows with virtually the same plot size and roof height.

The floorscape is plain tarmac and the absence of trees or hedges gives the area tired boring feel.

The majority of houses have kept their front gardens, but some have been paved over for parking. The road here is much narrower and reflects the 1960's lack of space for cars. There are no key features and no significant buildings. Boundaries are close boarded fences with concrete posts in many cases and at the end of Woodview Road with Springfields the view is just fences.

There is a parcel of land behind Woodview Road that has been earmarked for development although there are traffic considerations as to whether this will go ahead – given the access to High Stile in school hours.

Tenterfields/Venmore Drive:

Although this is in a different part of Dunmow it suffers many of the comments made in respect of Springfields and Woodview Road.

All 1960's housing, all semi detached of the same height and plot size. One or two single storey houses towards the Chelmer Valley. Building materials are concrete tiled roofs, brick built, and many having replacement plastic windows. The windows are of the 1960's "picture window" type.

The floorscape is completely tarmac and there are no trees to speak of. As with other 1960's housing the houses lie back from the road and have reasonable sized front gardens.

Tenterfields is the access road to other roads on the estate and to Venmore Drive with a cul de sac at the end and suffers parking problems because of this.

Many front gardens have been paved over for parking. There are no significant buildings in Tenterfields. Boundaries at the front are mixed and mainly low many with little or no planting.

Tenterfields does however, have good views of the Chelmer valley and the trees within this green area more than make up for the lack of trees in the estate itself.

Millfield: 1970's

Approached from the Chelmsford Road, this area is well set back with a large green open space in the front of the houses and a children's play area. The green space in front of the houses is a key feature of the area and gives it a community feel and brings together the footpaths and the Upper Millfield Area.

The area is quite distinct, ex local authority houses, mainly family homes with good space between them. Houses are of similar height and shape.

The children's play area is well designed and fenced in keeping. Significant trees are two large Cherry trees on the central green area. Additional trees planted along the Chelmsford Road side of the green would enhance the area significantly whilst cutting down the visibility and noise of traffic from the main

road and make a lovely open space even better. The overhead electricity cables and pylons detract from the view.

Parking is excellent with plenty of space and there is a good vista towards the Olives Wood area.

There is good pedestrian access and footpaths to Upper Millfield. Good vehicular access from the Chelmsford Road with no obstructions to the view of oncoming traffic.

The floorscape is tarmac with granite kerbs.

Upper Millfield:

An area of ex-local authority houses that have been re-furbished. The re-furbishment is good and has enhanced the area. The houses are of similar, two storey family home type and single storey elderly persons homes. There is good spacing between the houses as in Millfield, but parking has become a problem at the end of the cul de sac and garden areas have been paved over.

The roads in this area of Dunmow are much wider than in other estates and this gives a feeling of space whilst also giving adequate parking.

The majority of houses have front gardens that have remained gardens and this further enhances both Millfield and Upper Millfield. Verges are well kept.

Houses built at this period in Dunmow have significantly more space than anything since and this has created distinctive areas that are good for families with children.

Also because the houses are well spaced and low rise when travelling along the Chelmsford Road they do not obstruct the view of the woods beyond.

Ongar Road:

Approaching Dunmow the significant building is the large thatched cottage known as The Gatehouse. A key feature is also the brick and flint wall of the outbuilding to this house, and old barn.

The roundabout and over signage for the Nursery Rise estate area detract from this lovely old building and could have been better thought out.

Ongar road has a feeling space due to the large, well kept verges and houses set back from the main road.

There is a mix of houses, 1960's semi-detached on one side and 1940/50 bungalows and houses on the other side.

The vista is spoilt by overhead electricity cables and wooden pylons. However on approaching Dunmow here there is view of the Chelmer Valley and fields beyond which gives an idea of the place of Dunmow in the surrounding countryside.

The area could be enhanced by trees on the verge – there is plenty of space for this!

Once again the area is spoilt by wheelie bins, even though there is plenty of off road space for them in the front of the houses which have mainly large front gardens.

A further significant building is the Kicking Dickey pub. It really does complement the Victorian architecture of the Close at the T junction.

Chelmsford Road:

The significant feature of Chelmsford Road going south is trees - they hide the industrial areas and the potential development area (once mooted to be a business park).

Harris Green - Normansfield

This area is one estate which falls into two distinct parts, that built in 1982 and that built in the 1990's.

There are no key buildings, but the row of small house on the left at the entrance gives a "country" feel and they enhance the area.

Key features – unfortunately this is wheelie bins – because there is no space for them other than at the front of houses, on footpaths on the verges. They are a complete eyesore and detract from this area.

