



URBAN TYPOLOGY

TYOLOGY OF URBAN FORMS FOR SOUTHEND

Introduction

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

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

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

Residential development

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

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

Mixed use development

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

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

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

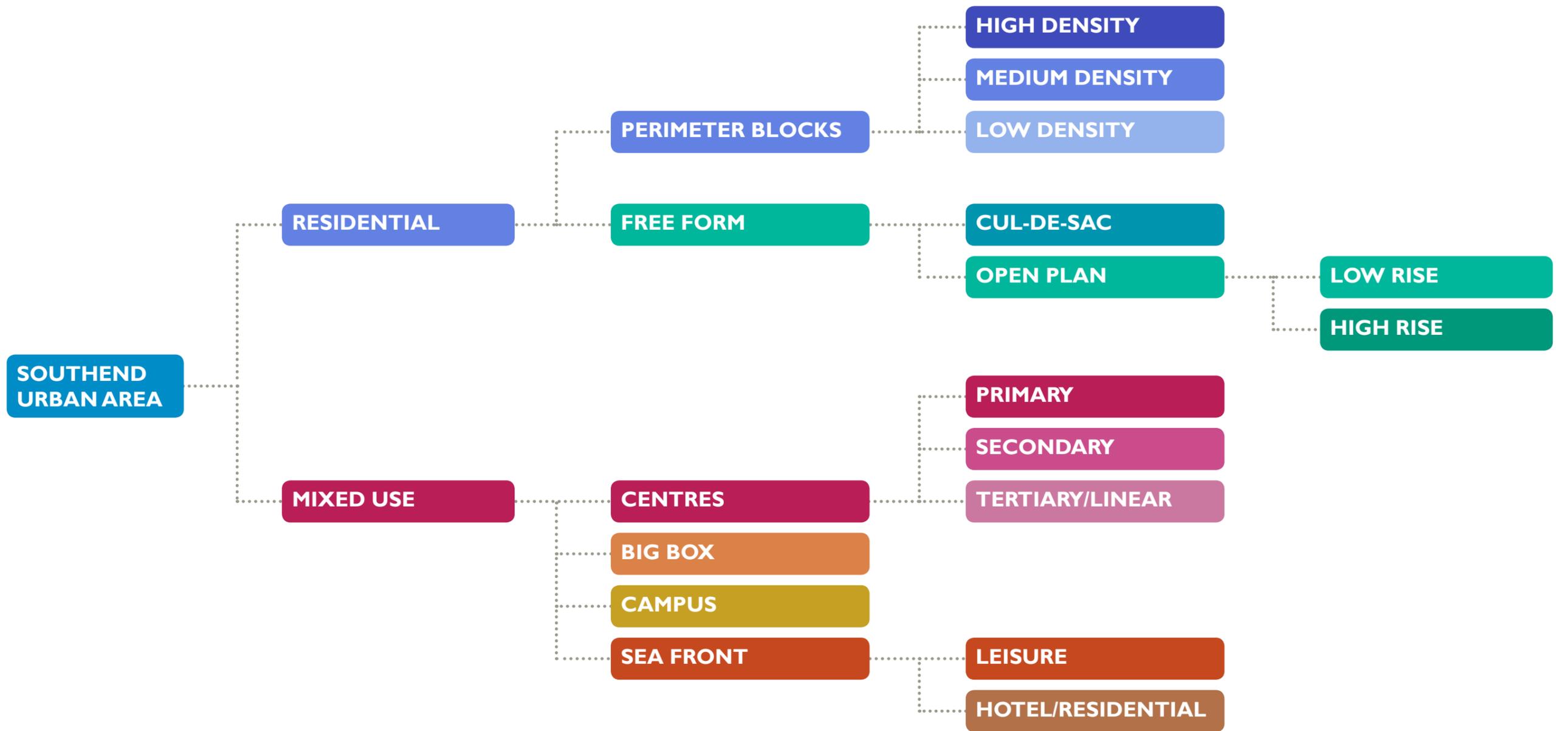
Campus development includes civic and business uses such as schools, hospitals and civic/community buildings. These areas typically have a public function and sit within a site which as well as having a stronger landscape character than big box development is also likely to have its own internal circulation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

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

Typology mapping

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

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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

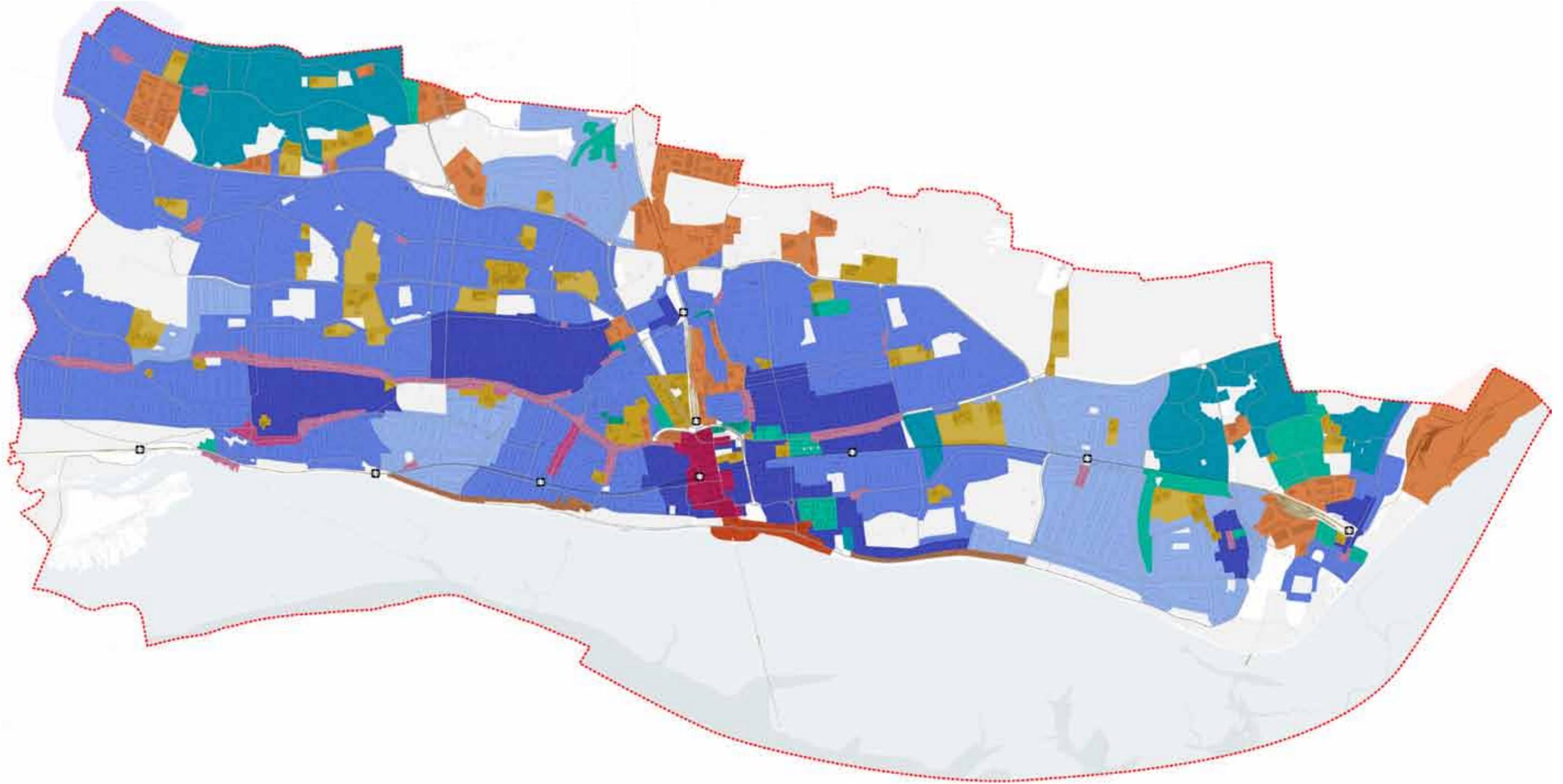


The central area of the seafront is associated with a vibrant architectural style and sea-front leisure and pleasure. It provides a stark contrast to the orderly and mannered Victorian and Edwardian suburbs in the surrounding areas.



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





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RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - HIGH DENSITY

