

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

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# Clacton Seafront Conservation Area Appraisal



## **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referred to in the Appraisals so that certain comments / statements made in relation to those buildings are now, no longer applicable.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/](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/TendringDC/Environment/Planning+and+Buildings/) or contact Regeneration, Planning and Community Services on 01255 686161.**

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## Clacton Seafront Conservation Area

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

**The special character of Clacton Seafront Conservation Area is derived from its seaside architecture and formal planned street pattern. The Area is the heart of the coastal resort and includes Victorian and Edwardian seaside buildings that were part of the early planned development of the resort, as well as formal gardens and pavilions, and important landmarks like the Martello Tower F and the Pier.**

### LOCATION

Clacton-on-Sea is the largest developed area in Tendring District, facing south east over the sea and standing on relatively level ground some 10m (33 feet) above sea level. With the inter-war chalet resort at Jaywick and the dormitory suburb of Holland-on-Sea, the population in 1991 was nearly 49,800, having virtually doubled in less than 30 years.

### HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

#### *Early history*

Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area occupied by Clacton-on-Sea was an agricultural landscape crossed by lanes serving hamlets and isolated farms south of the small settlement of Great Clacton. Both Chapman and André's map of 1777 and the First Edition 1" Ordnance Survey map of 1805 show that both the road to the coast from Great Clacton through Magdalen Green, and the smaller roads connecting the coastal area to the Little Holland-St Osyth road, had a roughly orthogonal layout at an angle to the coast. This glancing relationship between the road pattern and the seafront is still evident, not only in the old road pattern (Holland Road, Rosemary Road, Old Road) as it has survived, but also in later planned developments.

The only major development in the seafront area at this time was the construction of three Martello towers south west of the road from Magdalen Green, to designs by Colonel Twiss and Captain Ford between 1801 and 1812. The most northerly, close to the southern edge of the low cliff, was unusual in that it stood within a moat surrounded by a *glacis* or wide earth apron protecting its lower levels from artillery. The middle tower was fronted by a gun battery, since lost to the sea.

#### *The early development of the resort*

The 1851 Census revealed that coastal resorts were the fastest growing settlements in the country. Ease of access was all important, and this improved throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century with railways and steamships, with statutory holidays, and with the advent of cheap fares. While the building of the railway line to Colchester in 1837 and the subsequent branch lines to Harwich (1845/6) and Walton (1867) revolutionised agricultural operations, there were many who saw them as the means to open up the area for tourism. Walton had limited facilities for steamship access from 1830 that were slowly improved as the century progressed.

The first attempts to develop the Clacton seafront, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were frustrated by land being tied up in a trust fund. This trust expired in 1864 and the land, advertised as ripe for development, was bought by Peter Bruff, civil engineer to the Walton branch line and the promoter of the resort there, including housing, coastal defence and a new pier. He published his plans for a new resort at Clacton in 1871. Bruff believed that it was essential for the success of the scheme to attract a discerning clientele: good drainage, sanitation and water supply would be demanded, and these could only be provided by high rates and rents. The plans augmented the existing angled grid of lanes and added a new grid parallel to the coast and centred around his new pier that was built in 1873. The resort was intended to include semi-detached villas, hotels and boarding houses, open spaces and promenades. Pier Avenue, the roads east to Beach Road and the inner ends of what are now West Street and Station Road were begun: but Bruff's scheme has to be counted a failure, for he did not complete the development of his land, and he did not achieve the all-important rail connection to Colchester.

#### ***Further development of the resort***

The Woolwich Steam Packet Co then agreed to buy land and build an hotel. The result was the Royal Hotel, the western half of which opened on 24 July 1872, and which was sufficiently successful so that surplus land was sold off profitably and became the Cliff Estate either side of Anglefield, now at the seaward end of Carnarvon Road and the centre of the seafront development and still the dividing line between the eastern and western seafronts. Surviving examples of the sporadic development evident on the 1874 Ordnance Survey sheet indicate that building styles were generally middle-of-the-road if not old-fashioned: properties on the eastern side of Anglefield have the Jacobean-style detailing of the mid-century, for example. The Clacton entry in "Buildings of England" (revised 1965) refers to "the homely bargeboarded style of the Early Victorian suburb" which at the time of writing could still be studied here "with much profit".

