

EASTERN ESPLANADE CONSERVATION AREA

About 200 metres east of the Kursaal, this Conservation Area is associated with the resort's early period before the major expansion of the late 19th century. It contains mainly domestic buildings and, in particular, a terrace of early to mid 19th century cottages reputed to have been built for local fishermen. Its main interest relates to the design and materials of this terrace. Important features include:

- Recessed raised porches in weatherboarding with some decorative timberwork.
- Timber weatherboarding or yellow stock brick for the front elevations.
- Weatherboarded rear elevations.
- Sliding sash timber windows.
- Some original doors to the front entrances and side alleys.



A listed cottage, Eastern Esplanade

PLANNING CONSENTS

All development in these four Conservation Areas should follow the advice in the Conservation Area Guidance leaflet and, in particular, respect the features outlined above that contribute to its special character.

Planning permission is needed for development which materially affects the appearance or use of buildings or land. This can include, for example, re-roofing and altering windows, constructing extensions and new buildings.

ADVICE AND CONTACTS

Officers from the Technical Services Department are available to offer practical and technical advice on conservation and the need for consent. Contacts and sources of further information are given in a separate conservation leaflet.



Cottages Eastern Esplanade, on the Council's Local List of Historic Buildings

EASTERN ESPLANADE CONSERVATION AREA



Properties on the seafront in The Leas Conservation Area.

- Key for all Maps**
- Conservation Area Boundary
 - Listed Buildings
 - Buildings on the Local List

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INTRODUCTION

Southend's development as a seaside resort from the late 18th century onwards is central to its history. Parts of the present seafront still show evidence of this early development. Four seafront Conservation Areas have been designated because they have special architectural and historic interest and a character which needs to be preserved and enhanced. They are The Leas (designated in 1981 and later extended), The Kursaal (designated in 1989), Eastern Esplanade (designated in 1989), and Crowstone (designated in 1990).

Some individual seafront buildings outside these Areas, such as the Pier, also have special interest and are protected as Listed Buildings (see the Listed Buildings leaflet).

This leaflet describes the main features that give these Conservation Areas special interest. It is one of a series of leaflets forming the Council's Conservation Guide and should be read, in particular, with the Conservation Area Guidance leaflet. Together, these leaflets will help owners make informed decisions about development at their properties and, so, help to preserve and enhance the area's special character.



Visitors on the beach near the Kursaal, c1902

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 18th century, South End was a small hamlet along the shore at the south end of the lane from the village of Prittlewell (the lane now forms Southchurch Avenue and Sutton Road). It was dependent on local agriculture and fishing, and increasingly in the latter part of the century on oyster cultivation along the foreshore, the barge trade with London, and visitors.

From the middle of the 18th century, sea bathing for health became increasingly fashionable in England and new resorts were developed around the coast. Local land owners tried to exploit this fashion and attract visitors to South End with new accommodation in a lodging houses and small inns and hotels. Although a summer season coach service from London's Whitechapel to the Ship Inn, South End, began in 1790, and a second service from Aldgate followed in 1791, development was on too small a scale to be widely attractive and the resort appears to have mainly patronised by local custom.



The Britannia Public House, Eastern Esplanade c1890.

In the 1790s a more exclusive resort, New South End, began to be developed on the hill to the west (in the area of Royal Terrace). But this also failed to attract the fashionable society intended. One of the main problems was the difficult access by road and sea, and for many years New and Old South End together remained a small mainly local resort with relatively few facilities for visitors.

From the middle of the 19th century, however, three factors changed the situation. Increasing wealth and leisure time for the middle classes (compulsory Bank Holidays were introduced in 1871), greatly improved access by rail and boat, and the rise in popularity of excursions and holidays all helped to make Southend an attractive destination, especially for Londoners. The first railway from London was completed in 1856 and the Pier, (originally constructed in wood in 1829-30) was intermittently improved and extended, and eventually rebuilt in 1889. New attractions on the seafront were developed for visitors, along with new hotels and guesthouses. The seafront promenade was laid out and new housing spread over the surrounding area for people attracted to live permanently in the resort. The late 19th century was a boom period of growth and by the early 20th century Southend had become London's largest seaside resort.



Palmeira Avenue, The Leas Conservation Area. The new building on the right successfully replicates the original design

THE LEAS & CROWSTONE CONSERVATION AREAS

As Southend expanded westwards, Westcliff was developed as a new residential seaside resort. Much of the farmland close to the railway had been bought by one of the original railway developers, Brassey, in expectation of future development. Construction of Westcliff-on-Sea Station was subsidised by local developers and eventually opened in 1895. Development of the area between the railway and the seafront quickly followed, mainly with new houses and visitor accommodation over the next twenty years. The Leas Conservation Area includes the most prominent part of this development facing and close to the seafront. Despite some subsequent redevelopment and alterations, the area retains much of the character of the original residential resort.