Introduction

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

Urban form

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

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

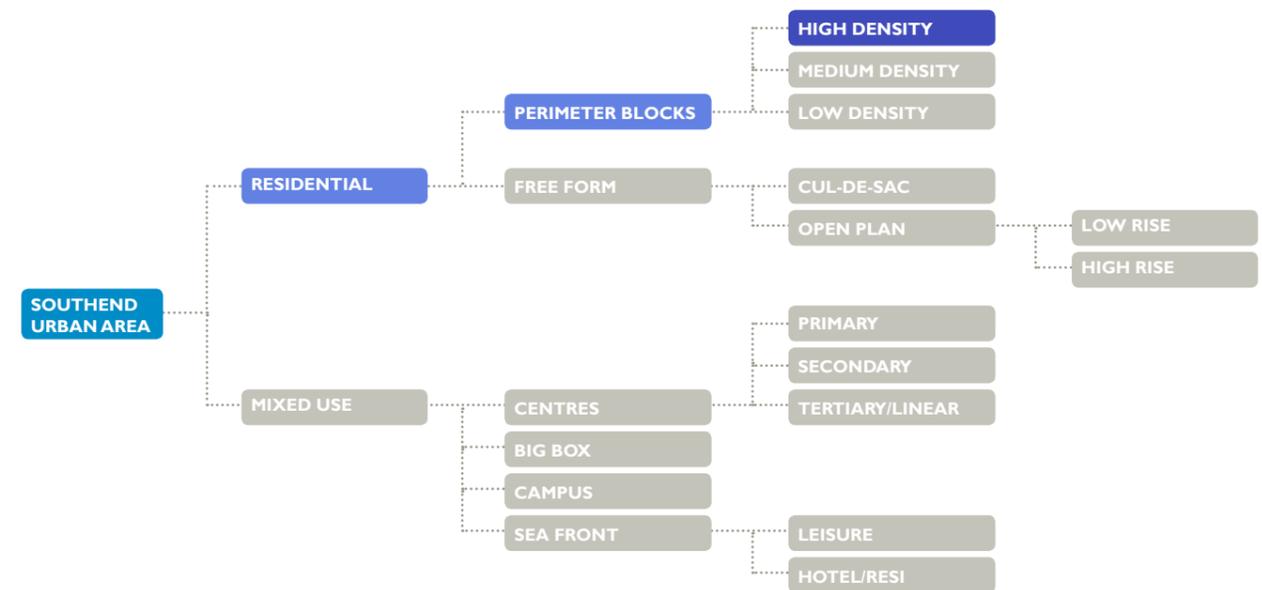
Buildings

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

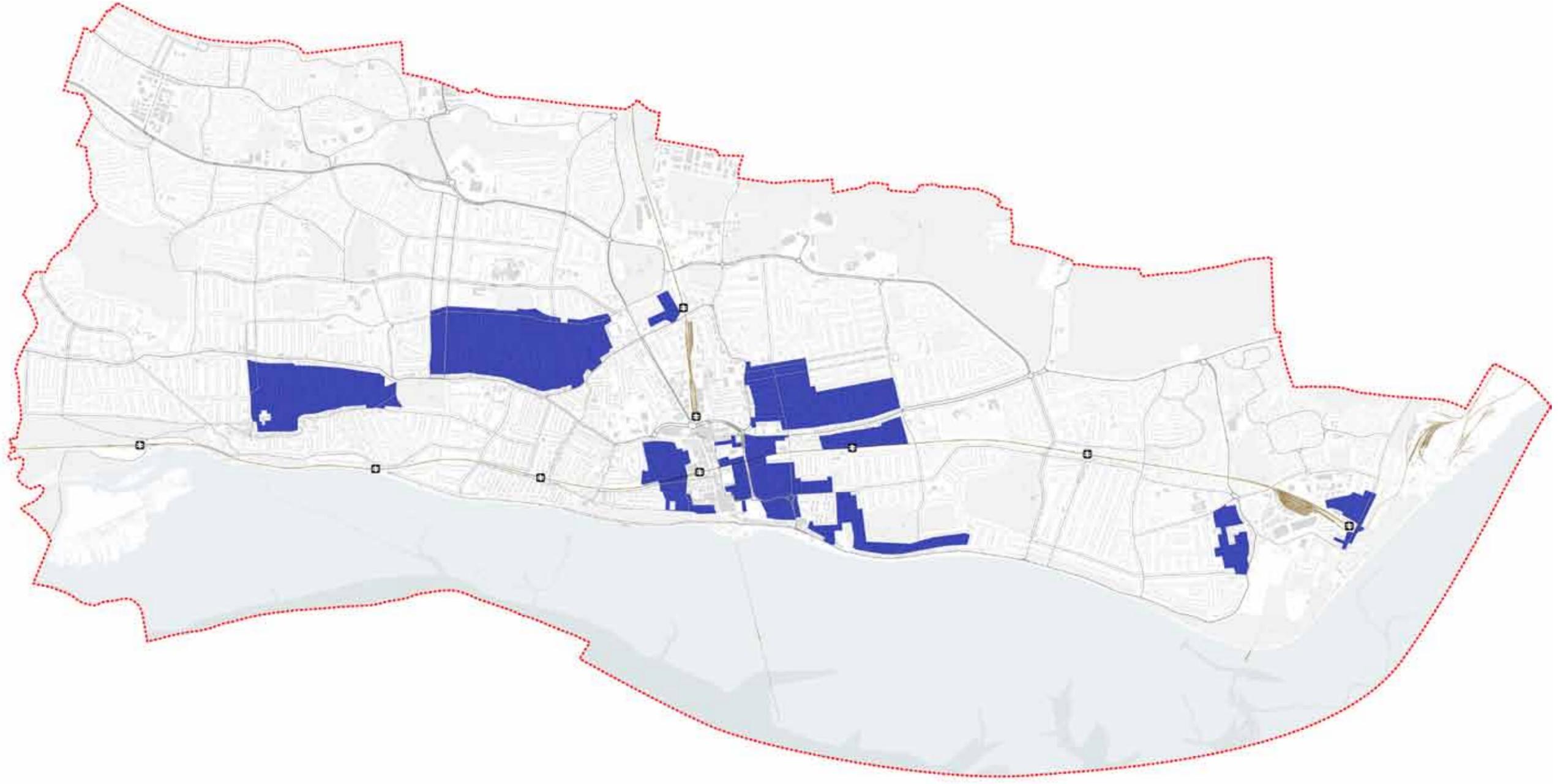
It is very common for buildings in this category to feature bay windows, often surmounted by gables at the roof. This can lend a very strong repeating motif to a terrace which establishes a clear unity of design and also creates a clear vertical scale. Victorian buildings are most likely to feature details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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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

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

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

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

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





RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - MEDIUM DENSITY

Introduction

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

Urban form

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

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

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

Buildings

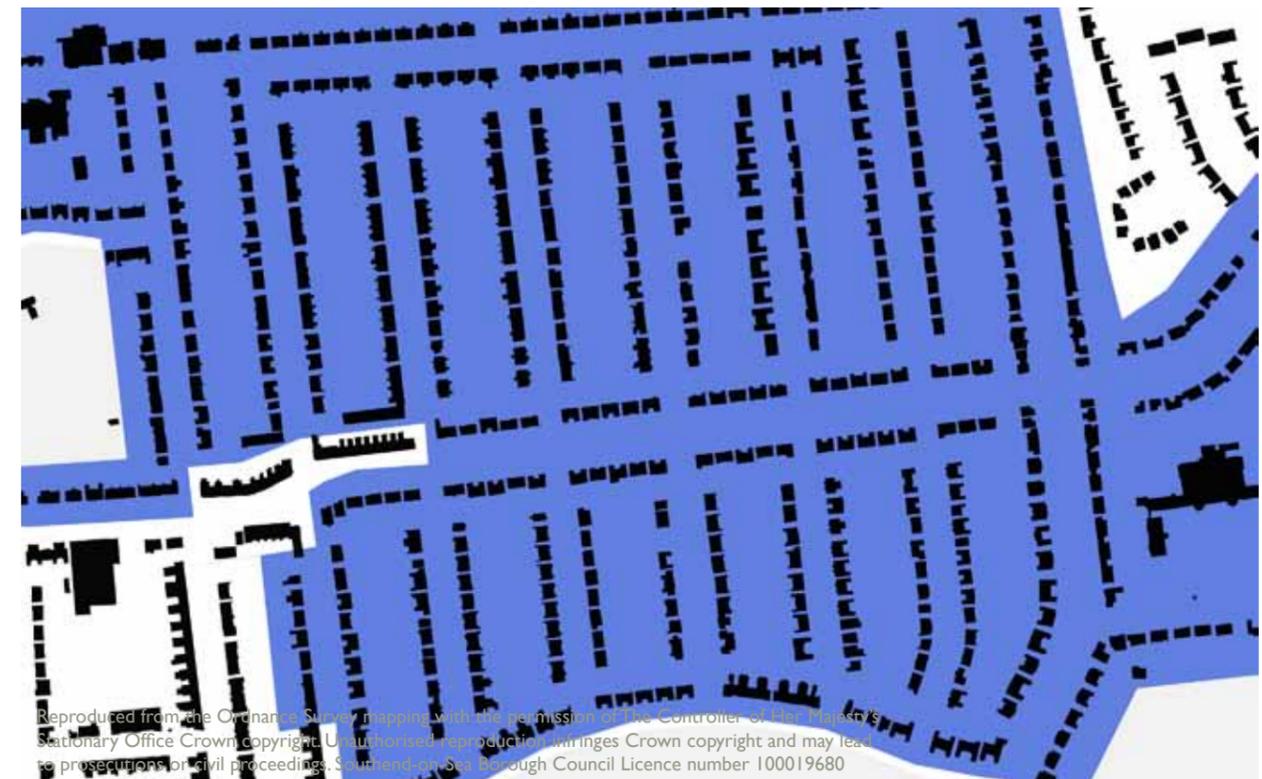
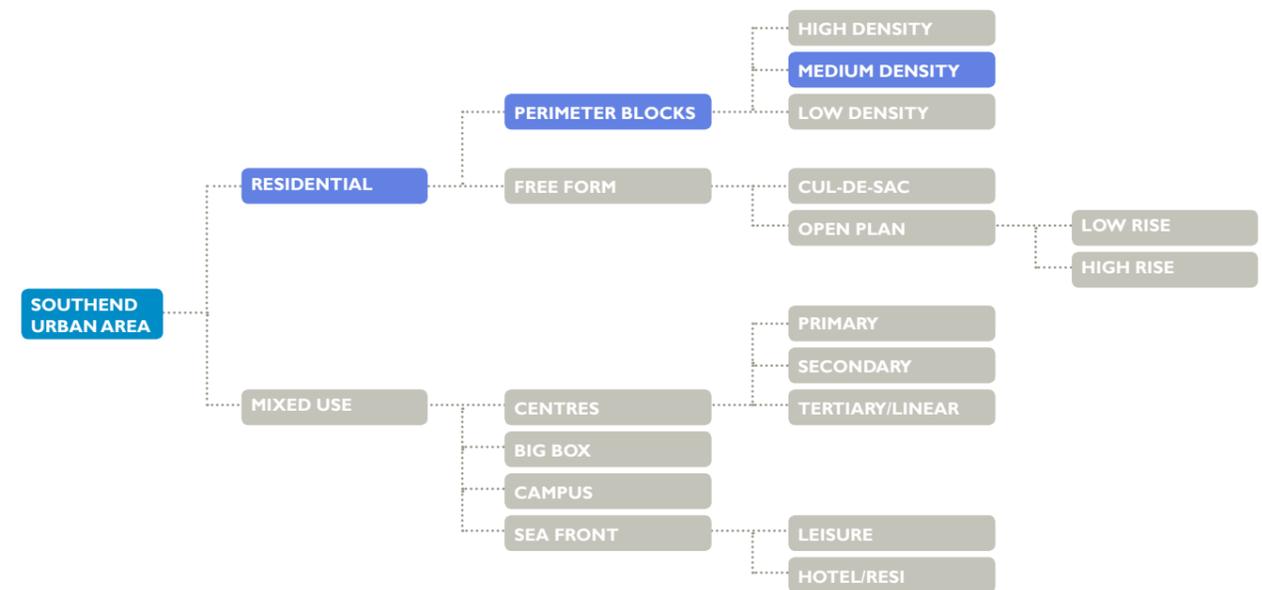
Buildings within the medium density areas are most likely to be semi-detached or smaller detached houses. Examples can be found from a wide range of periods. Whilst the earliest

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

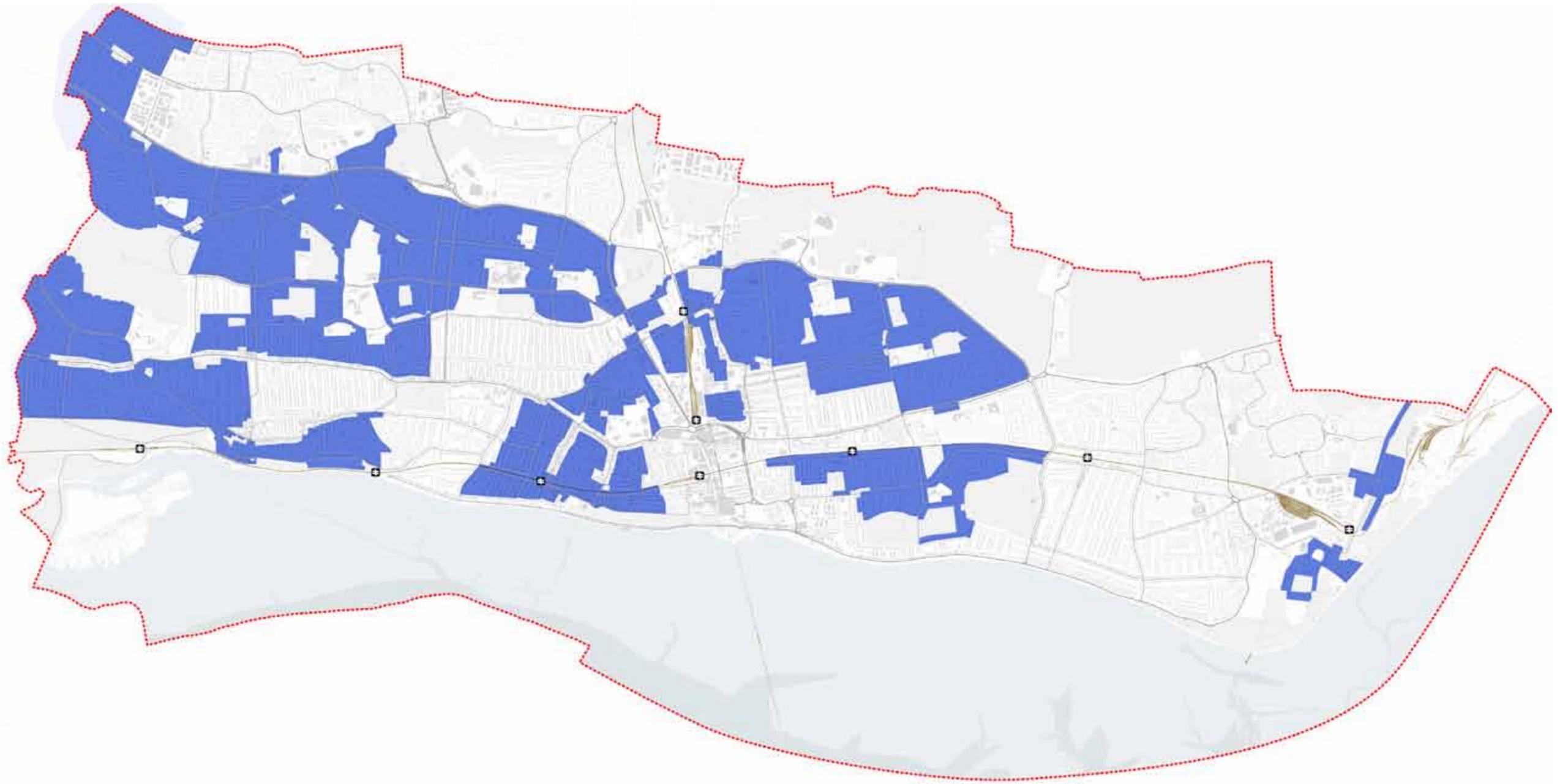
Regular and flexible grid areas are most likely to have been built by private developers and builders. As a result, they typically feature a richer architectural palette which can include a high degree of variation between plots. By contrast, a number of planned layouts are the result of public sector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

