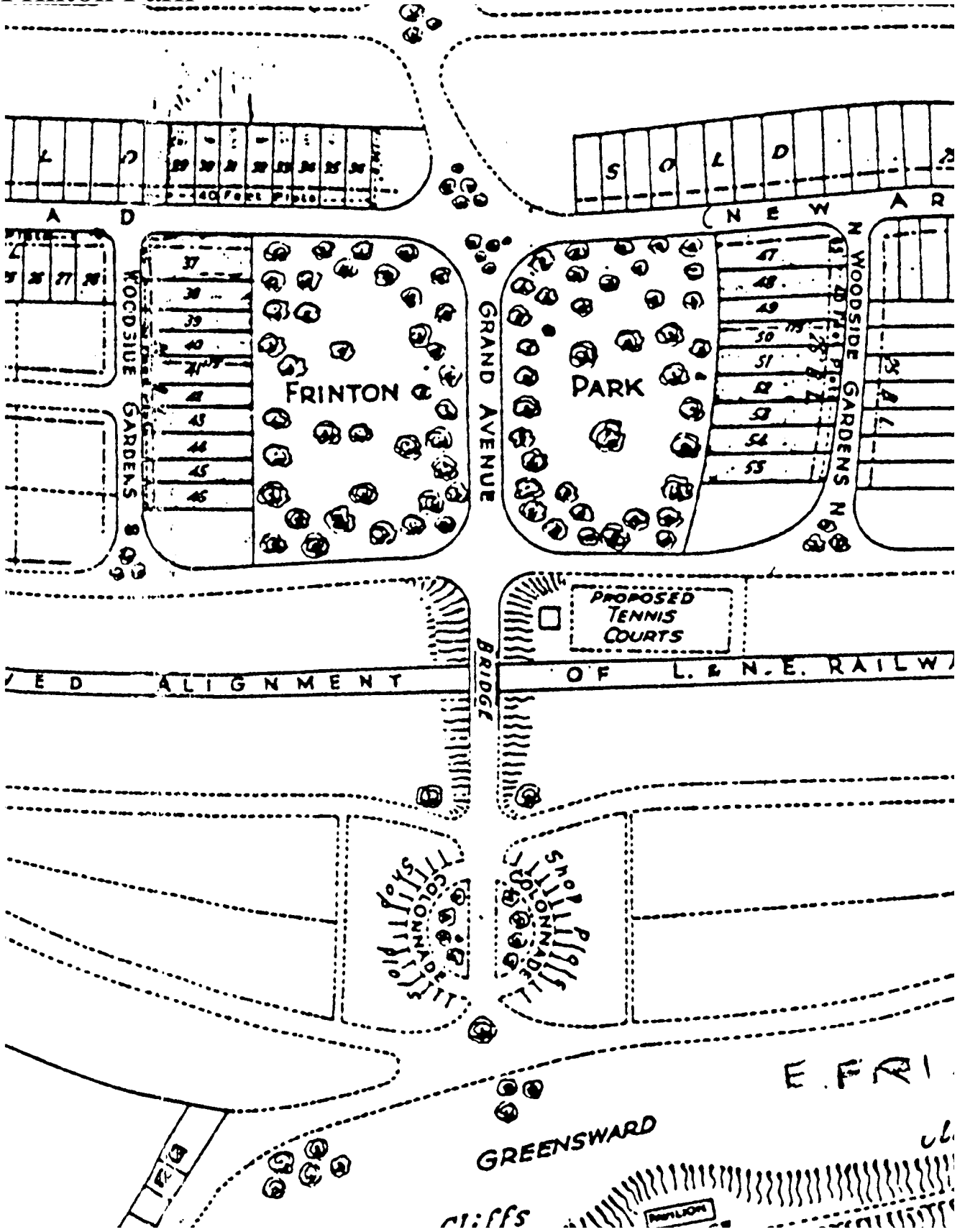




Frinton and Walton Conservation Area

Frinton Park



DISCLAIMER

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal adopted by the Council in March 2006 and appearing on this WebPage is derived from an earlier document produced for the Council by consultants Smith Stuart Reynolds in 2001. Subsequently, the Council published these documents for consultation purposes in late 2005. These were then partially updated and amended to reflect the comments received from town and parish councils and other interested parties. No comprehensive revision and updating of the 2001 documents took place.

