warrior square conservation area
character appraisal
draft 2002
# Warrior Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal

## Contents Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and Context</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the Area</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture of Area</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Interest</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townscape</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Description</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Special Interest</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Map</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Area Circa 1870</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

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


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

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

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

Location and Context

The Warrior Square Conservation Area is located on the eastern side of Southend Town Centre. The Conservation Area encompasses all the properties on Warrior Square North and Warrior Square Gardens opposite to the south. The Conservation Area is bounded by the retail units along Southchurch Road to the north, by Chichester road to the west, by the town centre car parking and swimming pool along Warrior Square to the south and to the east by a terrace of more recent properties in Warrior Square East.

The Warrior Square Conservation Area is one of a number of residential streets located on the fringe of the commercial area of Southend. Whilst these streets are of a similar domestic scale they are dominated by the commercial development in the town centre. Warrior Square Conservation Area, in particular, is overshadowed by Maitland House to the west.

Warrior Square Gardens is one of very few remaining green spaces close to the town centre. Its greenery can be glimpsed from the High Street, although at present a busy main road bisects the pedestrian route and consequently the gardens are under-utilised by the general public.

Warrior Square Conservation Area Appraisal
The street block to the south of the Conservation Area is designated as a redevelopment site in the Borough Local Plan (P5b). It is allocated for retail and mixed use development, although no major proposals have been forthcoming in recent years. There are also proposals in the Borough Local Plan to pedestrianise part of Warrior Square, to the south of the gardens, but as yet this has not occurred. However, this area is within the Town Centre Scrutiny Boundary and Sshape Objective 2 Project area for regeneration, whose objectives include the remodelling of Warrior Square Gardens to provide a high quality public space and the improvement of pedestrian links with Southend High Street.

**Designations**

Warrior Square Conservation Area was designated in February 1990. It contains no buildings that are either Listed or on the Council’s Local List of Historic Buildings.

**History of the Area**

Warrior Square is associated with the period of Southend’s rapid growth towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is one of only two Victorian residential squares built in Southend (the other is Prittlewell Square).
The Warrior Square estate was formed from a 13 acre field at the corner of the High Street and Southchurch Road. Originally part of ‘The Porters Estate’ the field was subdivided into plots and auctioned in 1881 for the speculative development of shops and houses. The plots that became Warrior Square were advertised as having a private garden in the centre that had already been “tastefully laid out with tennis and croquet lawns and planted with beds of flowers and ornamental shrubs”. The garden was to be reserved for the use of the Square’s future residents, on payment of an annual fee of one guinea.

This garden was probably intended to encourage the estate’s development in a location which, at that time, was seen as a little distant from the town’s main attraction, the seafront, and from other developing areas. The garden did not achieve this purpose, and despite other incentives, development was slow. It took twenty years before the Square was substantially completed by which time Southend’s late Victorian development boom was well under way.

Development around the garden was controlled by a stipulation that each completed house should be sold at or above a minimum price. Those on the south side were to have the highest sale price and were developed first with detached and semi-detached villas. More modest terraced houses were stipulated on the north side where the minimum price was to be £450. Development here took place in 1896 (nos. 13-43) and 1901 (nos. 1-11).

The east side of Warrior Square was developed significantly later than that the north and south, around the 1920’s -1930’s. Whilst this...
terrace still remains, it belongs to a different era and has a different style of architecture and materials. It is not associated with the original development of the square and is therefore not in character with the Conservation Area. The villas that were originally on the south side of Warrior Square Gardens have now been redeveloped as Warrior Square Swimming Pool and town centre parking.

The plot to the west side of the gardens, along Chichester Road, was not sold as part of the original Warrior Square Development. Instead this site became part of the commercial district of Southend. From the early twentieth century this site housed one of Southend’s many cinemas and later became Keddies Department Store. The Conservation Area, therefore, is confined to the surviving Victorian terrace on the north side and the central gardens which are now in public use.

**Architecture of Area**

Speculative housing around a central private garden was a common form of development in many urban areas in the 18th and 19th centuries, but not Southend. Warrior Square is a very late example of a Victorian residential square and its failure may have discouraged any further attempt in Southend.

