

Local Legacy - Register of buildings of local value in Chelmsford



Globe House, New Street. Built as 'Hoffmanns' ballbearing factory 1897. An important remnant of Chelmsford's industrial heritage and a powerful landmark.

Introduction

Historic buildings and structures make our most cherished places special and add to the quality of our lives by creating a sense of local distinctiveness. They contribute to the character of the borough and are part of our heritage which, once lost, cannot be replaced.

Chelmsford Borough Council wants to encourage owners to value and protect these special places, and has recognised the buildings and structures which it feels are of particular local interest in a new register.

The main form of protection is through statutory listing (based on national criteria) or designation of conservation areas within which buildings cannot be demolished without permission. Otherwise there is no test for the desirability of development, except the stated benefits of new development. In many cases individual buildings have very significant

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value and need a stronger planning defence based on heritage, local distinctiveness and sustainability.

Policy CP9 of the adopted Core Strategy (which sets out the Council's future strategy for development) describes the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the historic built environment and provides the policy context for identifying those buildings that are locally important.

The purpose of this document is to set out the Council's objectives and criteria for the conservation of the borough's unlisted historic buildings. While these buildings may not meet the national criteria for listing they undoubtedly add to the richness of the local built environment and thereby enhance the special identity of the borough.

Whether isolated in the countryside or part of the village or urban townscape, many buildings in Chelmsford complement the wider environment. Some are part of a combination of structures such as traditional farmsteads, with important group value. Others might feature in a terrace or street which has managed to retain its original character and identity. Others have survived over the years through a sturdy construction capable of adaption to occupier's needs - a clear sign of a sustainable building of great functional value.

Purpose of the register

The purpose of the register is as follows:

- To raise awareness of the borough's historic buildings and their importance to local distinctiveness and quality of life.
- To promote further research and recording of important buildings, associated architects, occupiers and local events that have contributed to our culture.
- To inform developers, owners, Council officers and Members about buildings within the borough that are desirable to retain and protect.
- To provide guidance and specialist advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of the buildings.
- To aid the Council in its decision making when discussing proposals and determining planning applications.
- To allow consideration of a building's special character when applying Building Regulations to alterations, extensions and change of use proposals.

Criteria for selection

A building of local interest is one which retains its historic form and external detail and so makes a positive contribution to the architectural and historic character of the locality for one or more of the following reasons: age, use, style, structure, townscape, patron/designer, and occupier/event. Age is clearly a significant consideration. The older a building is, the fewer examples of its kind are likely to have survived, and so the more likely it is to have historic importance.



Clock tower part of the original Britvic Factory

There are other criteria for selection: a building might have architectural interest, for example it might display particularly impressive craftsmanship or a distinctive architectural style. It might demonstrate technological innovation or excellence. It might have a close, documented historical association with significant people or events in history, or it might have scenic, artistic or group value. An historic building may have limited architectural interest but remain structurally sound and be adaptable for new uses.

Permanent built structures are included, rather than natural landscape features. Listed buildings of national importance are already covered by strong controls, and would not be included in a local register. Buildings within their curtilage are generally treated as listed so to avoid confusion these have not been included. Buildings within conservation areas are however included in the local register.

The criteria for inclusion are set out below:

Age and integrity

① For a building to be considered to be included in the register it must fall within one or more of the following age and integrity categories.

(a) pre-1840: all buildings where the style, form and construction of the building are easily identifiable, and potentially restorable.

(b) 1840 - 1880: all buildings that are largely complete, and of good architectural or historic interest.

(c) 1880 - 1940: only buildings that are substantially complete and unaltered and of very good architectural or historic interest that are largely unaffected by alterations and extensions.

(d) post 1940: only buildings that are wholly complete and of the highest level of architectural or historic interest that is unaffected by inappropriate alterations and extensions.

(e) Rare surviving examples of a particular type or form of building, material or style.

Historic interest

② The historic interest of a building or group of buildings is judged according to the following:

(a) Historic Association

i. well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event.

ii. figures or events of national interest with a direct association.