The Council recognises that over time changes have taken place to various buildings referred to in the Appraisals so that certain comments / statements made in relation to those buildings are now, no longer applicable. For up to date information relating to planning applications, permissions or other developments on individual buildings referred to in the Appraisals you are advised to use the Council's planning public access search engine at www.tendringdc.gov.uk/TendringDC/Environment/Planning+and+Buildings/ or contact Regeneration, Planning and Community Services on 01255 686161.

Frinton and Walton Conservation Area

Frinton Park

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been produced by the District Council but is based on earlier work by consultants Smith Stuart Reynolds in 2001. These earlier documents contain the views of the consultant and did not necessarily reflect the Council's Officer's views. Although these documents have existed for some time they had no formal, planning status.

The Council subsequently agreed in 2005 to prepare Conservation Area Character Appraisals for each of its Conservation Areas and as a forerunner to updating the above consultant's documents a consultation exercise took place in late 2005/early 2006. This involved town and parish councils and certain local amenity bodies. The results of the consultation exercise were reported to the Council's Planning Portfolio Holder when the document was formally considered for adoption as Council planning policy. As a result of this consultation the Appraisal documents have been amended and updated in the light of the comments received from consultees and as a result of certain changes which have taken place since 2001. Much of the descriptive material used in the original SSR documents has been retained.

Proposals originally put forward by the Consultant involving suggested changes to Conservation Area boundaries, enhancement works or proposed Article 4 Directions have been retained in these latest documents. However, it is recognised that town or parish councils do not support some of these suggestions and this is referred to in the appropriate document. Their inclusion in the documents as suggestions only does not indicate that the District Council supports such proposals at this time. They will be subject to further consideration by the Council in due course. Indeed all such proposals for boundary changes, and any new Article 4 Directions will be required to go through quite separate, statutory processes which will also be carried out with further public consultation.

This document has been formally adopted by the Council as part of its planning policies for this conservation area under the provisions of Section 71 of the Planning [Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas] Act 1990. It will therefore be an important material consideration in relation to the assessment and determination of planning and related applications in the Conservation Area.

SUMMARY

Frinton Park is a distinctive part of the Area, containing the surviving parts of an estate planned in the 1930's and comprising the largest group of Modern Movement houses in the country. The Area includes all these buildings, including part of a commercial terrace on Walton Road. Their setting has been compromised by the undistinguished residential developments built in the intervening period, but the historic interest of the road pattern and the important relationship with The Greensward supports Area designation.

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Frinton and Walton Conservation Area

Part 2 Frinton Park

LOCATION

Frinton and Walton occupy approximately 5 km (3.1 miles) of coastline south westwards from The Naze, a natural headland dividing Hamford Water from the North Sea. Both settlements have developed on a wide ridge of relatively higher ground between Hamford Water and the Holland Brook, the valley of which - with a tributary rising below Kirby Cross - separates Frinton from the larger conurbation of Clacton-on-Sea further to the south west. The towns are reached via B roads that divide east of Thorpe-le-Soken.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The medieval village of Walton enjoyed the suffix "Le-Soken" which, as with its neighbours Thorpe and Kirby, denoted special privileges regularised in the early 16th century and derived from the placing of these villages not under the see of London but under the chapter of St Paul's Cathedral. Kirby was the most important of the three. The medieval village at Walton has largely been lost to the sea.

Chapman and André's map of 1777 shows the Lower Street running through Kirby to Walton, with a small dog leg where Kirby Road curves into the High Street today. Otherwise, Walton is no more than the current High Street, though a single towerless church building is shown to the south towards the cliffs south of Walton Gap. Frinton is represented by a church, The Hall, The Wick and a parsonage lining a dead end south of Upper Street from Kirby Cross, now Old Road. The eastern ends of Upper Street and Lower Street are connected by lanes now represented by Turpins Lane and Elm Tree Avenue. Upper Street continued due east past where Frinton Station is now, to connect back to Walton High Street via Burnt House Farm, apparently emerging where Newgate Street runs today.

The origins of this part of the coast as a resort can be traced to the 1820's with the erection of "The Hotel" (later the Marine Hotel) at Walton and the publication of a town guide in 1829. Walton's position as a resort gained pace with the advent of the railway in 1867, with considerable development of houses and facilities by Peter Bruff. A promenade

and marine drive to Frinton was proposed and received the Royal Assent in 1879, but was not built because of lack of funds.