Argyll House, built in the 1930's is on the Council's Local List of Historic Buildings and within the Leas Conservation Area

The area has a range of seaside architecture typical of the period which makes an attractive and visually lively setting for the seafront. Features contributing to this architectural interest include:

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

Notable buildings include:

- Palmeira Mansions and the other contemporary buildings in Palmeira Avenue, built in 1901-2.
- Argyle House 1937, an imposing block of flats in the international style. It is on the local list.
- The sun shelter below Clifton Drive a typical design for the 1920s seaside resort.



Palmeira Mansions, The Leas Conservation Area and on the Council's Local List of Historic Buildings.

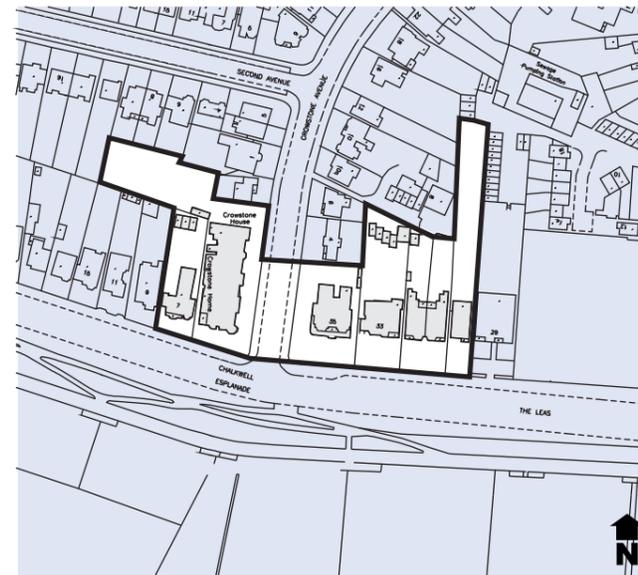
THE LEAS CONSERVATION AREA



Map Key - see overleaf

0 50m

CROWSTONE CONSERVATION AREA



Map Key - see overleaf

0 50m

The Crowstone Conservation Area is separated from the Leas Conservation Area by modern developments. It is contemporary with the Leas and has a generally similar architectural interest. Crowstone House with its prominent turret, built in 1905 at the corner of Crowstone Avenue and Chalkwell Esplanade, is an important townscape feature on the seafront.



Crowstone House, Crowstone Conservation Area



The Kursaal, after its restoration in 1998

THE KURSAAL CONSERVATION AREA

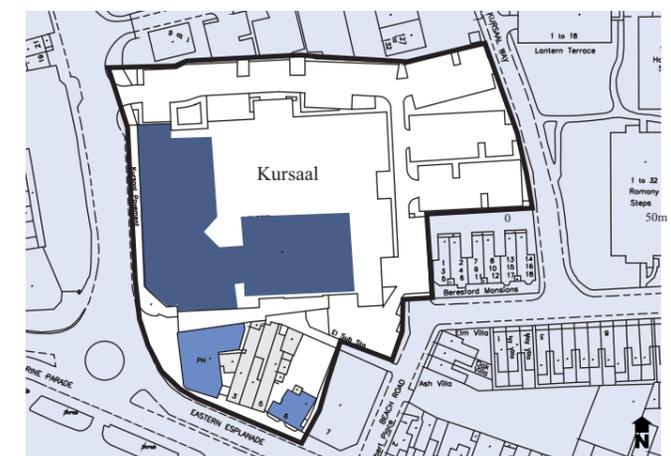
This is a compact Area associated both with Southend's origins and its later growth into a major resort. Buildings of particular interest are:

The Minerva - Built in 1792 as Minerva House, it was the home of Abraham Vandervord, the principal local barge owner. It was in the centre of the hamlet at the time of its early development as a small resort. It is now a public house and much altered.

The Britannia - Built in the early late 18th century and later converted to an inn catering for visitors.

The Kursaal - Originating as the Marine Park laid out in 1894, the "Kursaal" was built in the south west corner of the Park to form a grand entrance. Designed by George Sherrin in 1896, the buildings were not completed until 1901. The "Kursaal" included a circus, ballroom, arcade with amusements, dining hall and billiard room, but the planned "Blackpool" - like tower was not built. The Marine Park was soon taken over by amusements and rides, to become the resort's premier attraction. Although the amusement park has been redeveloped for housing, much of the Kursaal building has been restored following many years of dereliction. The tower, with its glazed interior, and the frontage to Southchurch Avenue are well detailed in red brick and stone, and are prominent features of the seafront townscape. It is now a listed building.

THE KURSAAL CONSERVATION AREA



Map Key - see overleaf

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