Two development companies took over the running of aspects of the resort in 1875, with mixed results. Finally the Clacton-on-Sea General Land, Building and Investment Co Ltd was formed, controlling all building in development areas and orchestrating other companies for the next twenty years. It bought Bruff's remaining holdings to the west of Pier Avenue, promoted steamboat and railway connections and advanced a high-class image for Clacton. The railway was eventually opened in 1882, on a site well away from the seafront given the passage of time. With 30 excursions carrying 40,000 holidaymakers to Clacton in the summer of 1901, and the number of steamer passengers rising from 6,780 in 1880 to 71,922 in 1890, the long-sought connections shattered Clacton's high-class pretensions.

Development of Clacton since this time has been consistent and steady, absorbing Great Clacton and Little Holland, now Holland-on-Sea.

### **REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN POLICY CONTEXT**

In this location, the entire seafront with the triangular gardens at Anglefield and the grounds of the Martello Tower are designated in the Local Plan as Protected Open Spaces. The seafront is designated generally for enhancement. There are policy areas relating to safeguarded hotel and guesthouse uses, to catering and small retail developments, and there is a designated area of special character running between Pier Avenue and Anglefield with policies encouraging development respecting local seafront character and the retention, conversion and adaptation of property which makes a positive contribution to that character. The seafront gardens to the west of the Pier are annotated as an English Heritage designated Historic Garden and the cliff slopes are shown as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### **CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES**

The centre of Clacton's seafront coincides with the area with the earliest development and most of the remaining traces of the original plan for the resort. These are interspersed with the survivals from the earlier pattern of lanes and with wider, more civic streets laid out as Clacton's development proceeded around the turn of the last century. Conservation Area status is believed to be appropriate because of the intrinsic interest of the resulting street pattern, and the surviving evidence for its development.

The boundaries of the Conservation Area were drawn up following assessment of the seafront area for its relevance to the original pattern of development, to the subsequent aspirations of the town, and to the relative strength of seaside "character". The Conservation Area includes the whole of the coast including the pier between the Martello Tower "F" in the west and the Towers building in the east. The Area covers the buildings fronting the seafront together with a few adjoining properties in Tower Road, Alton Road, Edith Road, Penfold Road and Agate Road. It extends inland to include the lower part of Pier Avenue and the grid of streets to the east of Pier Avenue south of and including most of Rosemary Road, but excluding properties fronting Station Road. The area boundary is drawn round prominent public buildings at the junction of Carnarvon Road, Holland Road and Church Road. It then runs eastwards along the centre of Church Road, turning down St Pauls Road towards the sea to join the Area's coastal boundary.

#### **West of Pier Avenue**

*This is the part of Clacton seafront laid out adjacent to Bruff's scheme and without reference to his original plan. It mirrors the earlier development on the east side of Pier Avenue, contains valuable Victorian buildings, relates to an attractively laid out section of seafront and has an obvious termination in the Martello Tower.*

Beginning at the south western end of the selected area, the Martello Tower, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, provides an obvious

termination. It marks the point at which the low cliffs run inland, separating it visually from developments immediately to the west and south west which are in any case almost entirely modern. The remains of the *glacis*, the resulting curve in Marine Parade West and the planting associated with the Tower reinforce the Tower as a visual "endstop". Immediately north east of to Tower is a group of coastguard cottages which are attractive, full of maritime character and obvious candidates for designation. To the north, the Clacton and District Hospital sits on the regular plot of land formerly associated with the Martello Tower. Grouped around an original block in Arts and Crafts style, the hospital has a range of buildings of various styles, many of which, especially the most recent, being of good design in attractive settings. The self-contained and wholly developed nature of the site suggests that no particular purpose would be served by designation.