The north side of the Square has not been greatly altered and presents an attractive façade of typical red brick late Victorian terraced housing with appropriate detailing and materials. The houses were built in pairs with mirrored designs - central entrance doors, recessed porches and balconies over, on either side of which are two-storey bays. Consequently, the terrace has a good degree of design unity. But note the subtle variations in design. Houses in the older part of the terrace are grouped in fours with square or canted bays, gables or hipped roofs to the bays and with different window designs typical of this period. Detailing such as panelled entrance doors with tiled and leaded lights surrounds, decorative ridge tiles, fish scale slates to some of the bay roofs and balcony ironwork, also provide attractive features. The six properties at the western end of the terrace that were built several years later are also mirrored pairs.

The turn of the 19th century marks the transition between late Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Elements of emerging Edwardian features and detailing such as square bays with heavier casement windows and fish scale decorative tiles are evident on certain groups of properties within this terrace. The coloured fanlight casement windows and doors on the first floor of numbers 29-35 are of a particularly distinctive design which exhibits strong Edwardian influences.

**Archaeological Interest**

There is no known archaeological interest or potential in this area.

Warrior Square Conservation Area Appraisal
Townscape

Warrior Square North is one of four roads surrounding Warrior Square Gardens. Although at present only the north and east sides are built up, the original formal alignment of the streets around a central garden still remains.

Unusually for an area of parking stress, the vast majority of the front gardens of Warrior Square North have been retained. This significantly enhances the setting of this terrace and is an important part of the character of the conservation area. Unfortunately the ornate railings that originally enclosed both the front gardens of the terrace and Warrior Square Gardens were reclaimed for scrap during WWII.

The central garden and the mature street trees provide an attractive outlook for the terrace and help give the area a relatively peaceful atmosphere in the busy town centre. A mixture of lime, horse chestnut, holly, sycamore trees and hedges line the perimeter of the gardens, enclosing the central grassed area and reinforcing the gardens symmetrical layout. London plane trees line the adjacent streets, complementing the formal arrangement of trees within the gardens.

The mature trees and hedgerows surrounding the public gardens provide a strong sense of enclosure and to some extent protect the open space from the traffic. However the residential square, being open on two sides suffers from a lack of enclosure. In townscape terms it would be significantly enhanced if the south side frontage were to be redeveloped with an appropriate design of buildings.

Apart from street lighting and parking pay points the street furniture is located within the central gardens. The provision of furniture is minimal - consisting of several wooden benches, (painted bright green), and a few wooden litterbins. The street furniture within the conservation area does not significantly contribute to the townscape or character of the area.
Street Description

Warrior Square Conservation Area is made up of one street, which, whilst rather run down still retains many of its original period features. 2/3 of the properties still have their traditional windows and doors and half of the roofs are the original slate. All except 2 of the porches have been kept open and only 15 of the 22 are still have their original facing red brickwork. Just over half the traditional balconies also remain. Other building detailing such as tiling in the porches, and decorative stone work surrounding the windows and doors all add to the special character of this street.

However, with the majority of the terrace converted to flats there have been an number of unsympathetic additions that diminish the quality of the conservation area. In particular several properties have multiple utility boxes and inadequate refuse storage facilities that have a significant detrimental impact on the streetscene. The uniformity of the terrace has also been disrupted by the conversion of a porch and entrance hall into a habitable room.

The table below summarises the extent of properties with unsympathetic alterations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alteration</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altered windows</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosed / lost porches</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant utility boxes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsightly refuse storage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered roofing materials</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of facing brickwork</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite dishes on front elevation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balconies lost or altered</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Special Interest

Based on the above assessment, the Area’s special interest is summarised as:

- Example of late residential Victorian Square – plot developments laid out around central garden.
- Good example of late Victorian terraced architecture with transitional Edwardian influences.
- Good architectural detailing, pattern of grouping house designs within terrace.
- Setting of terrace with public gardens provides an interesting and relatively peaceful townscape.
- It provides an attractive contrast to the commercial town centre.

Proposals

No changes are proposed to the current boundary of Warrior Square Conservation Area.
The majority of the properties along Warrior Square North have now been converted to flats or offices, consequently their permitted development rights are more restricted. However, there are still minor operations that could be carried out without the need for permission that would harm the Conservation Area. For example the painting of brickwork and the construction of a means of enclosure could be detrimental to the character of this conservation area. It seems that at least 2 of the properties are still single dwellinghouses and these are therefore vulnerable to permitted development such as window alterations, alteration to roofing materials and infill of porches, which could adversely affect the conservation area. It is therefore considered necessary to serve an Article 4 Direction to give this conservation area the extra protection need to preserve the character of this area.

**Bibliography**

Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan 1994
Town Centre Scrutiny Report – Southend-on-Sea Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012