Bellmead war memorial, dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Boer War



Statue of Graham Gooch, 1992. Associated with a nationally and locally important sportsman

- iii. figures or events of local interest with a prolonged and direct association;
- iv. the contribution made by the individual or event to the local scene.
- v. the importance of the building in relation to the work / influence of the person or event in question.
- vi. a key association with a notable figure or event, particularly if this figure or event influenced local or national events during the association with the building in question.

(b) Social Importance

The development of an area is often influenced by an individual building, which may play an integral part in the shape of the area, or in the local social scene. Such buildings may include churches, schools, village and town halls, chapels, public houses, memorials, places of employment and workhouses, which formed a focal point or key social role in the history of the area.



White Horse Public House, one of a number of mid c19 pubs of townscape, historic and architectural interest

Architectural interest

3 The architectural interest of a building or group of buildings is judged according to the following criteria:

(a) Artistic Innovation or Virtuosity

- i. early local examples of a particular architectural style.
- ii. use of quality materials and workmanship.
- iii. the work of a notable local architect (same determining factors as for Historic Association).
- iv. architectural merit as recognised by local or national awards, or publications.

(b) Technological Innovation or Virtuosity

- i. early local examples of a particular type of building, or early local use of a new material or building technique (e.g. 19th Century concrete etc.).
- ii. use of quality materials and workmanship.

(c) Group Value

- i. terraces, enclosing buildings (surrounding squares, farmyards etc.), uniform rows etc.
- ii. early local examples of deliberate town planning.
- iii. groups which as a whole have a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.

(d) Buildings contributing significantly to townscape appearance

- i. pubs, churches, factories, cinemas, banks etc.
- ii. buildings that are a focal point of social and visual interest.



St. Mary's Church, Widford. A prominent landmark of immense social and architectural interest

- iii. form a landmark, from within or from outside an area.
- iv. of good general architectural or historic interest.
- v. townscape value; a building which adds to a group, street or space.
- vi. Groups which as a whole have a unified architectural or historic value within the local area.

(e) Sustainability

- i. useful and adaptable for continuing use.
- ii. robust construction with quality materials.

Particular weight is given by the Council to architectural and historic interest. Historic association may be an additional factor, but will not usually be significant enough individually to warrant inclusion.

Buildings are selected based on the above criteria, with recommendations welcomed from Parish Councils or Town Councils, local history groups, village design groups and other interested parties. When the register has been compiled for an area (i.e. a parish) all owners of the selected buildings are notified and comments sought from interested groups on the building's special interest.

The register, as approved by Borough Councillors forms a basis for protection and care of the borough's locally important built heritage.

The Council wants to ensure that only the finest buildings of definite character and quality are included. However it should be noted that there are many buildings which are not included, but do never-the-less make a contribution to the locality, for instance the numerous late C19 and early C20 houses, of which only the most exceptional examples are included.

Buildings have been selected through a documentary survey, local knowledge, rapid visual survey and local recommendations. Documentary sources are primarily from conservation area character appraisals, The Buildings of England Series (Bettley, 2007), Essex County Council surveys of modern/industrial sites, Royal Commission surveys and reports, and specific research into locally important building and architects.

For each entry there is a brief description and statement of significance. The description is for identification purposes, but doesn't necessarily include all features of interest, and is limited to external appearance; however most buildings will have internal features which contribute to their importance, such as plan form, fixtures and finishes. A brief statement of significance is also given identifying why the building has been included.



Chancellor Building, Victoria Road, South. Built 1904-6, as a museum, art school and library. A high quality public building designed by local architect Frederick Chancellor



The Gemini Building, New London Road, 1938. A good example of a mid twentieth century public building

Implications of inclusion on the register

Inclusion on the register does not introduce any special planning controls, but in exercising its planning functions the Council will seek to protect locally registered buildings from demolition, unsympathetic alteration or extension and harm to their setting.