Between the Tower and Pier Avenue is a "ladder" of parallel streets built on land bought from Peter Bruff and developed without regard for symmetry with the other side of Pier Avenue. The surviving historic buildings fronting Marine Parade West are mainly Victorian and Edwardian with some modern infill of character. Whilst Beaumont Hall, a landmark mid-Victorian building with a prominent corner dome and ponderous architectural details, has been lost its modern replacement attempts to replicate some of its design features. On their seaward side these streets have right-angled junctions with Marine Parade West, coinciding with promenade pavilions: on their inner side, they crash into another grid of streets following the older geometry as it was developed in the original plans. Much of this area is safeguarded for hotel and guesthouse use. These streets as laid out and developed therefore relate historically, visually and in operational terms to the seafront and are thus in principle suitable for inclusion. The modern developments between Tower Road and Alton Road are exceptions, and by extension the block to the north west containing West Cliff Theatre and the listed St James' Church (Temple Moore, 1912-13), as too divorced from the historic pattern. The much altered Edwardian properties on the north east side of Alton Road are similarly one or more stages removed from the intrinsic historic interest of the potential area, though Alton Lodge behind the Beaumont Hall site is worthy of inclusion as an earlier development with enhancement potential.

Edith Road contains pairs of late Victorian houses, all heavily altered, particularly at roof level for the majority with roofs parallel to the street. Nevertheless, many attractive details survive, including Gothic cornice details in render, railings at first floor level and some remains of original front and side boundary treatments. The houses tend to be picked out in jolly colours and the street with its esplanade shelter as an end stop is redolent of the development of the original scheme for Clacton. The extent of loss of original character and appearance is however extremely severe, and the inclusion of properties in this street without extending the boundary much further to other neighbouring areas is difficult to justify. Measures to enhance the appearance of the buildings and curtilages in this street would be welcome, but it has to be questioned whether conservation area status in the appropriate vehicle for this in all the relevant circumstances. Beatrice Court at the north western end of the street is an interesting modern design which is not tall enough to do justice to its prominent location in views from Jackson Road to the north east. Buildings facing seawards on Jackson Road and Beatrice Road are varied and have many attractive features, but again they are too many stages removed from the essential historic interest identified above.

The next seafront block, with Victorian buildings and a new corner block under construction, leads to Penfold Road. This is a pleasant though unexceptional street with varied building types, which does not quite hang together in visual terms. The most attractive buildings are two large, late Victorian blocks on the east side with prominent gables and continuous balconies at first floor. The northernmost has some original fenestration surviving at ground floor level. The seafront block beyond (Waverley Hall Hotel) has a considerable return to this street, including a car park and what appears to be staff accommodation in a separate villa. The whole of this group is looking rather sorry in maintenance terms, possibly the result of a period of vacancy connected with the recent management changes. The result for Penfold Street is a certain degradation of character, and the lack of maintenance leading to unkempt hedgerow boundaries on the seaward corner. Given the lack of distinction in the street, it is not considered that the Area should extend beyond the seafront properties.

Agate Road consists of Victorian paired villas on the west, many providing seaside accommodation, facing varied facades generated by the backs of properties in Pier Avenue, some freestanding buildings including a semi-detached pair of villas, and a Council car park. The junction with Marine Parade was part of Peter Bruff's scheme, though the actual alignment of Agate Road derives from its subsequent development to a different plan. Once again, the altered plan form and the degree of modification to facades and curtilages indicate that the architectural or historic interest of this street is not quite high enough for inclusion.

### **Pier Avenue**

*Pier Avenue was the centrepiece of Bruff's development, aligned on the pier and still containing properties dating from the earlier days of Clacton's tourist development.*