Land at Frinton was bought for development in 1885, but despite the augmentation of the station from a wayside halt in 1888, nothing was done until Sir Richard Cooper, took over the development company. By 1903, Frinton had a golf course and lawn tennis club, Station Road (now Connaught Avenue) had been constructed and The Greensward laid out as part of much-needed coastal defences.

Frinton's heyday came between the wars when the town, its golf club and its tennis club were very much on the international high society circuit. Connaught Avenue was known as "the Bond Street of East Anglia". Frinton Park Estate was proposed on the back of this success to connect Frinton and Walton. The railway line was moved, the old track bed becoming Waltham Way. Some plots were sold, and the venture was then taken over in 1934 by the South Coast Property Investment Company. Oliver Hill was engaged to draw up a masterplan in 'Modern Movement' style, including a college, churches and a 100-room luxury hotel. The Estate Office and some houses were built, and a parade of shops begun, but the scheme was too uncompromising for contemporary taste and was abandoned. The road layout was amended and conventional houses built instead.

The development that took place, however, has produced the single largest surviving grouping of Modern Movement houses anywhere in the country.

Frinton's popularity never recovered after Army occupation during the Second World War, and its larger hotels

were demolished or converted to retirement homes. Holidaymakers did not return to Walton in the same numbers after the war, and by 1980 only the Pier Hotel here remained open.

Development in the locality since the war has consisted of substantial estates between Frinton, Walton and Kirby.

CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

The Area includes the whole of the coast between Albion Breakwater at the end of Walton High Street and the Greensward by Frinton Golf Clubhouse. In Walton it runs north of High Street, taking in older properties in Saville Street and North Street as far as Stratford Place, Alfred Terrace and the small garden on the north western corner of the junction with Kirby Road. Running round the memorial garden, the boundary includes houses on the south side of West Street though much of Station Road and the car park is excluded. Older property at the top of Church Road is included in the Area, as is the station and houses fronting Southcliff. The Area boundary then runs along the inner edge of the coastal open space, including the South Cliff Trailer park, south westwards to Easton Way.

At Easton Way the Area runs inland to include Modern Movement houses. To the same end it similarly runs on either side of Central Avenue as far as Walton Road, including Graces Walk and part of the north side of Waltham Way.

Running round Cliff Road, the Area takes in properties on the Esplanade fronting The Greensward, turning inland to include almost the whole of The Crescent and its gardens. Returning to the Esplanade, the Area includes older property fronting the sea until the boundary turns north again to include Connaught Road as far as the station and its setting. Apart from the central section of Upper Fourth Avenue, the Area includes properties on the east side of Upper Third Avenue, the north side of Ashlyns Road and all the Avenues, the Tennis Club and the Golf Clubhouse before returning to the sea.

REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN POLICY CONTEXT

The Greensward and Pedlars Wood are designated as Protected Open Space. Properties on the seafront on either side of Pole Barn Lane are covered by policies controlling institutional uses. The groups of surviving Modern Movement houses are identified as Areas of Special Character.

AREA APPRAISAL

Easton Way is a private road originally intended to continue in both directions onto The Greensward, with evidence of a kerb line running southwards towards Central Way: it now ends rather inconsequentially with a tiny triangular island graced with a small oak tree framing the view in the centre. The Greensward continues along the seafront in a more formal and regular manner than at Walton.

The Area runs inland to take in the Modern Movement houses. They stand behind open front gardens, the road having no separate pavements. There are two groups, a pair either side of the exit onto The Greensward, and a more concentrated group around the corner. Taking the latter first, and starting on the seaward side, no 14 is in pretty good condition though with plastic windows and an array of statues over its flat-roofed garage. No 12 also has uPVC windows, and its roof has been treated conventionally with boxed eaves and plastic rainwater goods.

They lead on to no 10, the most impressive of this whole group, with a tall semi-circular bay near to the entrance. This house appears to retain its original metal windows, while parapets are still intact. There is some modern ironwork, and a new California block wall has been built on the frontage.

On other side of road is no 23, which also has aluminium windows. The next-door house has been renovated in the recent past. The regular alignment and the number of windows on the frontage, which are all in uPVC, suggests that these are relatively recent insertions into the masonry. The final house in this group, no 19, also has plastic windows, though it retains the original glass brick window on the side elevation, possibly lighting the staircase.

The three houses included in the Area between this group and the sea front are of recent date and undistinguished.