There are no open spaces and no trees planted in the road. Where there are verges they are unkempt. The Floorscape is mainly tarmac although the newer parts of the estate have used brick pavers. The floorscape is almost totally obscured by parking especially in the older part of the estate built in 1982 where there is adequate allowance for parking.

Where front gardens are bricked over and cars parked right up to front doors, this gives a closed in feeling. Where front gardens have been left and particularly where they are well maintained there is a feeling of space which makes a complete difference to the area.

The building heights are mixed, mainly on the new part of the estate with affordable housing by way of apartments and small terraced houses alongside them. There is a good mix of house sizes.

There are communal areas alongside footpaths that do not seem to belong to anyone (e.g. fence and footpath to The Close) these are in very bad repair and parked over making access difficult.

Good public lighting and street signage. As elsewhere in Dunmow television aerials are in abundance!

THE CLOSE

The Close is a unique area, being a conversion of the old workhouse.



All buildings are significant and key to the area and are excellent examples of their type. Some have been extended in keeping with the Victorian architecture. A key feature of the Close is that it is a self-contained example of Victorian Architecture (built around 1840-1842).

The approach to the Close is screened almost completely from the main T junction with the Chelmsford Road and Ongar Road by large trees of which there is one significant tree in the centre front – an Oak?

Access is poor as this area was not designed to accommodate cars. Access is poor throughout the area of the Close. There are no verges as all available space that can be used for access alone is narrow and has to be kept clear.

There is however a significant central green area at the rear of main building for common use of the residents of the main building.

All of the smaller buildings around the central main building have been turned into individual homes with individual small gardens. The boundaries are unique, being mainly old red brick walls and railings. The heights of the buildings vary considerably in view of their former use – three, two and single storey- and the whole area is dominated by the central large building which is now apartments.

There is no public lighting and the area does not have a feeling of light and space inside.

The frontage of the main building (the old entrance area) is magnificent but is hidden from the road by trees and therefore the impact of such a significant area is lost on approaching Dunmow from the Ongar Road. This is a pity!

The Floorscape is scruffy and in bad repair and there is inadequate parking but this is probably a reflection of change of use to private ownership and individual properties together with listed status.

There is very poor fencing (local authority) and footpath access to the Normansfield area from the Close and poor dovetailing of the modern houses in Normansfield with the Victorian architecture of the Close.

Better management of the site, both of the internal routes and spaces and of the boundary would enhance the Close.

Newton Green – Stortford Road

Key Buildings

There are no key buildings.

Key Features:

Newton Green is a uniquely shaped housing estate of local authority and ex-local authority housing. The uniqueness comes from the fact that it is very low density and designed around a large round shaped village green. The green is approached off a normal residential road of larger houses and opens to this large green area surrounded by a roadway and then the houses in a circular pattern. This large open space gives the area the look of a typical village green and yet it is only about half a mile from the town centre.

Most of the houses lie well back from the road and the green and have spacious front gardens:

Trees:

There are no trees at all and this detracts from the large village green which would be considerably enhanced by some tree planting. There are few trees or large bushes in the front

gardens and although the area has a large green it feels somewhat bare.

Buildings:

All the buildings are residential houses of the same type, height and design (? 1950's). It is obvious that some have been taken into private ownership. The majority of the houses are red brick in the lower sections and white or pale coloured rendered upper sections. The roofs are concrete tiled with conventional chimney stacks - there is a proliferation of television aerials on high poles. Almost all of the window frames are painted white and look to be of either softwood or plastic in a similar design. The houses are a basic local authority box type design.

Parking:

Cars tend to be parked in the roadway surrounding the village green although many houses have made space for one car in the front of the house and still have been able to keep a moderate amount of garden.

The floorscape is grey asphalt on the road and pavement, with a small grass verge. There is no signage to speak of as the whole area is, in effect, a cul de sac.

Another thing that detracts from the space is overhead electricity and telephone cables. There is public lighting provided all around the green.

To sum up, this is a unique space that could be considerably enhanced by tree planting and it would not be built in such a low density nowadays.

STORTFORD ROAD – towards Tesco from Newton Green

Again this is an area built around a lovely green area and the houses were originally very similar to those in Newton Green. Almost all have been taken into private ownership and have been extended and changed considerably. They are all of brick and render with concrete roof tiles and those that have been extended have been either rendered to match or the same red bricks used.

The parking is the same as Newton Green with the green being surrounded by a narrow road with off street parking and once again the residents have provided parking spaces in front gardens. The gardens are well kept and planted with trees and bushes and the area is screened from the old A120 by a large and old mixed hedge.