The seaward end of Pier Avenue is however part of the original scheme, and is evident on the 1874 Ordnance sheet though with relatively little built development apart from the three villas on the Parade frontage between Agate Road and Pier Avenue, and the western half of the Royal Hotel. These seafront properties are appropriate for automatic inclusion. Turning to the properties either side of Pier Avenue, they are of surprisingly early date and small scale considering their location. On the west side is a remarkably unspoilt three storey group redolent of the Royal Hotel itself, the building at the seaward end being particularly attractive with bracketed eaves and the remains of cast iron details supporting a continuous verandah at first floor level. Nos 1-11 are the subject of a refurbishment scheme including the reinstatement of original features. At the inner end, the huge fascia of "Magic City" may be hiding the facade of the former Brunswick House School shown on the 1874 sheet. Properties on the east side are a little later, but still understated in townscape terms. The rest of the block, facing West Avenue, partakes more of the commercial character of the town centre and is difficult to divide in conservation terms from the late Victorian and Edwardian developments to the north and

west. It is suggested that the area boundary be drawn fairly closely around those properties fronting the seaward end of Pier Avenue.

Pier Avenue is of course aligned on the pier itself. This part of the seafront has been the subject of continuous adaptation, a notable example of which was the replacement of the shops either side of Pier Gap with the Venetian Bridge and landscaped gardens around 1913. The pier itself is evidently the result of various building programmes: the inner end is most altered, while the outer parts are perhaps most suitable for appropriate enhancement. The Pavilion Cafe is a prominent local feature though not very attractive in its present form.

### **East of Pier Avenue: the Bruff development**

*This location was developed by Bruff and is notable for the combination of more formal streets with those with a more intimate scale. Enough survives of the original buildings and their garden frontages for conservation matters to take a higher priority in future developments.*

Given that the seafront buildings are included as of right, precise boundaries inland are proposed to exclude Station Road. Though they have consistent late Victorian facades, the shopfronts are much altered, the properties themselves are not exceptional, and their character relates to the commercial streets and is indivisible from the similar properties opposite. The boundary is recommended to run around the backs of these buildings to exclude them from the area, though open courts accessed from Colne Road and the rear entrance to Tesco's should be included for enhancement potential. The northern boundary is recommended to include those buildings on Rosemary Road which have the small-scale character of most of the rest of the street.

The sea front to the east of the pier comprises roughly-grassed slopes with two bland terraces below the upper level with its rather formless gardens, with patched tarmac, utilitarian railings and a lack of seating. The best feature is the varied tree screen on the landward side, which is a prominent feature along the Marine Parade. The public toilets to the east of the Pavilion have an inconsequential space in front that requires improvement.

Immediately east of Pier Avenue is the seafront block containing the Royal Hotel. This is the south westernmost of six blocks laid out by Bruff between Beach Road, the Marine Parade and the pre-existing Rosemary Road. While the three seaward blocks are fronted by substantial Victorian villas or their later replacements, the inner three have an intimate scale and character not found anywhere else in Clacton. These blocks and the island block between Beach Road and Anglefield also contain a good proportion of those properties shown as existing by 1874, and for these reasons are considered worthy of conservation.

Now painted light blue, the Royal Hotel is an impressive building retaining many original decorative details such as its ornate verandah and its eaves brackets in cast iron, and the rendered chimney stacks with their boldly-modelled heads. Some old-fashioned ancillary buildings remain in the yards to the rear, including a pretty old pantiled-roofed building with hipped northern end gabled southern end and two large open sheds with steel trusses. The hotel dominates views south along Colne Road, partly because much of the adjacent block has been cleared for car parking around nondescript development. On the other side of Colne Road, Lindale Lodge was originally an attractive pair of semi-detached Victorian villas, now combined. The decorative gables have been retained but are rather lost in a continuous roof extension. The garden frontages have also been combined and recast in a rather bland manner. The Argyle Hotel with its extension next door is in better decorative order.

The northern half of Colne Rd has a more enclosed character. The Comrades Club on the west side is a detached building with a symmetrical brick frontage. Beyond a rather grubby yard, stands the back of Superdrug with more Station Road backs beyond. Opposite are a series of apartments rather marooned in gardens entirely given over to parking, with all front and side boundaries swept away. The house on the corner of Pallister Road retains decorated verandah work at first floor level.