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

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



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Streetscape and landscape

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) Grass and planted verge streets

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

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

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



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

b) Tree-lined (unverged) streets

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

c) Bare streets

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



RESIDENTIAL - PERIMETER - LOW DENSITY

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

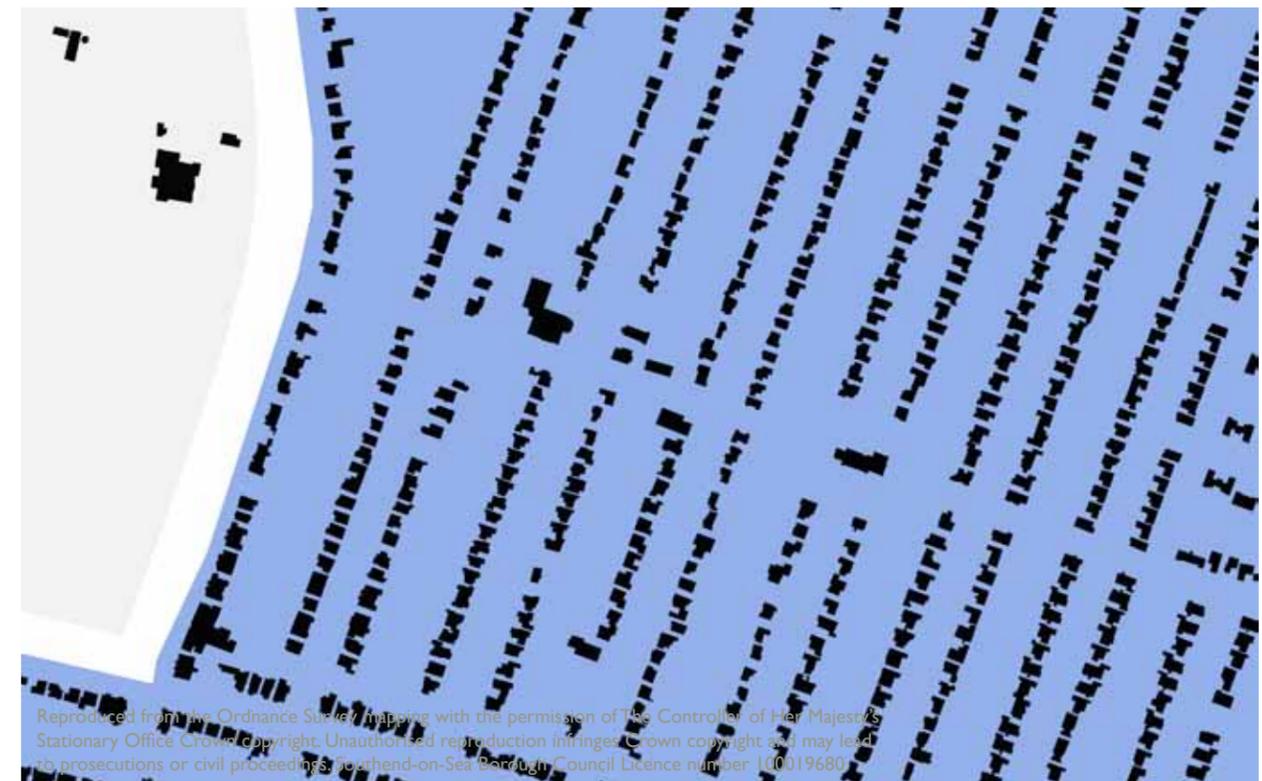
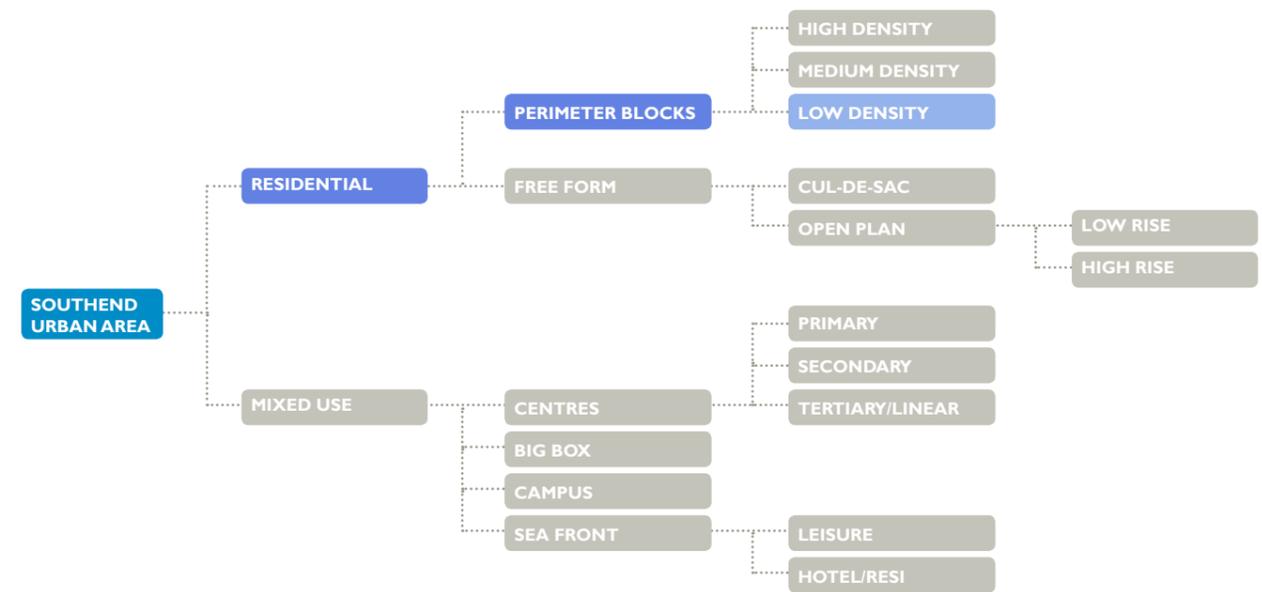
Buildings

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

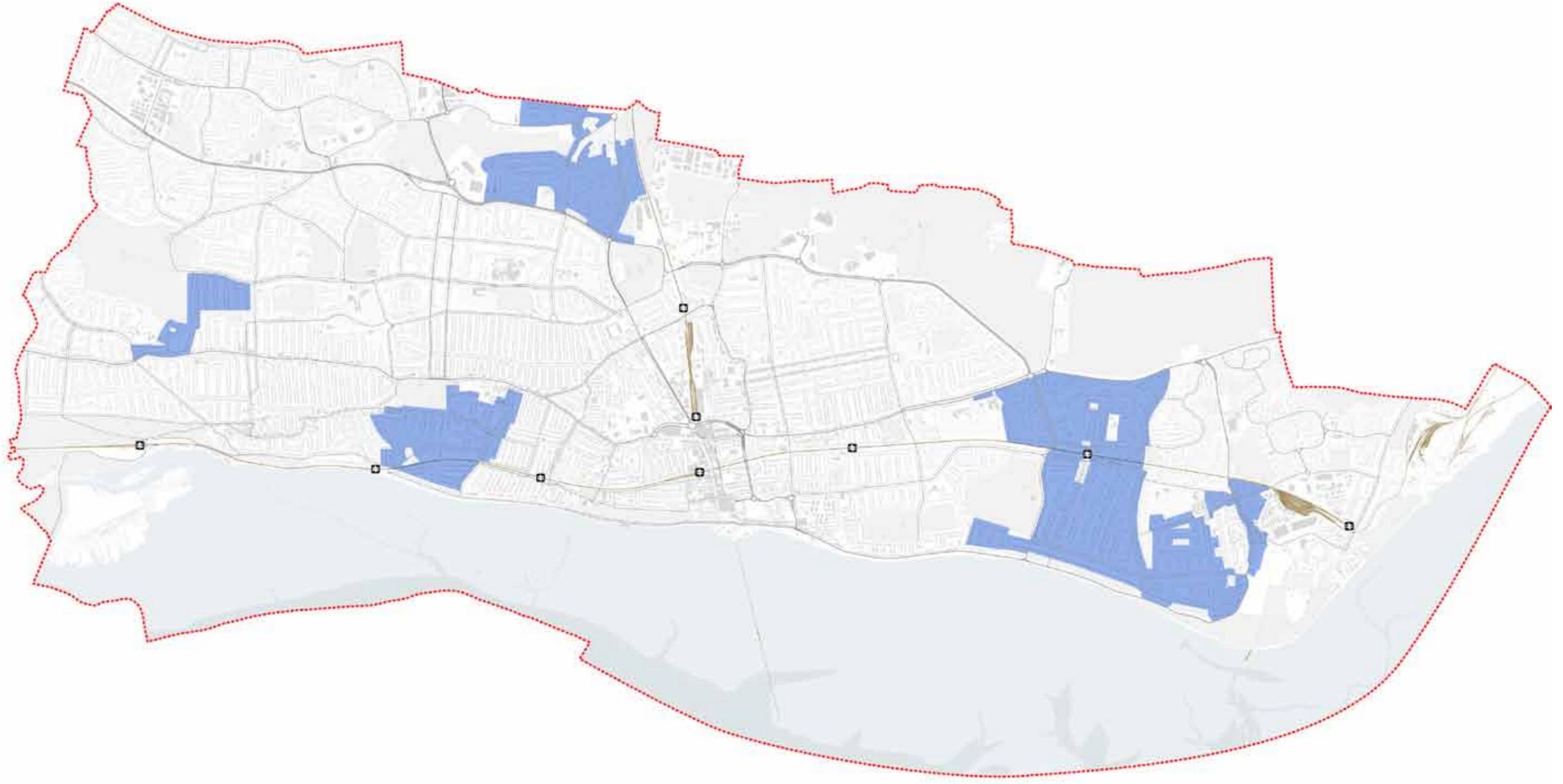
Given the relatively exclusive nature of these areas, it is very common for buildings to vary significantly between plots, including bold and elaborate features and details, particularly at street corners. The general scale of buildings in these streets is two storey, although this can range from 'chalet'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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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

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

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

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





RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - CUL-DE-SAC

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

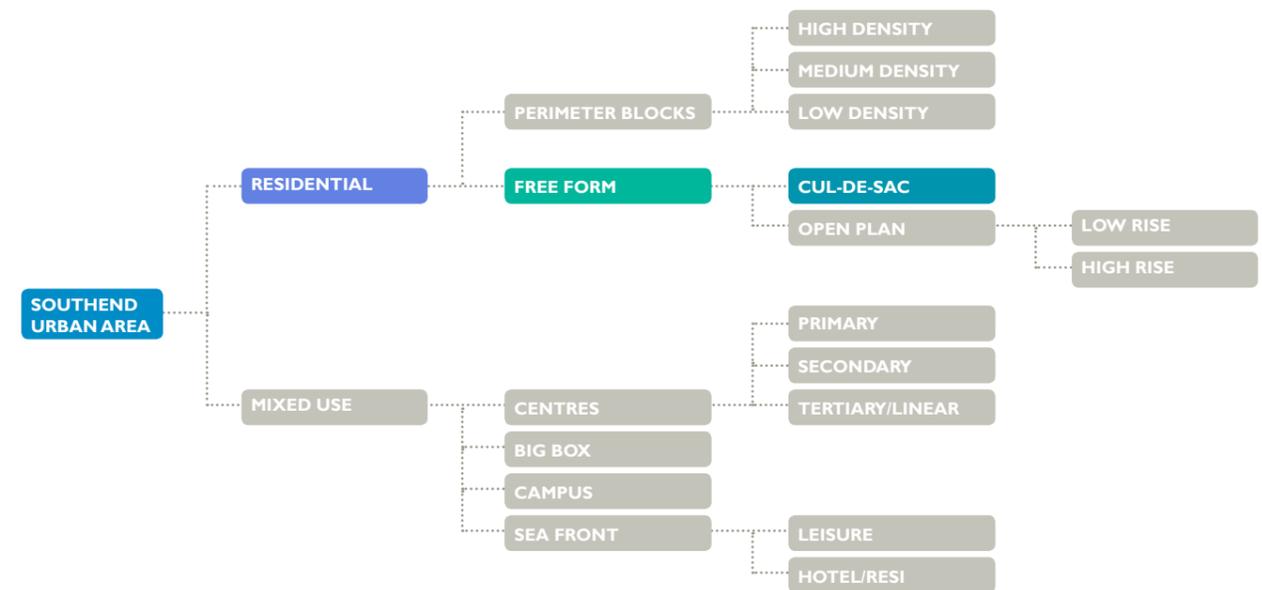
Cul-de-sac areas are frequently criticised both for their lack of legibility and permeability. The use of consistent building types repeated