The outstanding feature of this area is the fact that the green in this case has been planted with trees which are now very mature. Oak, Chestnut and Sycamore trees make this area a very pleasant place to live. This area is included in the new conservation area of the town.

There is a footpath through the edge of this area from the town to the new primary school and the large supermarket. This footpath is unkempt and not well lit at night.

This green area is on the main route into Dunmow and when approached from the old A120 gives the town a “country town” look.

St Edmunds Lane

Key Features

St Edmunds Lane is a boundary road delineating the North East border of the Town. Furthermore it has fields and open country behind the houses on the North side and the Chelmer Valley on the South side.

St Edmunds lane is a busy through road to the B1256 (old A120) and has two distinct halves. One half of the road is ex- local authority housing with bay and off street parking and the other half of the road is private dwellings, some of which are very individual. The halves are separated by an open green field area and two significant residential properties. A bowls club and cricket club are situated at the eastern end of St Edmunds Lane.

Key Buildings

Key buildings are the converted old mill house and the Edwardian detached property on either side of the St Edmunds

Lane. These two properties form the boundary between the two types of main housing in St Edmunds Lane. The Old Mill House forms the centre point of a view from the centre (and in particular the Eastern Sector) of Great Dunmow town and the Chelmer Valley. Further key buildings are the new bowls club and the very contemporary house alongside the new bowls club. This house stands out because has been given a very minimalist and contemporary makeover and stands out from the architecture and design around it and in Great Dunmow in general.

Trees and Open Spaces

There are few significant trees around the local authority housing at the western end of St Edmunds Lane, at the eastern end there are mature trees in the gardens. Throughout St Edmunds Lane however, there are views of the countryside and Chelmer valley which have many mature trees. There are mature trees in the central green area; this central green area is in private ownership.

Building Types

The buildings vary in age from new build to 1950's are mainly of brick and render at the western end, where all buildings are of the same height and design on either side of the street, one side being newly refurbished and the other side being the original 1950's housing. Roofing is concrete tiles “terracotta colour” At this end what is very noticeable is the number of overhead electricity cables and telephone cabling with many wooden supporting posts. Even on the refurbished houses they have not had cables buried and have been connected to the old style wooden posts.

At the southern end of St Edmunds Lane the buildings are of vary heights from bungalows, two storey, three bed roomed houses to large detached houses occupying larger plots and with higher rooflines. The age range here is from 1960's to modern day. Mainly brick built, with concrete tiles and in the main white wooden casement window types. There are one or two large distinctive properties and at the B1256 end there are some very old cottages.

Floorscape

St Edmunds Lane looks like it has been built in two distinct times. The roadway is tarmac and the pavement at the western end has a small grass verge between it and the road whereas the eastern end this verge disappears in places. There are small cul de sacs on the southern side with footpaths through the houses down into the Chelmer Valley. These footpaths provide an important role of connecting St Edmunds Lane with the Town Centre, there no cycle ways.

Parking has become a problem at the western end in the evening. On the north side there is a parking bay area constructed into the raised verge. This does not accommodate two vehicles per house and parking spills over onto the southern side of the road. In the evening this has the effect of narrowing the road to one lane. Because the road is relatively straight there have been problems with speeding cars.

There have been problems with parking whilst the cricket club is in use at the eastern end. Parking is around the busy junction at this end of the road.

Development Land

There appears to be a pocket of development land either side of the road at the centre of St Edmunds Lane, however as the Chelmer Valley (on the southern side) is protected, there may be no potential for development. On the northern side there are open fields which can be easily accessed from the central area of St Edmunds Lane and this could lead to development pressures which would widen the boundary of the town on this side.

Vistas

There are significant views of the Chelmer Valley and the countryside beyond and any development in this part of Dunmow would affect the vista from the town itself due to the lie of the land and in particular from the Chelmer valley reducing it to a “strip” of land in the centre of housing. This might detract from the rural feel of Great Dunmow.



Boundaries

These mixed and range from low garden walls to high hedging and large gates – i.e. the large contemporary house. Many of the properties at the eastern end have no front boundaries with garden planting and low features that lay back from the road. Almost all the houses in St Edmunds Lane have front gardens, most of which have not been paved over.

The Maltings

Key Buildings:

There are no key buildings immediately visible on entering The Maltings, however the two houses fronting North Street have used the bricks reclaimed from the original Maltings and there is a Thatched cottage at Kings Court, backing onto the old Kings Head pub (undergoing renovation) which all formed part of the original Maltings. It is a pity that they have been “built around” leaving them barely visible.

Key Features:

A key feature of the Maltings is that the site sweeps down to the Chelmer Valley and as the buildings are of uniform two storey heights there is a clear vista of the mature trees in the Chelmer Valley and the fields beyond. This has an immediate visual effect on entering the site.