East of the Royal Hotel on the sea front is The Lighthouse, redeveloped in the 1930's with rough rendered walls and a flat-roofed top floor with green tiled cladding. Next door, the Plaza Hotel is a three storey Victorian building with full-height bay windows though heavily altered at ground floor level with a massive fascia. The side elevation to Orwell Road is a disappointment, with an unsympathetic three storey brick flat-roofed extension and parking on crumbling tarmac.

Orwell Road contains possibly the most complete idea remaining of the original character of these blocks. This is largely because of the survival of original features associated with the Edensor Nursing Care Home, a combination of former hotel buildings with a flat-roofed three storey extension at the southern end. These buildings retain their original frontage walls and gate piers and are a positive element in the street scene. Its elevation to Pallister Road is not quite so attractive, with a big mansard roof roughly in the middle. To the south, the Wavecrest Hotel appeared to be original fabric though heavily altered over the years. The Chantry Hotel opposite is a neat and quite well-appointed double-fronted gabled Victorian building. Next door to it are two pairs of fairly plain Victorian villas, double-fronted again with full height bay windows. Like the Edensor across the road they have retained their original front walls. Lavender House and Rose House are slightly cut-down versions of the previous building, only going to two floors though they have had a third floor added with masses of glazing. Again, there are vestiges of the original garden frontages here as well, making this section of Orwell Street of great interest. This character is enhanced by views northwards to Sandles Inn, of strong period character with an attractive mid-Victorian campanile. Approaching Sandles Inn, the northern part of Orwell Road is less attractive. There is a small car park on the west side for general shopping and also various services to the rear: it could with advantage be a little bit tidier. Opposite stands a group of fairly plain two-storey buildings with some old shop front details surviving below simple bay windows.

The next block to occupy the seafront lies between Orwell Road and Beach Road. On the south western corner stands the Geisha Hotel, with a very-heavily altered, rather dull frontage with balconies. Its forecourts sport some good planting and a strange little parking area on the side with terrazzo tiles. The adjacent seafront building is the Grand Hotel, a blocky 1930's design with some valuable period details. Its front garden area has been unashamedly given over to customer parking. Looking west past the end of Pier Avenue gives a view of a succession of mid and late-Victorian buildings, though much altered and with conservatory frontages over prominent as is the Royal Hotel in its blue livery. Round the corner into Beach Road is Clearwater Reach, a modern block of apartments with two entrances handled differently, set in elevations of cream brick with red brick dressings over channelled stucco, topped by smooth render and balconies.

Running along the rear of the seafront blocks is Pallister Road. The western third is varied, the first block being two storied of yellow brick, while the next four are brick and stone Edwardian buildings. Now mostly fish restaurants, their ground floors are heavily altered. The next section is more immediately appealing, with, on the north side, an attractive group of eight terraced houses, all of two and a half storeys with one building still retaining its original dormers in French renaissance style. All the rest have big boxy extensions, but the group reads coherently in views of the street because the front gate piers are generally retained. The easternmost building also figures in views along Orwell Road and gives visual support to surviving Victorian details there. The view eastwards along Pallister Road is dominated by the Beach House Hotel on Beach Road.

The Beach House itself is finished in rough cream render, with a central projecting bay at first floor level. The forecourt is generally lacking interest. To the north is a dull modern four-storey apartment block. Opposite is a Victorian two storey terraces retaining some original dormers in the middle but replaced with heavily glazed continuous mansard dormers at the Frandon Hotel on Pallister Road.

Rosemary Road represents the northern limits of the original development scheme. Immediately east of Station Road on its southern side are a number of typical Victorian two-storey terraced shops, with some remains of Victorian shop fronts. The most attractive are the five properties including the corner with Orwell Street, with an elegance to the detailing and more evidence of original shop fronts. The whole terrace is set back from the edge of the pavement adding a little to the apparent width of the street and providing room for shopkeepers to display signs. Further east again is a fussy and interesting little group of four properties with blind pediments in the parapets and open pediment window heads at first floor level. Again there is plenty of evidence of original shopfronts and of the original glazing patterns of the windows.