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

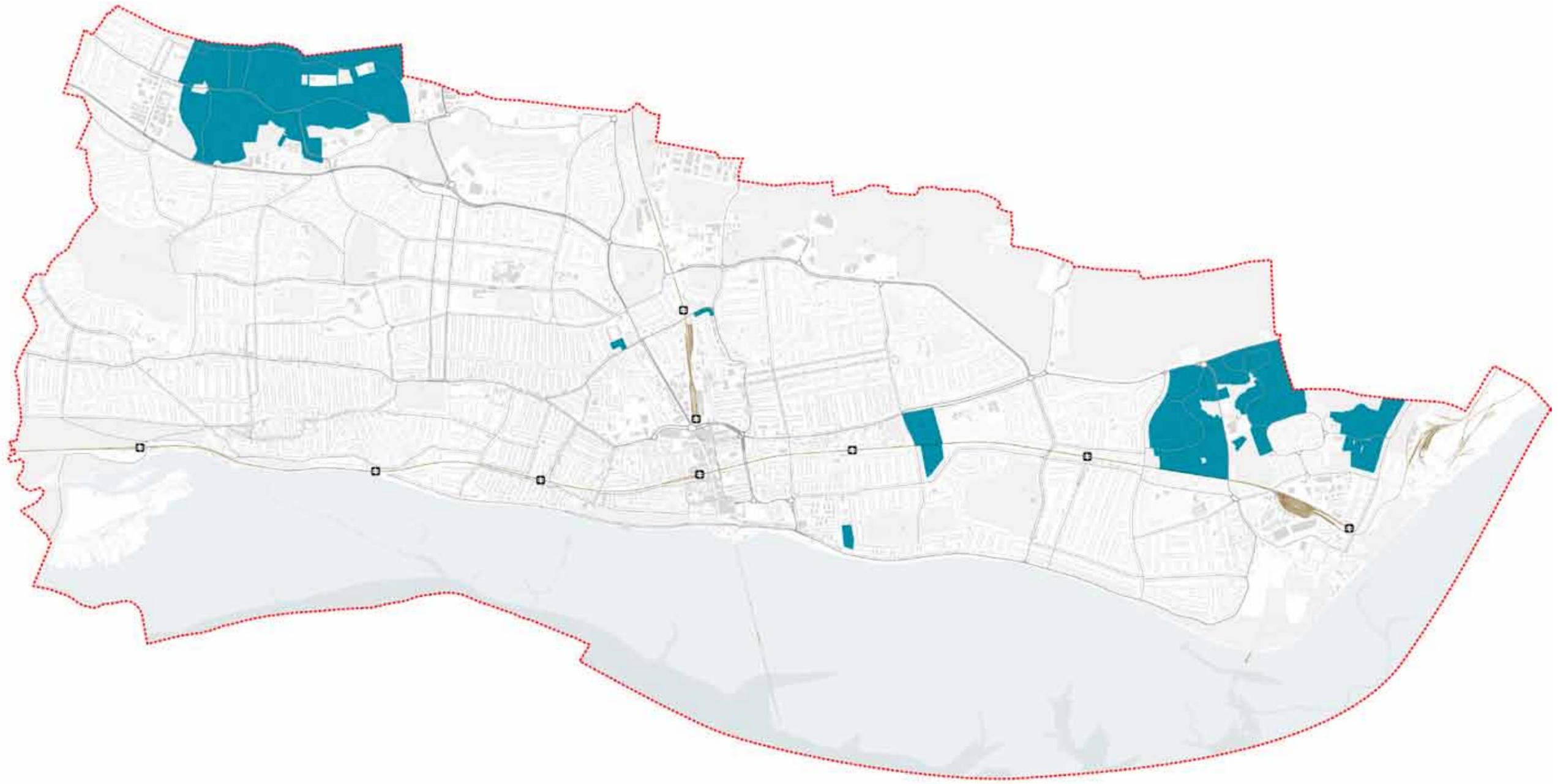
Buildings

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

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



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

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

Streetscape and landscape

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

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

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





RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - OPEN - LOW RISE

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

Buildings

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

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

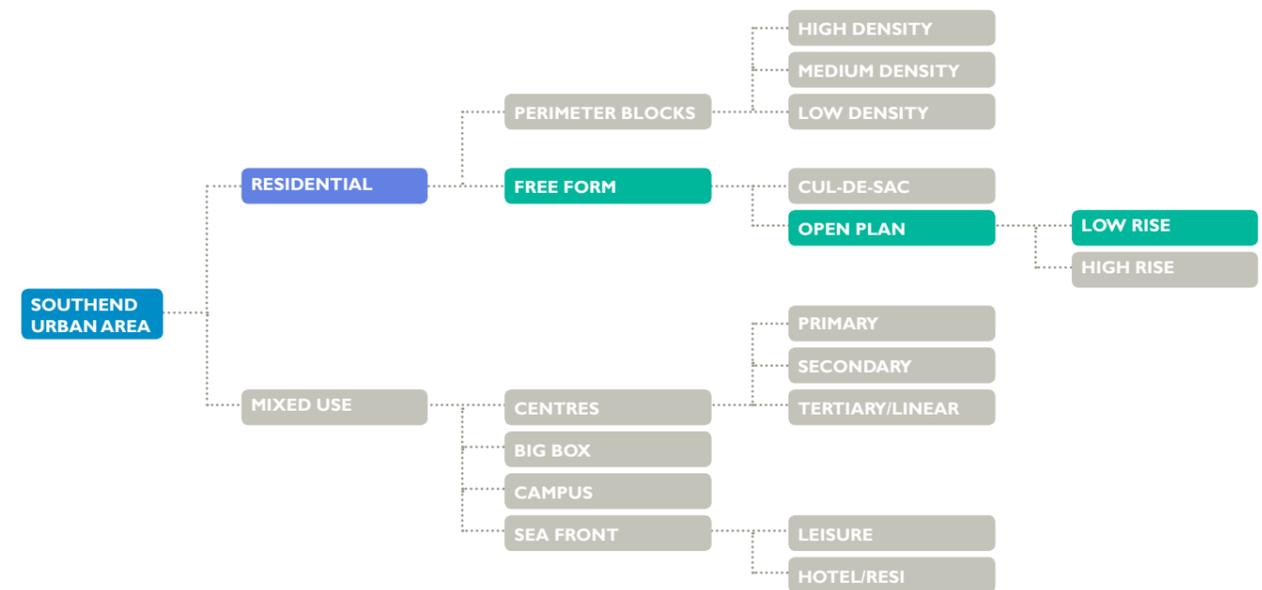
Buildings are likely to feature a very limited palette of materials in any given area and often include features such as timber infill panels set between windows in brick elevations. Windows are also most likely to have a strong horizontal proportion with generally very flat-fronted buildings.