The roads are wider than later developments and allow for parking in addition to the off road parking/garages available. The footpaths are wide and the houses are recessed back from the road giving an open feel. The only exception to this is in a number of cul de sacs where the developer has crowded in as many buildings as possible – see boundaries below.

Trees:

As above – Chelmer Valley adds significantly to this area as do trees in gardens.

Open Spaces:

There are no open spaces as such, but the area is criss crossed with footpaths to the Chelmer valley which runs along one whole side (east) of the estate. These footpaths also give really easy access to the shopping facilities in the High Street and the green area of the Doctors Pond, reducing the need for cars.

Verges:

The verges are green and in most cases well kept because they are privately owned.

Buildings:

The site is completely residential with no community buildings. The buildings are brick and render in differing proportions, but giving an overall consistent feel. There are a few half timber boarded / brick houses. Whilst the buildings are of the same height, the rooflines have been varied between pitched, gabled and hipped. This breaks up the roof lines and adds interest, however, there are no chimneys. Roof tiles are almost 100% concrete, although some have been coloured to look like slate.

Boundaries:

Mainly brick walls, some brick and topped by timber. A feature of Maltings is the boundary walls being mostly 6ft high and made of brick. This is especially apparent in the small cul de sacs branching off the Maltings where a number of houses have been squeezed in and the only way to have a private space or small garden is by the use of high brick boundary walls. Too many blank brick walls!

Floorscape:

Tarmac road surface, and tarmac footpaths, concrete curbs.

Signage:

Not significant on this site – road signs at low level and in keeping.

Woodlands Park

Introduction

Woodlands Park is destined to be the largest single development currently planned in Great Dunmow, consisting of some 1,600 new dwellings built from 1992 onwards on farmland to the northwest of the town. Of these, less than half had been completed by May 2008. Construction of the new north-western relief road, which now defines the western settlement limit of Great Dunmow, was largely completed in 1994, but remains unfinished 14 years later, until the development reaches an advanced stage as a consequence of a legal agreement between the developer and the District Council. At the current rate of development it will not be completed until 2024. On the southern edge of the estate are a supermarket (4,000 m², opened 1995), and the Great Dunmow County Primary School (opened 2005).

Buildings

The dwellings completed so far vary in size from high-density terraced 'courtyard' two- and three-bedroom houses to five- and six-bedroom detached or linked properties. Most are of two storeys, though some have third-storey accommodation, with dormer windows to preserve the lower roof-edge line.

The style is generally a modern interpretation of 'Tudor' or 'Victorian', with finishes of a high quality mainly in London brick or red brick. There are some interesting details of decorative external timbering or brickwork (left) and nearly every house has a characteristic wire chimney-cowl.

The larger properties have a standalone garage which mimics a Palladian stable block – square, with a distinctive cupola on a shallow pyramidal roof.

Some parts of the development have a half-rendered or shiplap finish, giving them an 'Essex vernacular' appearance, especially when – in a few instances – this is combined with the steeper traditional Essex roof pitch. Overall the architectural quality, layout and public realm of the development leaves a lot to be desired and emphatically should not be allowed to set the standards for either further phases of this development or housing elsewhere in the town.

Courtyards

Juniper Court is a small square of terraced houses with a fenced, well-planted space at its centre (though surprisingly no seats). Unfortunately the courtyard developments constructed later are less attractively finished.

Affordable Housing

An area at the southeast corner of the estate has been developed as affordable housing. This is mostly three-storey accommodation which fronts directly onto the 'spine' roads, with (inadequate) communal parking and utility areas behind (right). The lower roof-edge line is not maintained here, resulting in tall blocks with shallow roof-pitches which are entirely out of tune with the rest of the development.

The effect is overbearing, not helped by extensive on-street parking. The finish of the ground floor of many of these buildings is mostly render in a pseudo-stone block pattern, painted in inappropriate colours – a 1970s-style nightmare. Depressingly little effort has been made to integrate this housing with the rest of the development.

Trees, Floorscape and Open Spaces

There are no original mature trees in the development and indeed a number have, controversially, been felled during construction. However a number of new trees, mostly birch, have been planted in gardens. The boundaries between the front gardens of properties are low hedges.

Woodlands Walk is a wide avenue, with access driveways to houses on both sides, and a central footpath of concrete blocks with broad verges and hedges. Although currently on the edge of the development, it will eventually be a central feature of the estate.

At several points the path opens onto wider 'greens'. These cannot however be described as play spaces, having no facilities and with ball games prominently forbidden by garish signs. Several 'play spaces' have been provided in the affordable housing area, but these are small, unkempt and unattractive 'cages'.