The Council's adopted Local Development Framework (LDF) policy documents include policies for the protection and enhancement of local heritage (CP9). In addition in some cases relevant policies will include sympathetic extension of dwellings (DC47), protection of the character of conservation areas (DC17), protecting the setting of listed buildings (DC18), protection of registered parks and gardens (DC20), protection of archaeology (DC21), protection of local facilities (DC37) and achievement of high quality development (DC45).



Where buildings are already within a conservation area and are considered to make a positive contribution to the area's character, inclusion on the register would introduce no significant additional controls.

In interpreting and implementing these policies the guidance below will be relevant considerations in assessing proposals for buildings or structures on the register.

Demolition

Whilst there is no specific need for planning permission for demolition of buildings outside conservation areas (although there is a duty to give notification of the demolition of a dwelling), the Council has a responsibility to make every effort within its powers to protect the historic environment. This can include, if it is appropriate, the serving of an article 4(1) direction on a locally important building to remove permitted development rights (including demolition).

The Council will, as far as possible, resist the demolition of a building identified according to the published criteria as being of local architectural or historic interest. Any proposal for demolition should be supported by an independent structural survey, an analysis of the cost of repair, the market value of the building and evidence that the building has been marketed for a reasonable period of time at a realistic price which reflects the condition of the building and the site constraints and details of what would take its place after demolition.

In exceptional circumstances where the Council accepts that the retention of a registered building is not justified and demolition is permitted it will usually be a requirement that in addition to normal planning policy requirements:



Trinity Methodist Church, 1961. Socially and architecturally important

- i. Any replacement building is of equal or greater architectural and townscape quality.
- ii. The developer makes provision for accurate and detailed (i.e. to Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME) standards, of a level to be agreed) record of the building for archive purposes prior to demolition.

Special Features

Whether internal or external, special features should usually be retained, conserved or restored where possible. In this regard it is important that the designers have a good understanding and regard for what gives a building its special interest. The entry on the register will give a starting point, but will not be exhaustive or detailed. Special interest may include plan form, staircases, doors, windows, decorative features or elevational treatment. Where possible historic fabric should be retained and repaired to retain authenticity. Repair of the fabric should usually use traditional materials and methods of working.

Extensions and New Buildings

New works in the immediate setting of the building should usually preserve the scale, character and setting of the building. For extensions this will normally mean being subservient in height and massing, which could be achieved in a historic or contemporary way. For either option contextual analysis, design quality, attention to detail and good quality materials will be important.

Setting

The setting of a registered building will usually be an important element of its character. This might include how it reads in a street or within open countryside. Proposals for new development should give careful consideration for the quality and nature of the setting of buildings. The position, layout and design should preserve important aspects of setting and where possible enhance those which are of poor quality.

Important elements in setting are likely to be:

- The arrangement of built elements to complement historic form and function.
- Views into, through and out of sites.
- A relationship to surrounding levels of built enclosure and scale.
- Surface treatments, boundaries and trees.

Further guidance

The Council is able to offer preliminary advice on proposals affecting registered buildings. Contact Planning Services, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CMI IJE, or telephone 01245 606826 or the Council's conservation officer on 01245 606294.



Courtman House (40 Maltese Road,) c.1885. One of many good quality Victorian Villas in the borough. Designed by local architect Frank Whitmore

Further reading:

PPG15 Annex A – Guidance on alterations to listed buildings. Not statutorily applicable, but may be a useful reference for owners or designers.

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, CBC, adopted 2008 – contains the Council's planning policies

Making Places SPD, CBC, adopted 2007

Sustainable Development SPD, CBC, adopted 2007

CBC guidance notes on insertion of dormers, two storey extensions and security shutters.

Conservation principles, policies and guidance, English Heritage, 2008

Guidance notes on historic buildings by SPAB, Georgian Group, Victorian Society, Twentieth Century Society and Essex County Council.

www.chelmsford.gov.uk – details of existing listed buildings, conservation areas and planning policy.

This leaflet is available in alternative formats, including Braille, large print, audio tape and other languages.

Please call 01245 606458