Approaching The Greensward, a well-maintained empty plot constitutes part of the grounds of Morae, a Modern Movement house again in good condition. The parapet may have been renewed but the original windows survive, even those on curved outer elevations. A simple balcony overlooks the front lawn bounded by chain link fencing. Opposite, the house on the north side is a long rectangular block, with a balcony between two projecting semi-circular bays. The windows have unfortunately been replaced with small paned uPVC items throughout.

To the south, the frontage to The Greensward is taken by an L-shaped group of 3 storey flats, with well-maintained grounds and an important tree just within the plot of the next individual house next door.

The next section of the Area is centred on Central Avenue, intended as the focus of the Frinton Park development. Central Avenue, its northern extension to Walton Road and the parallel roads (Warley Way and Audley Way) constitute a large part of the Area, the *raison d'être* of which are five Modern Movement houses, the remains of the shopping terrace and the evidence of the street pattern. The south side of Warley Way is in the Area: it's a rather open road, with little in the way of street trees, and some incidental planting in front gardens: there is more of both kinds at the seaside end of the street. There is little distinction between the undistinguished bungalows on both sides of the road, the only difference being the Modern Movement house at the seaward end. This happily is in good condition, with its original windows. The white, grey and pink paint colours have something of the Florida Art Deco about them, while the front garden and drive has been landscaped in the current smooth concrete and metal mesh, a successful blend of styles.

Next door to this on the landward side is the two metre back fence of the long back garden of an undistinguished chalet, which is not a neighbourly feature in this particular street.

Central Avenue also contains unexceptional bungalows on both sides, with a variety of garden frontage treatments and one or two fairly small street trees. The mature trees of Pedlars Wood to the north west are very important in this location because of the small scale of the bungalows. The dense planting comes over the railway line down to the junction with Quendon Way and Rainham Way. This northern section of Central Way is now a poorly-surfaced road, and it is difficult to imagine its pronounced hump-back over the railway line as a satisfactory feature for the centre of an intended prestigious development. At the foot of Pedlars Way stands the gaunt remains of a crescent of shops. Only part of the crescent and its return were constructed, and most are in a ruinous condition.

The Greensward at the end of Central Avenue continues its more formal setting, with simple timber posts at the end of avenue. Three planted trees of various sorts are not really surviving very well and it is doubtful if they contribute to the character of the Area. Below is a lower triangular area, once again mown with seats and marked out generally with simple bollards. There is an important viewpoint here of the crescent of houses, including some of the Modern Movement

At the end of Central Way is a damaged junction box in a prominent central position. The nearest Modern Movement house is The Leighs with original balcony railings and possibly the original gatepiers. The house itself is sadly rough rendered with brown uPVC windows.

The curving part of Quendon Way is a more enclosed section of street. No 55 is the only Modern Movement house to be listed, as the best preserved. It was designed by Oliver Hill in 1934, and built in 1935. It has a small shingle front drive, and two fairly mature trees on its southern boundary.

Audley Way is perhaps more open in aspect than its neighbours: the bungalows on the northern side within the Area are open plan, with well maintained lawns. Those on the southern side have a range of low frontage walls, but at the seaward end there is much more vegetation framing the view through to the sea.

Grace's Walk has the greatest concentration of Modern Movement houses on plan but it is a disappointment. Though many of the houses give a good impression of the style, the street does not 'hang together' visually as a street because of its slightly unkempt air arising mostly from the random and intrusive nature of dense planting in front gardens. Attention is taken by a tall tree at far end, beyond the minuscule turning circle.

There are three more Modern Movement houses at the seaward end of Audley Way. They are associated with the denser planting at this end of the street, but because the planting is more organised and better managed, it doesn't have the same damaging visual effect as the planting in Grace's Walk.

Waltham Way is the original track bed of the railway line between Frinton and Walton. This is a very much

more regular suburban environment with street trees, so that the Modern Movement houses on the north west side are all visible. The first at no 8 has been spoilt by decorative rendering, and with aluminium windows in hardwood surrounds. The next two retain their original metal windows, painted black. The following example has decorative render in the plain local pargetting style of panels divided by smooth strips, which again is regrettable. The remaining houses retain plain elevations though with altered windows.

On the corner with Cliff Way is the listed former Estate Office, now a dwelling known as the Round House. Its Waltham Way elevation is however dominated by a single storey garage with an inappropriate panelled door and a pantiled roof, the edges of which are unfortunately visible.