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

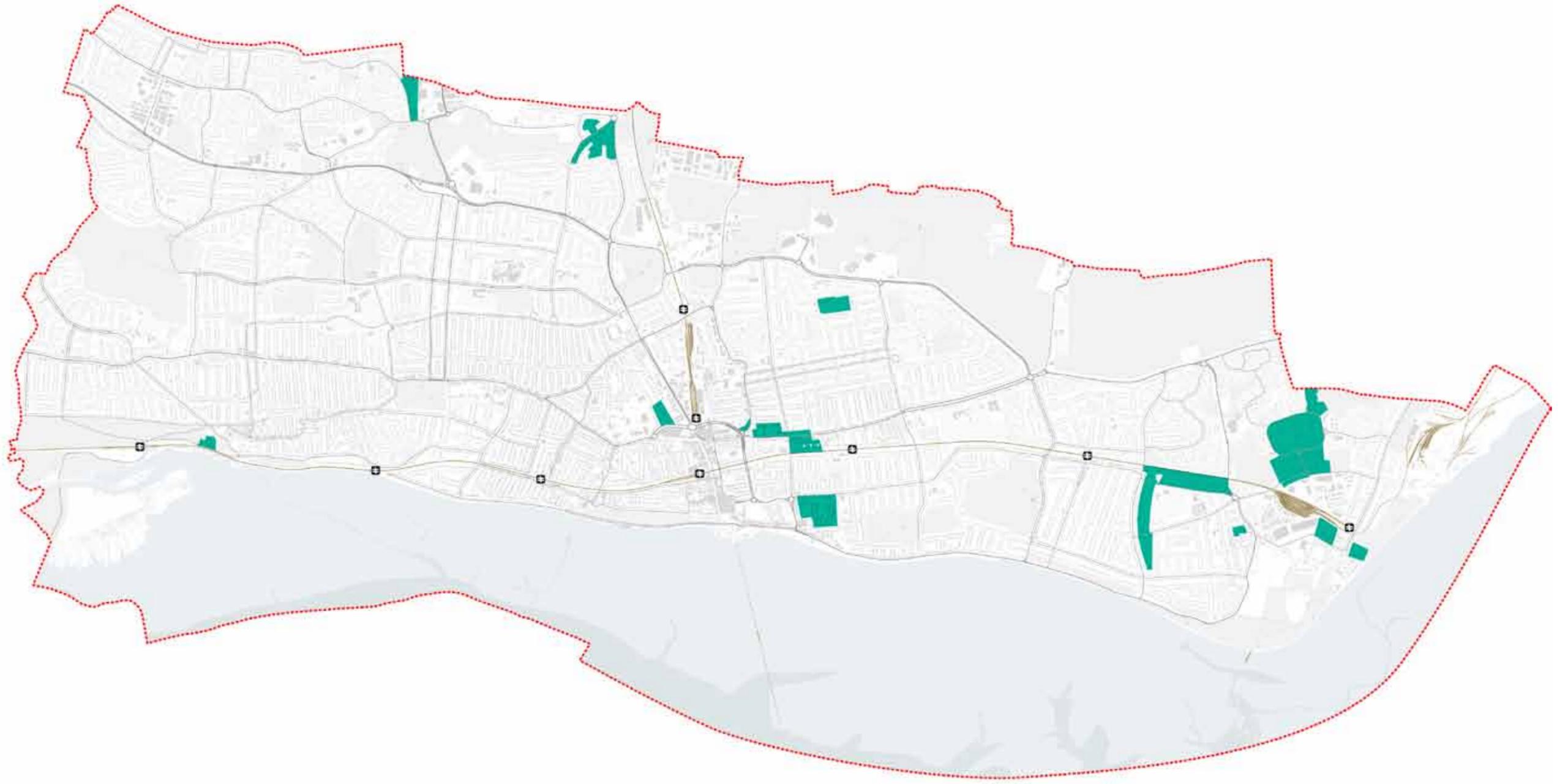
Streetscape and landscape

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

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



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

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

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





11-25
BACKLAY

RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - OPEN - HIGH RISE

Introduction

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

Urban form

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

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

Buildings

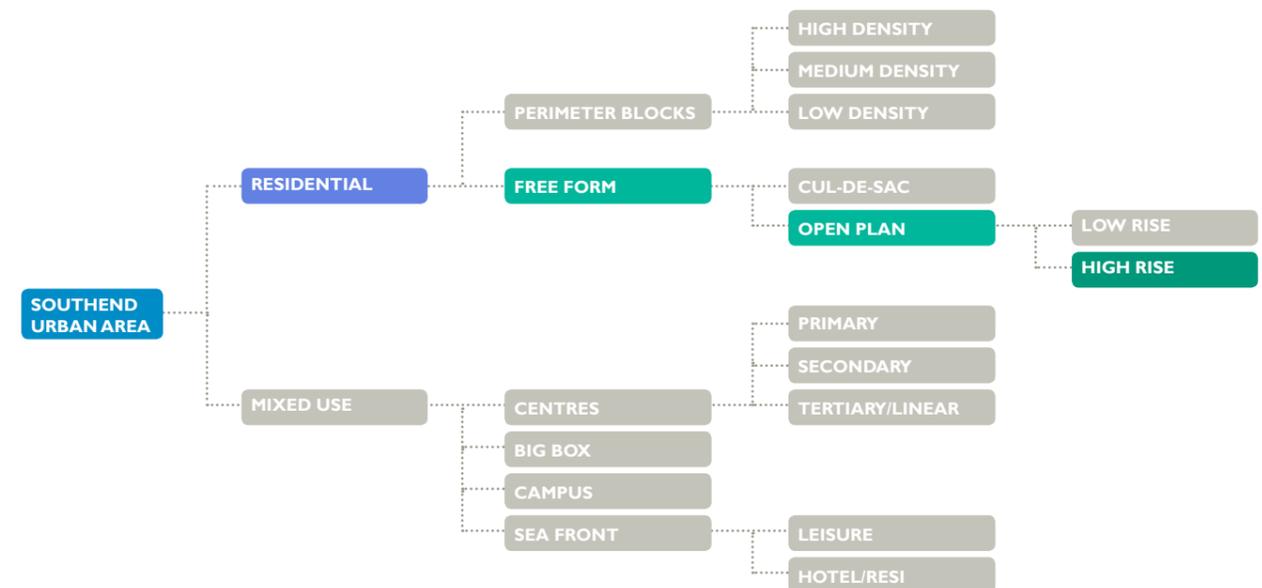
The examples of tall residential buildings in Southend typically date from the 1960s. Whilst they vary in height and form they are typically between 11 storeys and 17 storeys high. They follow a limited number of designs, typically matching others in their group where they are clustered as can be found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

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

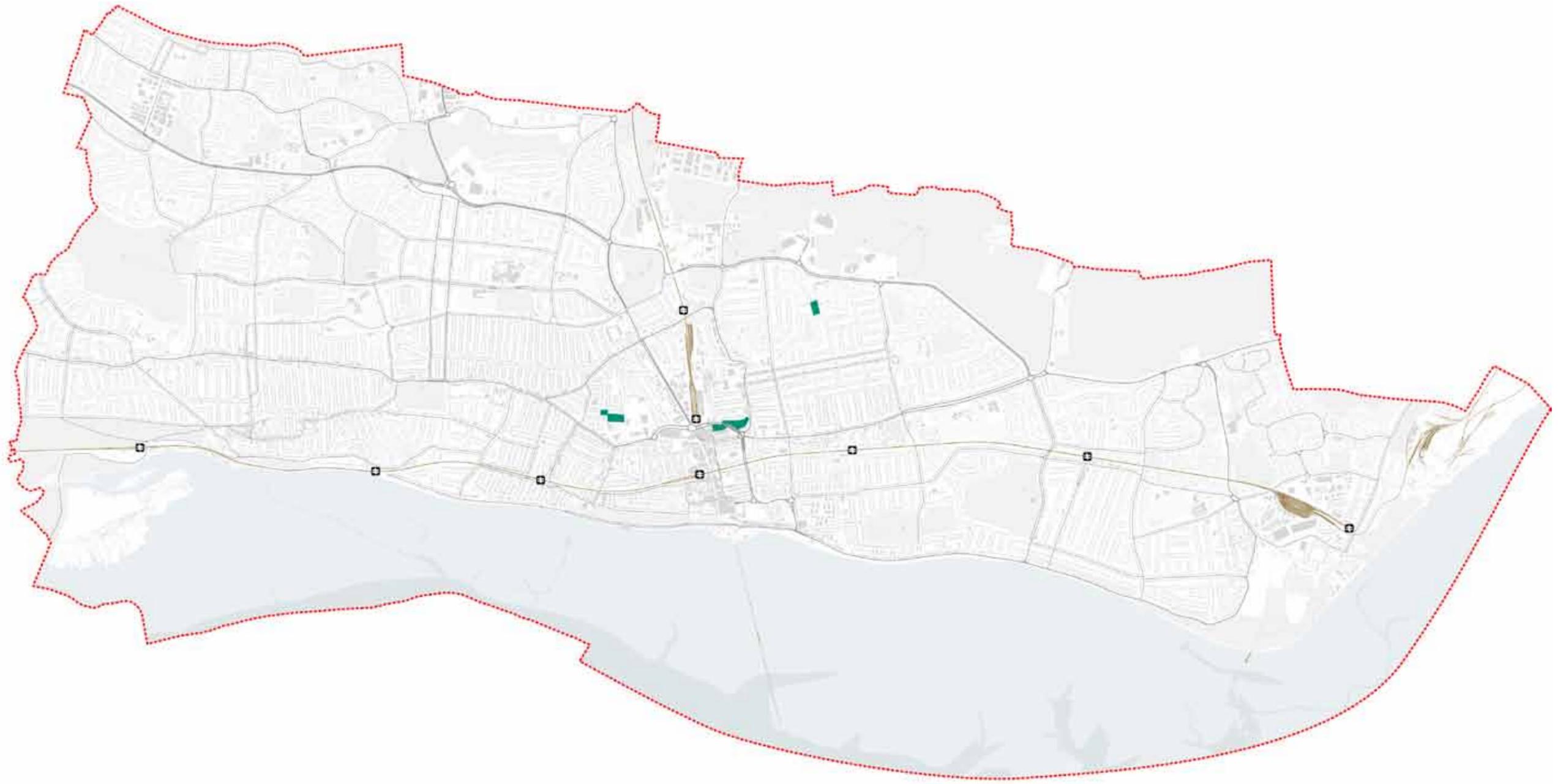
Development density is difficult to calculate given small isolated examples. However, studies have shown that towers set within landscape and providing surface parking as can be usually found in the Borough does not provide a dwelling density significantly higher than conventional Victorian terraced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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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

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





MIXED USE - CENTRES - PRIMARY

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

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

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

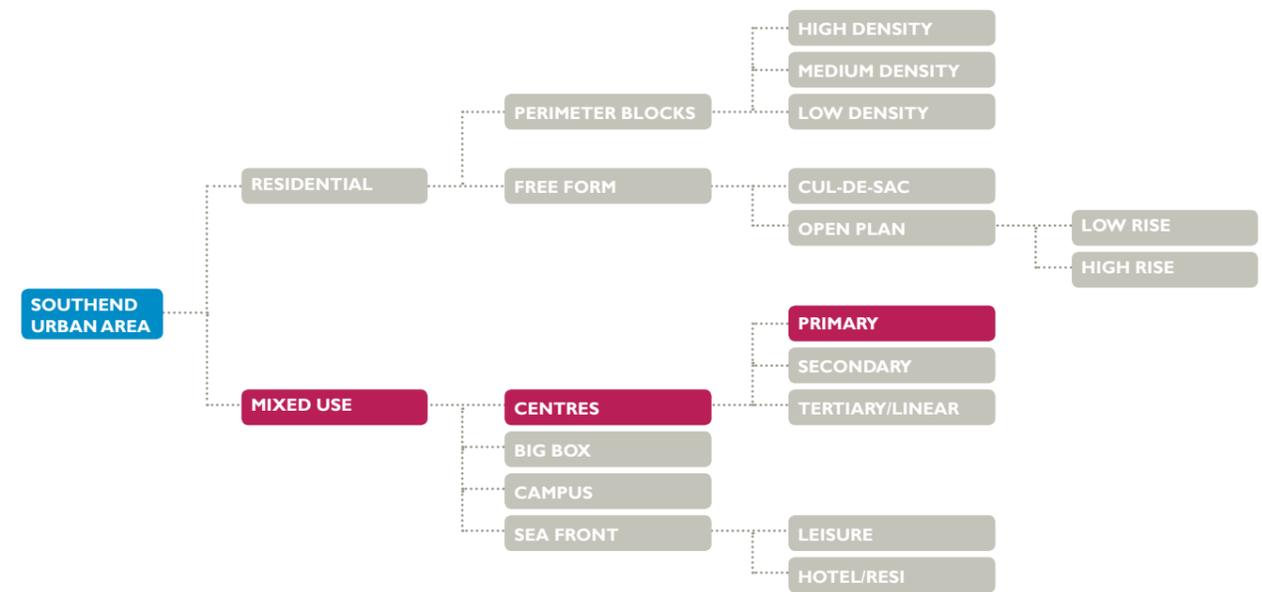
Buildings

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

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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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