To the north is the Clacton covered market, which is set well back from road: it has no great townscape presence but adds to the vitality of the street. Nearby is the attractive and valuable facade of Sandles Inn, already mentioned in respect of Orwell Road. Adjacent is an extremely regrettable post-war block of grey render with a mansard roof, followed by the former Imperial Hotel, now occupied by the Council's Community Voluntary Services. Dated 1895, and looking a little like a London Board School, this is of three bays, the right-hand bay being an attractive archway through to the rear. To the east again is a distinctive building, painted cream with a modillion cornice supporting a hipped roof. The elevations are enlivened with terracotta panels painted in naturalistic colours.

On the south-east corner of Rosemary Road and Beach Road there is a tall three storey building with a hipped slate roof, now called Cherry Trees but originally two houses. This is a plain, mid-Victorian block, possibly predating the Bruff layout, with much evidence of the original gate piers, the more northern of the pair actually retaining its ball finials. The outer end of Rosemary Road has a different character again, with fewer commercial premises and a less lively atmosphere as a result. Views eastwards are closed by the old Lifeboat House which is an extremely distinctive building although with not as much presence as one would like in the street scene. It has a short rendered tower, with an attractive dome presiding over a brick façade with Dutch styling, which appears to be much rebuilt.

### **Carnarvon Road and Anglefield**

*Anglefield was in existence at the eastern end of Bruff's development from a relatively early date. Much survives from this time, and further attractive buildings have been added, particularly the distinctive group of public buildings at the junction with Holland Road and Church Road.*

From Carnarvon Road and Anglefield, the original development occupies the sea front blocks as far as Vista Road. The pre-existing, agricultural road pattern is represented by Holland Road, and its junction with Anglefield and Rosemary Road which with its pivotal role in the development of the Clacton seafront and the presence of so many public buildings gives added significance to this location.

The junction of Rosemary Road with Carnarvon Road could be an attractive space but is unfortunately rendered rather barren by standard road alignments, unappealing street furniture and, on the north side of the Lifeboat Station, a large area of tarmac which could possibly be improved with planting. Pleasant properties occupy either side of Carnarvon Road to the north, in particular a fine pair of Arts and Crafts houses in Tudor vernacular style, but the street as a whole does not reinforce the character of the seafront areas. Surrounding the junction is a group of distinctive buildings, notably Christ Church, the United Reformed Church on the north east corner, a pleasant building though with a tower about half the size it might be given the scale of the building. Sitting further back to the east is the very austere neo-Norman of the listed Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Light and St Osyth. Grosvenor Court on the seaward corner of Rosemary Road is quite attractively handled with roof terraces set back behind red railings, though a little heavy towards the road junction. Further modern blocks intervene along the west side of Anglefield until the

Esplanade Hotel returns to the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with shaped gables, projecting bays, a sitting out area, and an attractive single storey extension for Coasters Restaurant on the eastern side. This facade swings round the corner with the remains of the original front boundary wall.

It is recommended that the Area includes the major junction on Carnarvon Road, the former lifeboat station, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church, and then runs along Church Road as it is a feature of the road layout on the 1874 Ordnance Survey sheet.

### **East of Anglefield**

*This part of the Area contains relatively early development of the layout of this part of the seafront, and the interest of many of its buildings, notably the former Grand Hotel, now converted to flats.*

Church Crescent and relatively early properties fronting the south side of Church Road are all recommended for inclusion. This designation includes the Colchester Institute, both the former Grand Hotel on the Marine Parade and the modern extensions fronting Church Road. The eastern termination is recommended to be St Paul's Road rather than Vista Road. Though this takes the Area beyond the original road layout, there are good reasons for this limited extension. The bend in Marine Parade East at this point makes a convenient termination that has visual relevance in views in both directions along the Parade. The large building in French Renaissance style east of the former Grand Hotel is related to its listed neighbour and worthy of inclusion. These two buildings are prominent in views along the coast from Holland-on-Sea and it is fitting that the Area should include both. Developments to the north and east are pleasant though lacking in distinctive character, and are not considered to be worthy of designation.