Cliff Way itself enjoys delightful prospects in all directions. Only the first four properties are in the Area: three of them are Modern Movement, and constitute one of the finest sequences combining the well-known cubical design aesthetic with large scale curved facades in the Round House itself and in the curved sun-trap projections of its neighbours. The intervening house is post war, a pleasant design in yellow brick with a prominent plain roof. The Area ignores the group of possibly inter-war houses on the curve of Cliff Way before leading on to Frinton's sea frontage south of Pole Barn Lane.

APPRAISAL PLAN

The above analysis has been used to generate Map 3, indicating the essential structure of this part of the Conservation Area and its relative quality. Included are features regarded as either negative or neutral compared to the character and appearance of the Area, as follows.

Negative factors

The poor condition of the terrace off Walton Road is a negative factor as it tends to underline the perceived difficulties and alien qualities of Modern Movement style which have in part led to so many insensitive alterations and 'improvements' to the surviving houses.

The dense frontage planting in Grace's Way is a negative factor because it conflicts with the more open aesthetic of the original development, it hides these distinctive facades and prevents the creation of a coherent appearance.

Neutral factors

All houses in this part of the Area are neutral factors because they have no intrinsic interest.

SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: BUILDINGS

The exterior restoration of the Modern Movement houses, to include the reinstatement of smooth rendered facades, copings, balcony details, windows and doors, would be an acknowledged enhancement of national significance. Such work would make use of, and contribute to, the widening body of knowledge about restoration techniques and the sourcing of suitable components for buildings of this period and style.

SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: CURTILAGES

Consideration should also be given to the setting of the Modern Movement houses, to promote coherent groupings and underline their period character.

SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The junction of Central Way and The Greensward needs some attention, with its prominent junction box and unsatisfactory planting.

Any restoration work of the former crescent off Walton Road should include the comprehensive reconsideration of its setting.

There are no other suggestions given the pleasant informality of The Greensward and the lack of other open space.

BOUNDARY REVIEW

With the exception of Seashells, no 20 Grace's Way, the Area is drawn as tightly as possible around the surviving parts of the original Frinton Park Estate while retaining an 'area' designation as opposed to a 'pepper-potting' exercise.

If the current boundary is retained, it is recommended that the current Area is divided up into the three sections on which these three reports have been based.

Turning to the rationale for Conservation Area status, The Council in its Local Plan has identified Frinton Park as an Area of Special Character, with policies in place to support an Article 4 Direction relating to the retention of original features and finishes and the careful design of any extension. Demolition of dwelling houses is permitted development, and thus also susceptible to an Article 4 Direction. Together, these measures would cover the Modern movement houses satisfactorily.

On the other hand, the Area has been designated to integrate Frinton, Walton and this estate to the seafront, which has an identifiable character based partly on its relationship with neighbouring built development, even where that development is itself of limited historic interest or visual appeal. The Modern Movement houses are evidence not only of an architectural style but also of an attempt to build an estate, which could not be reflected by the use of additional controls in tightly-defined locations. For these reasons, the current Area boundary is supported.

Further Information

For further information about the Conservation Area Reviews please contact Tendring District Council's Heritage and Conservation Manager on 01255 686170.





1. The attractive coastline between Frinton and Walton, here seen from Burnt House, forms the context for the Frinton Park Estate development in the 1930's. The fine views in all directions gain added interest from the surviving examples of Estate development.



2. Modern Movement houses on the south east side of Easton Way. This group is made more interesting by the prominent curved façade of No 10 in the background. The most obvious alteration is the use of conventional eaves detailing at No 12.



3. The only Modern Movement house in Warley Way is in good condition, complimented by recent landscaping works in the front garden, the aesthetic of which suits this 1930's house very well.



4. Two Estate houses and the former Estate Office at the far right make an impressive group on Cliff Way, interrupted only by the well considered post-war design, which must however be considered as a neutral feature in this special context.



5. The surviving Estate houses in Graces Walk retain many of their original features, though their continuity in townscape terms - and important feature of the original design - has been compromised by dense incidental planting in front gardens.



6. This view looking seawards along Warley Way shows the general current environment of the surviving Modern Movement houses. The street plan is, however, a part of the historic environment and is one of the reasons why continued Area status is supported.



7. The junction of Central Way with The Greensward is rather accidental, and the prominent junction box does nothing to improve matters. Some tree planting has been carried out, but it is difficult to detect any comprehensive scheme.



8. The best surviving section of the shopping terrace on Walton Road is not supported by the derelict condition of the remainder and its generally unkempt setting.