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





MIXED USE - CENTRES - SECONDARY

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

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

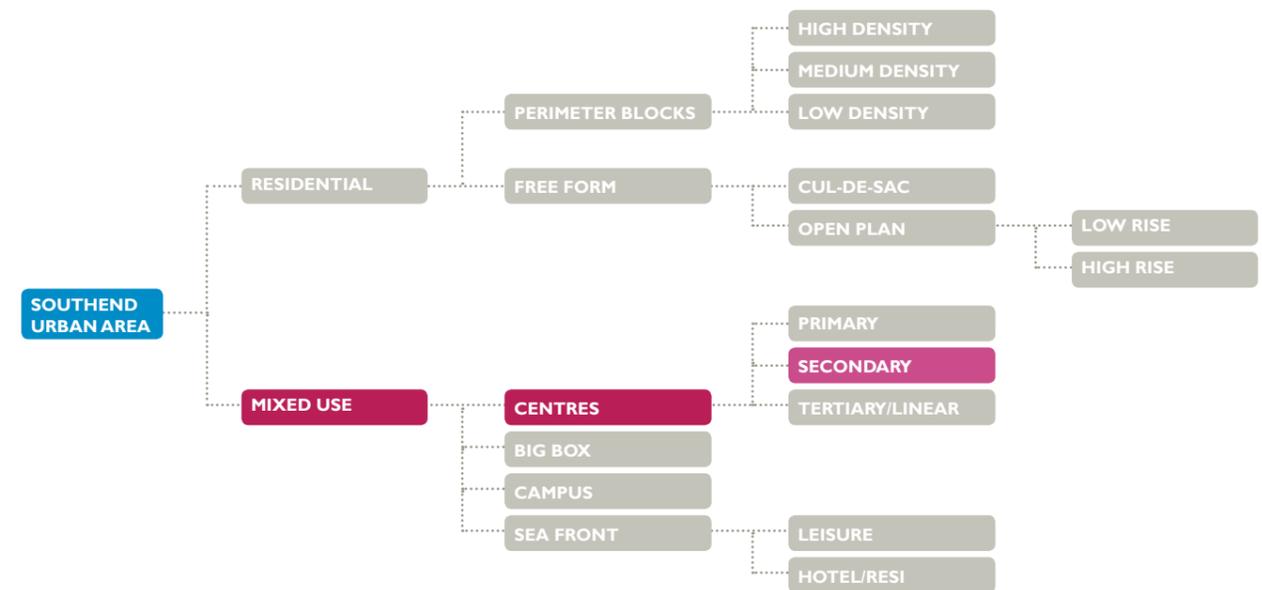
Buildings

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

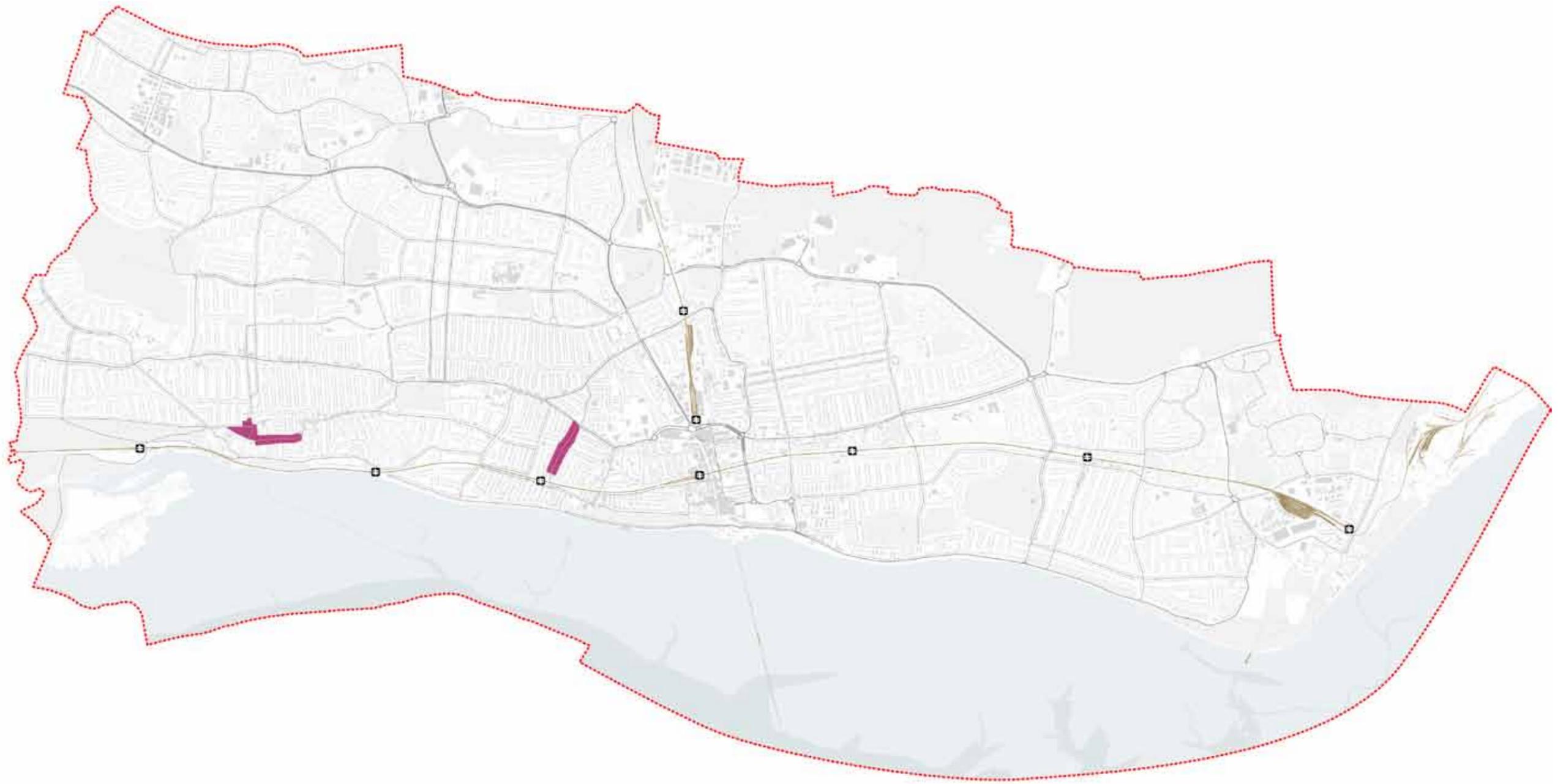
There are a number of good examples of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and shop fronts in Westcliff and Leigh. Examples in Leigh include The Atelier Gallery, the Sue Ryder charity shop, the Faux Workshop & Gallery and several banks which are built in robust Edwardian style on corner plots. Westcliff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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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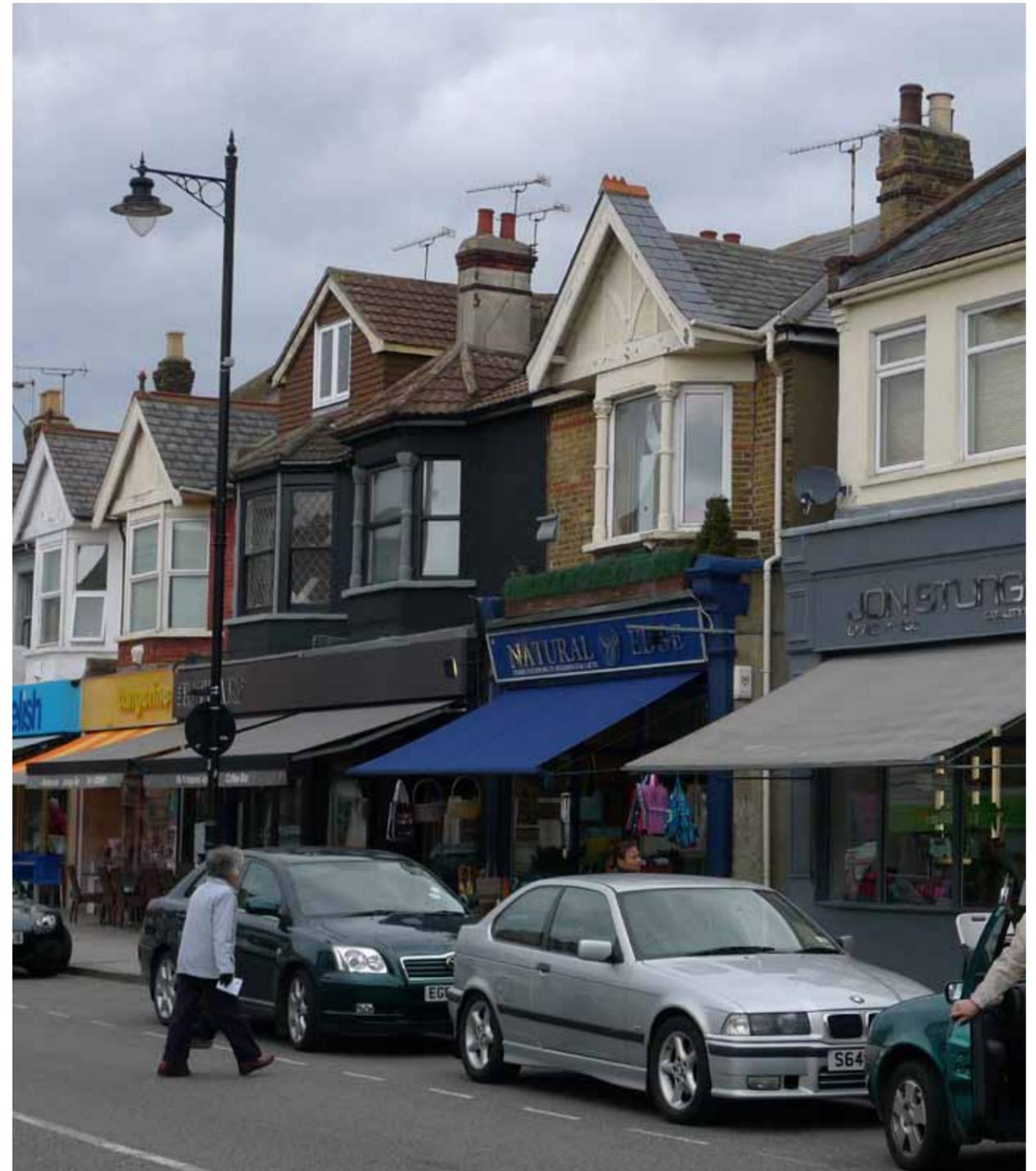
and delivery vehicles servicing the high street commercial properties.

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

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

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





MIXED USE - CENTRES - TERTIARY/LINEAR

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

Buildings

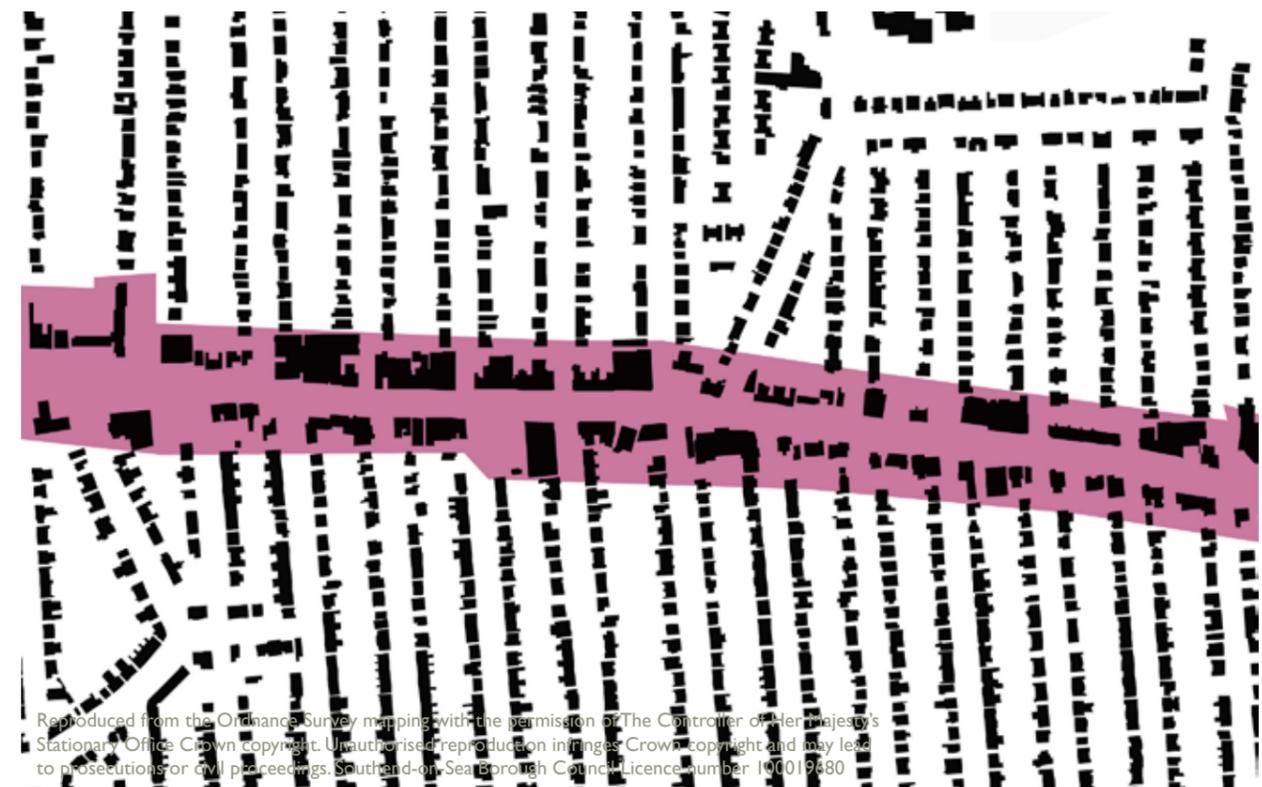
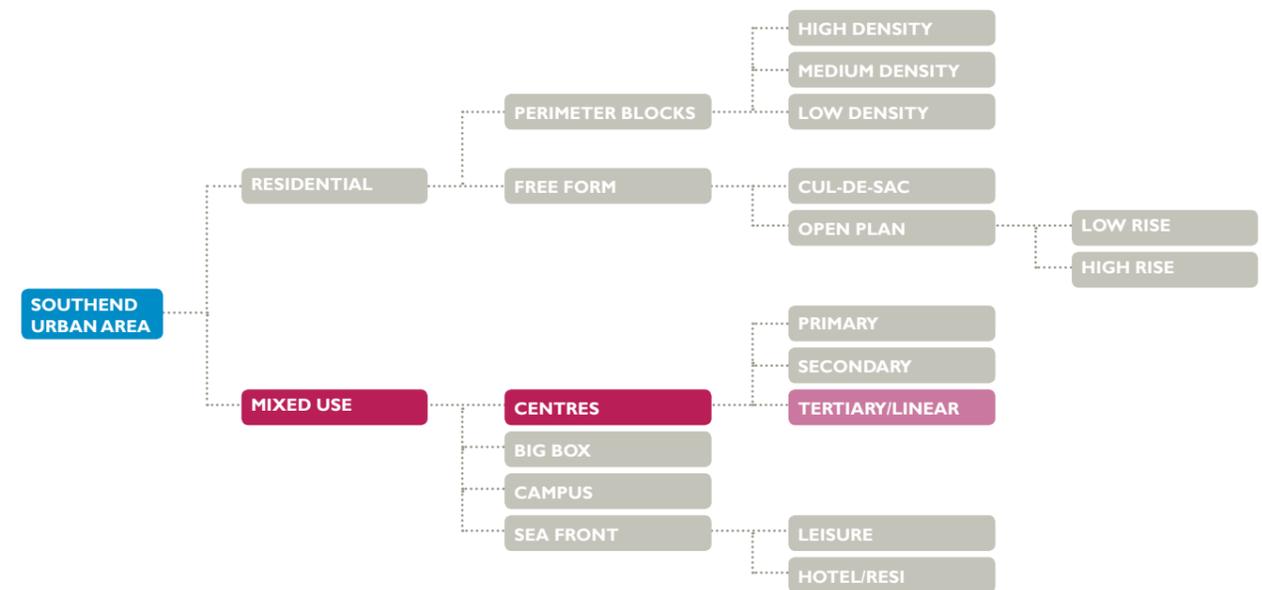
Buildings in tertiary centres include a mix of custom-built units and conversions from residential units. In the case of areas like Cluny Square or West Road in Shoebury terraces have been designed from inception with separate flats above. However, it is more typical to find