The 'spine' roads are of asphalt, with kerbed verges and footways, except in the affordable housing area, where there are no verges. Elsewhere, road surfaces are often shared by vehicles and pedestrians and are mainly blocks, with no kerbed footway, though in some cases a separate footway is asphalted.

Every effort should be made to secure more green space and recreation areas that are accessible to all and of high quality.

Industrial Estates

Flitch Industrial Estate:

Low rise industrial buildings, mainly prefabricated materials.

Low rise and evenly spaced.

Colouring empathetic with surrounding area.

Landscaping to front of some buildings with shrubs and borders – Good examples are Multitech Fibreco.

Good vehicular access, wide road and excellent parking facilities. Not well signposted.

Good pedestrian access with vista towards Olives Wood at the rear of the estate.

Well maintained kept clean and tidy.

Best example in Dunmow!

Station Road Industrial Estate:

Well screened from the main (Chelmsford Road) by trees and well screened from the residential area (Station Road) by hedging and small trees. Not well signposted.

Significant Building (Dubilier) at the entrance, unusual octagonal shape and good use of small space at entrance to the estate gives a good impression at entrance.

Low rise industrial buildings, mainly prefabricated and 1960's Poorly defined areas per building and especially areas for rubbish bins/skips, therefore rubbish tends to be dumped and overflowing and is an eyesore.

Adequate parking, but again poorly delineated. Fencing to by-pass in extremely poor condition and is hazardous. Poor lighting.

Chelmsford Road Industrial Estate:

Good vehicular access to mainly low rise industrial buildings mostly prefabricated warehouse type but some part brick and concrete with offices.

Buildings of varying height do not give a uniform view of the area and look untidy in layout.

Well screened by trees from both Chelmsford Road and By-pass. Verges within the estate are extremely scruffy and unkempt. Little provision has been made for rubbish and it is therefore left in whatever space is available.

Fencing in extremely poor condition and has fallen down giving access from Chelmsford road estate to Oak industrial estate (maybe deliberate)?

Oak Industrial Estate:

Good vehicular access, well signposted, no significant buildings. Poor pedestrian access to the inner parts of the estate because of brambles and condition of fencing.

Inadequate parking further into the estate adds to poor pedestrian access as cars block footpaths.

Buildings mainly of warehouse, prefabricated type (2003/4) at entrance area moving on to older (1970) type concrete and brick buildings with office space. Floorscape good at entrance and then deteriorates at rear of the estate, badly delineated areas with any small green areas between sites covered in brambles. Significant Oak trees at the rear of the estate.

Hoblongs Industrial Estate:

Extremely poor and ugly access – Floorscape in disgraceful and extremely poor condition possible due to number of large heavy vehicles using this estate.

Older (1960's) commercial/warehouse type buildings with many manufacturing sites – hence large heavy vehicles – the estate is a narrow cul de sac and is not conducive to access by large vehicles.

No provision is made for rubbish and rubbish is everywhere. Sites are not delineated and are poorly laid out – old vehicles have been left between sites making it very difficult to survey and not using the available space to its best advantage.

Landscaping around the "Travel Lodge" hotel has improved the area, and the whole area's access to the by-pass and A120 is being considered in light of the new waste transfer station. Access to this whole area is dangerous at the moment.

There are a number of cars from the car sales area of the garage on the public grass verge and verges are unkempt, especially in the area of the soak away which is opposite the entrance to the industrial estate.

Significant buildings are: new police station (part built at time of survey) and Travelodge Hotel (as described above). The design of the police station is distinctively modern and while it may have worked as a design in another setting it bears absolutely no relationship to its current context.

The design of the Travelodge is mediocre and its setting is very poor, despite the attempts at tree planting. The few residential properties near the hotel are now surrounded by ugly commercial development. One small dwelling remains isolated by the road network, almost hidden by trees and surrounded by traffic and dangerous vehicular exits.

The area demonstrates a complete failure of comprehensive planning.

No significant trees or green areas, however the trees and hedging along the Chelmsford Road enhance the route towards the town from this entrance.

This area is a significant entrance to Great Dunmow from the A120 and does not reflect the quality of the town.

All industrial sites have been located in the southern end of the town and are low rise and in a low lying area. This does protect the vistas of the town itself. When looking at the vista down Oakroyd Avenue for instance, one can see the fields beyond but not Station Road industrial estate between! One can clearly see the difference between the more modern Flitch estate with that of the oldest Hoblongs. Some considerable thought needs to be given to the Dunmow South entrance off the A120 into the town.