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

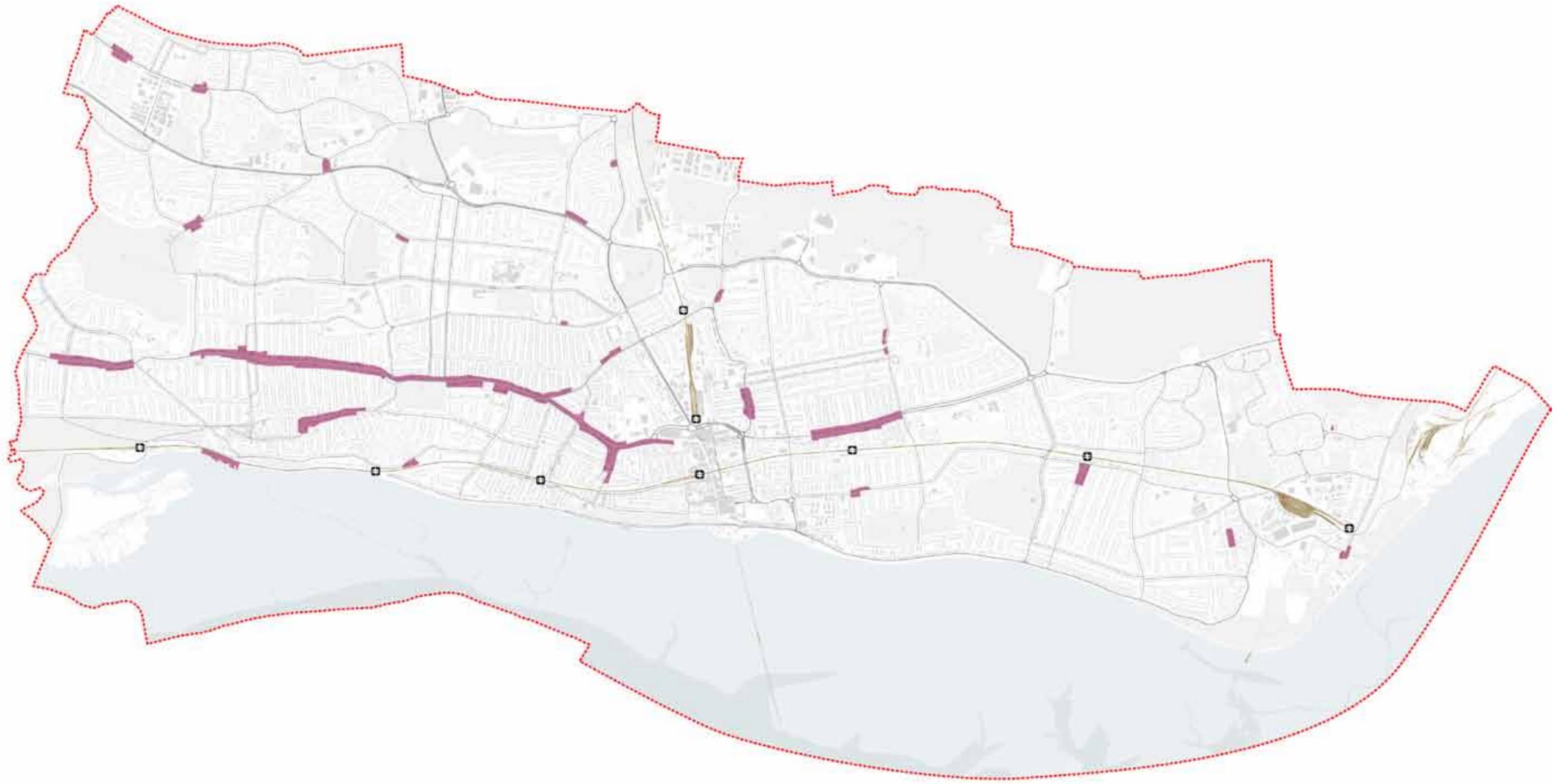
Streetscape and landscape

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

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



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

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





MIXED USE - BIG BOX

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

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

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

Buildings

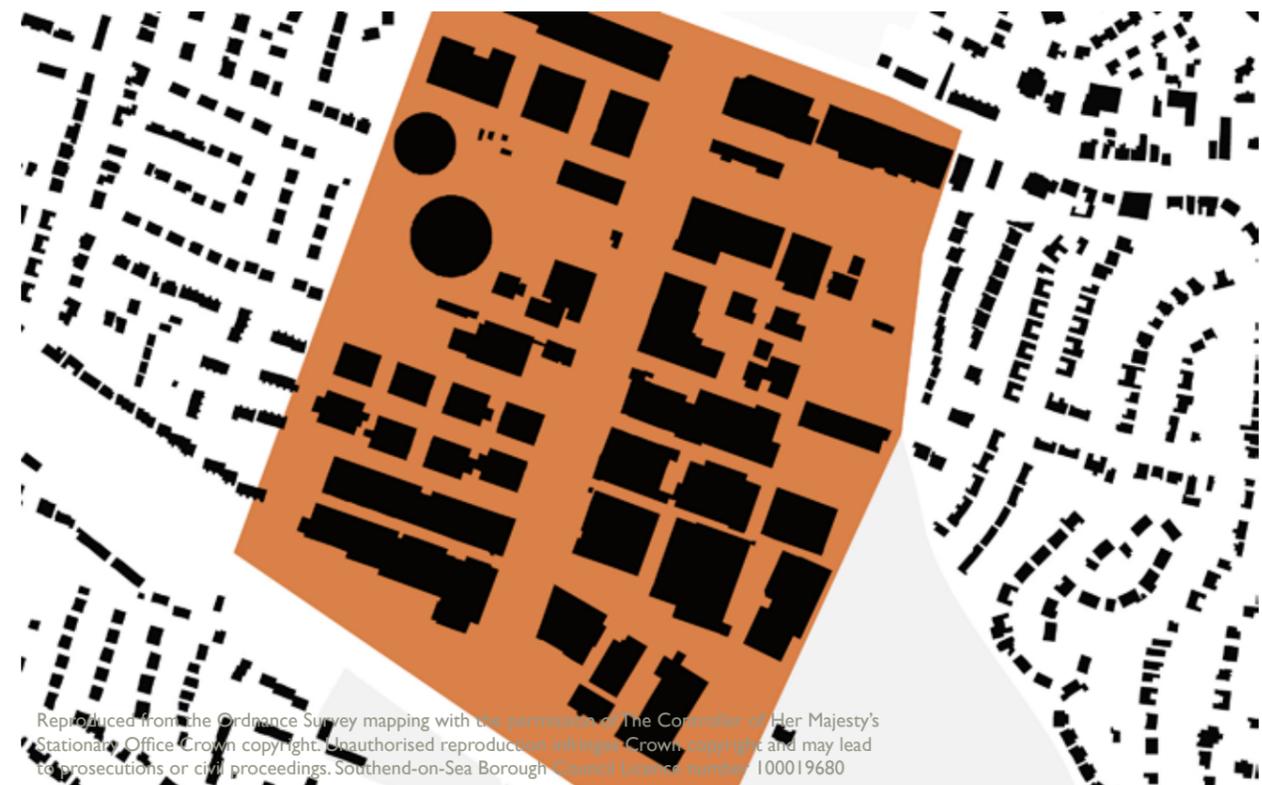
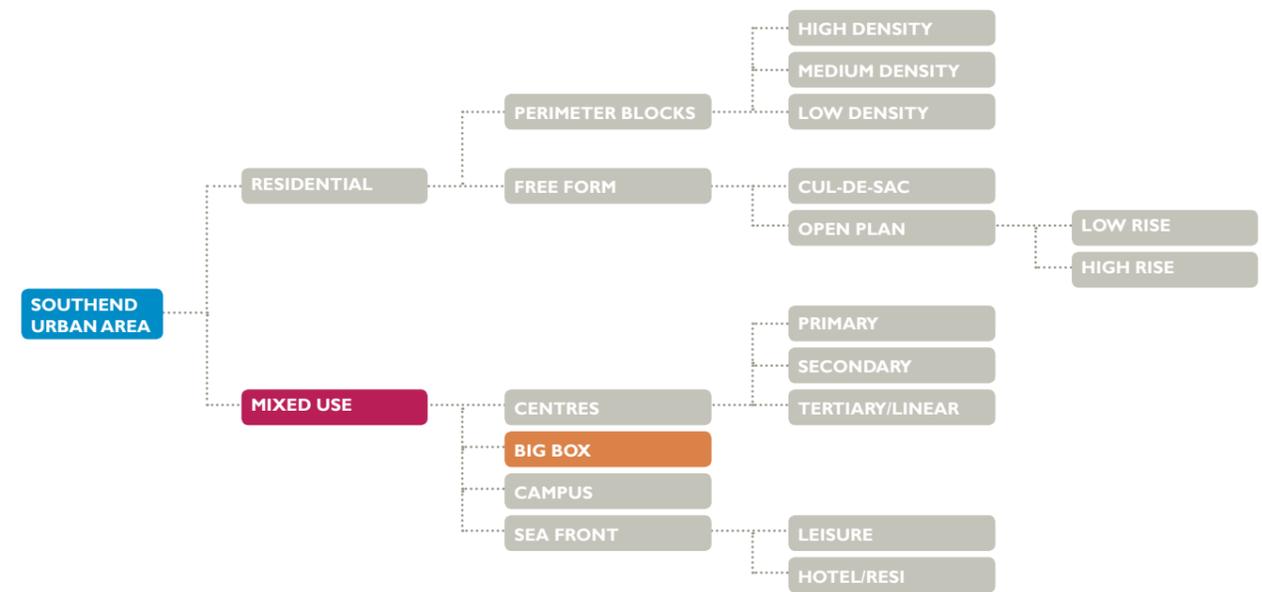
Buildings within the big box typology are typically large and simple and frequently have

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

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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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





MIXED USE - CAMPUS

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

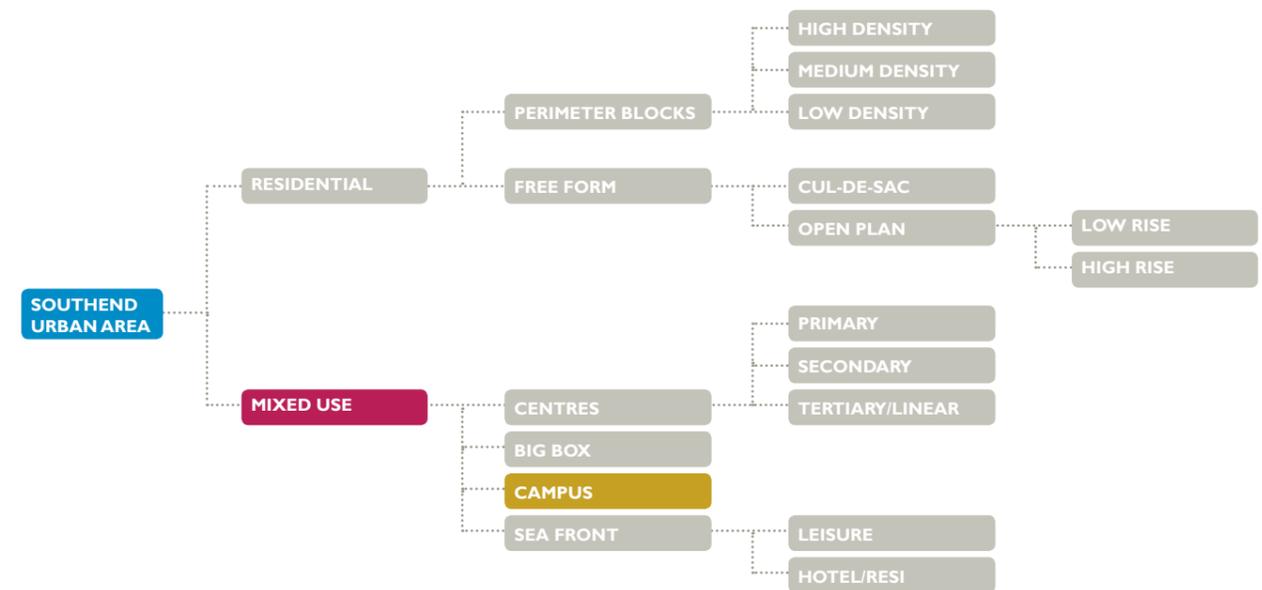
One significant impact of a campus building, can be the disruptive effect that a large enclosed area can have on the network of pedestrian routes in the area. By being a substantial body of land which doesn't provide through-routes it can reduce the frequency and directness of pedestrian routes and make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

Buildings

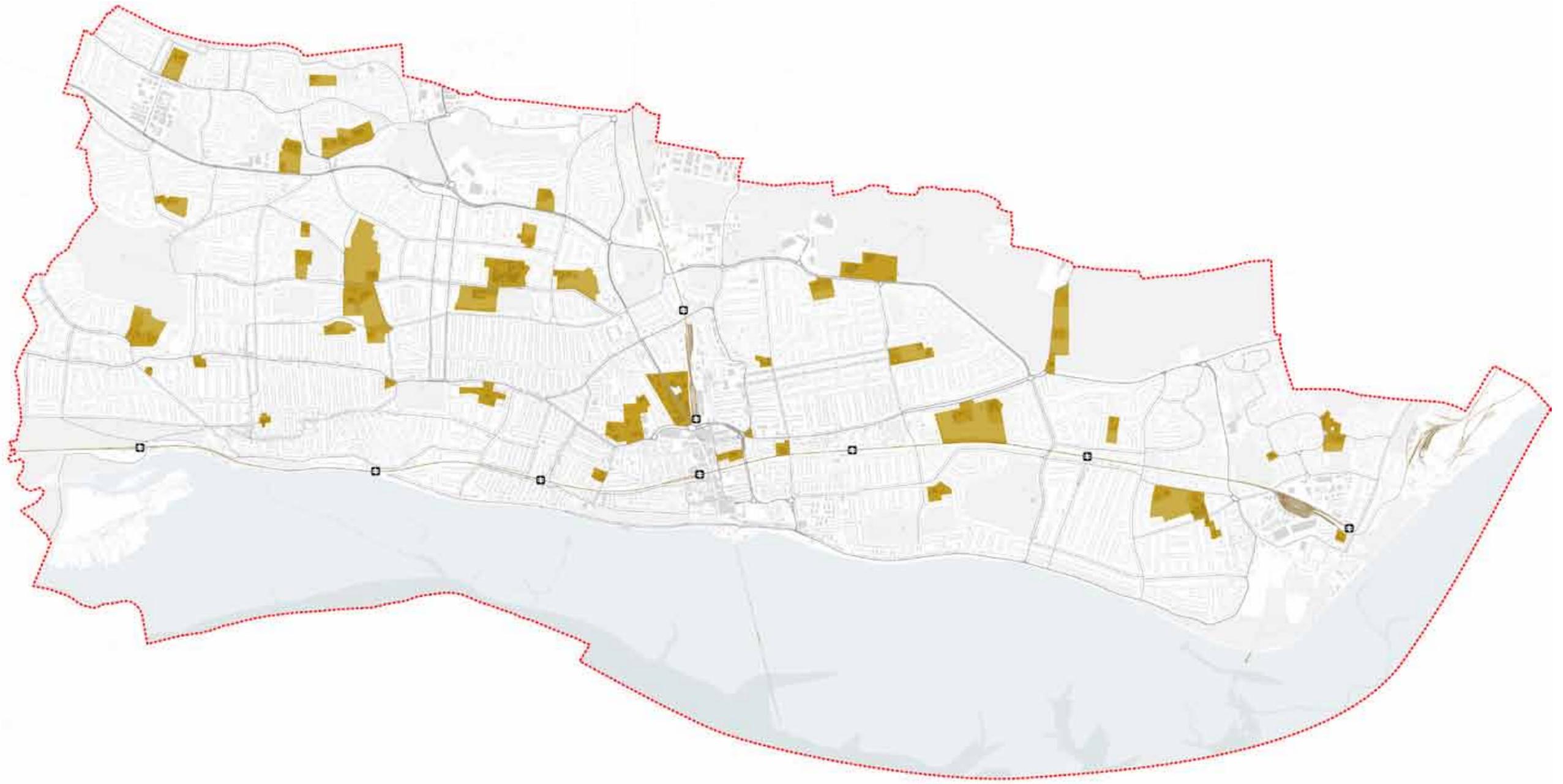
Buildings which fall within the campus typology vary widely in their built character, ranging from stout Victorian and Edwardian schools through to very low-rise 1960s schools and more expressive modern designs.

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

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



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Streetscape and landscape

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

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

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

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

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





MIXED USE – SEAFRONT – LEISURE

Introduction

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

Urban form

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

There are a number of distinct features:

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

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

Buildings

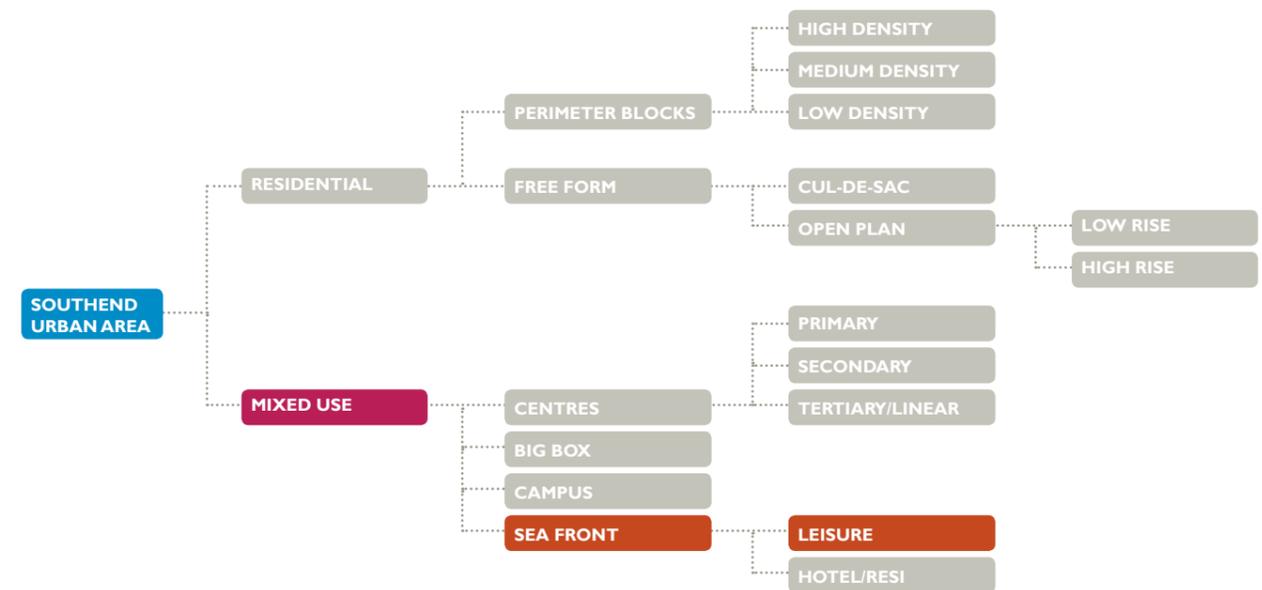
The majority of the buildings on Southend's sea frontage feature bold and exuberant external decoration in a manner which has few comparators beyond other seafront resorts and one-off examples such as Camden Town in London. Beneath the neon and applied decoration there is a mix of buildings, including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

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

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

Streetscape and landscape

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



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

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

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









MIXED USE – SEAFRONT – HOTEL/RESIDENTIAL

Introduction

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

Urban Form

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

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

Buildings

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

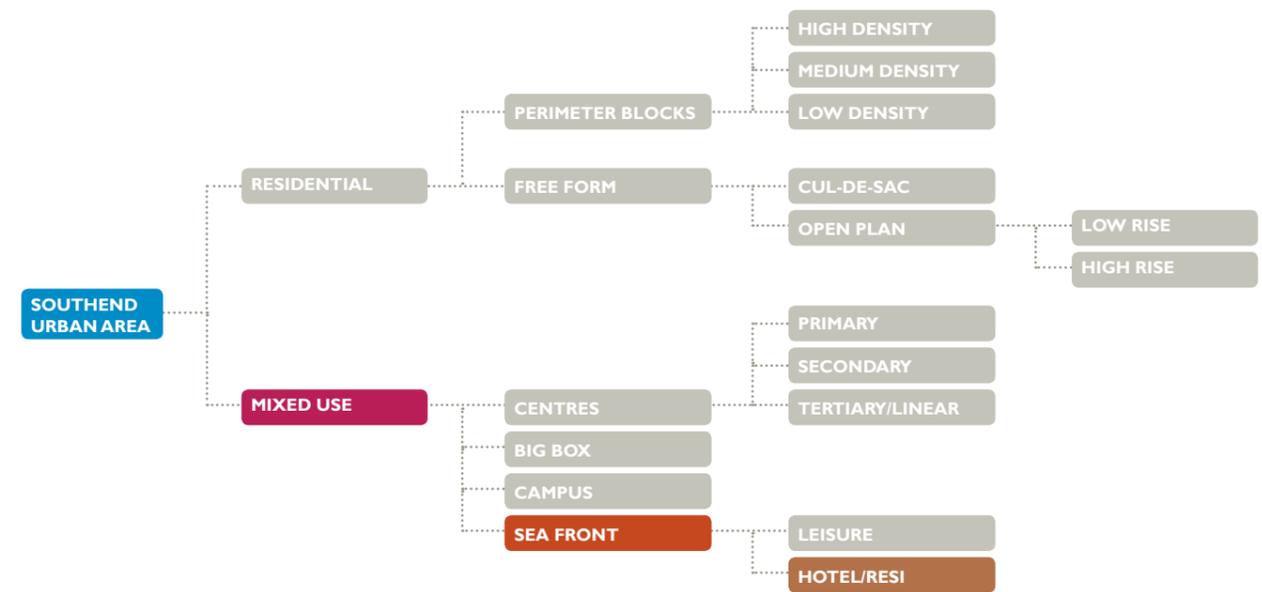
Of particular interest is the strong orientation towards the sea. Coupled with the south-facing aspect this gives a strong, single-minded approach to orientation and particularly with buildings which provide retirement or residential accommodation tends to manifest itself in features such as sun lounges,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

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

Streetscape and landscape

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

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



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

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







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