Anglefield itself is focussed on a triangular area with interesting planting and surrounding development on the east side is a group of mid-Victorian properties, possibly originally all in yellow brick, with some fine surviving details. These adjoin a pair of instructive late Victorian properties: Coastal Court to the west has unsympathetic pvc windows and replacement dormers, and its front garden has been entirely concreted over to provide parking. Next door, the Melrose Hotel has replacement windows though these retain the original character and the forecourt includes some grass and planting., and they have still got a bit of grass in front as well. They are next to Southcliff Hall, a modern development of four storeys, designed to look like coastal warehousing with a corner turret prominent in views from the west. Beyond this is an attractive pair of mid-Victorian properties with the usual range of extensions and alterations and then Rosebank Court, an unfortunately dull design. The Esplanade here is actually very open, there is now no longer anything at ground level between the road and the sea except some dull utilitarian railings: the vegetation occasionally looks designed but mostly looks accidental and rather piecemeal.

On the corner of Harold Road stands Glengarrie dated 1890 with many intact details and undergoing paint renovation at the time of writing. A house on the north corner with Church Crescent is also currently undergoing renovation: it has elevations of yellow brick, with red terracotta and brick details. Its windows with margin lights are being replaced in pvc but with some attention to detail.

Church Crescent presents a confused picture. Small cottages - mostly with large paved areas in front of them - are mixed with modern infill and the backs of properties on the Parade and Anglefield, which tend to be concrete aprons with parking or garaging. It is a modern reworking of the old mews court, and only improves at the entrance to Church Road facing the liturgical west end of the Roman Catholic Church where a house and a bungalow in arts and crafts style face each other.

Church Road is a pleasant street with generally consistent development on the north side and more varied though generally earlier properties on the south. As the south side relates to the earliest years of Clacton's tourist development it is considered that these properties should be included in the Area along with the seafront. The relevant buildings include, from the west, a pair of early to mid-Victorian stucco houses which look as if they are the beginnings of an uncompleted scheme. Next door are two pairs of three storey late Victorian houses including the empty Red Rose Hotel in a poor state of repair, and beyond that a most attractive pair of houses dated 1877, in weatherboarding with a Welsh slate roof. Again to the east is another small pair of houses with some very distinctive gothic details. The property on the corner of Harold Road has been heavily altered but is originally Victorian, of two storeys with a little tower.

The next part of Church Road is institutional because it contains the backs of College buildings. The dominant building is of four storeys with a roof of profiled metal, and beyond that a slightly scruffy range of 1960's buildings. There is an important conifer on the corner. Thoroughgood Road continues northwards into an attractive housing development which again is not strictly within the conservation area character identified above. The seaward view down Thoroughgood Road reveals a variety of lighting columns and other street furniture around the former Grand Hotel. The houses between "The Grand" and the frontage are actually set due west: they are not aligned with the road and do not face the sea.

Next corner is that between Vista Road and Church Road. The sea frontage is taken with The Towers, a large Victorian structure in yellow brick and stone with French renaissance details. The remainder of the block at the time of writing is rather standard 1960's institutional architecture, all empty, with unkempt grounds. On St Paul's Road is a good mid-Victorian double fronted building with gothic details, and dentilled courses to the two storey bay windows. The whole complex was being renovated and extended at the time of writing. The block to the east of this site, on the east side of St. Paul's Avenue on Marine Parade frontage, is modern, of smooth cream render with a mansard roof, and not suitable for inclusion in the Area.



## **SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: BUILDINGS**

### ***General: side elevations***

More care and attention needs to be given to the side returns of properties on the more prominent frontages. These side elevations, ancillary buildings such as garages, and the areas of forecourt or garden in front of them, are of visual importance in oblique views, which is how the walking or the motoring public view them. These locations also have an important role in reinforcing the visual relationships between frontage properties and their neighbours in side streets, and therefore the continuity of facades of historic interest. In too many locations it seems that the interest of owners or occupiers in the main frontage of their properties does not extend to side elevations, though these form an important part of the character and appearance of buildings as a whole.

### ***General: advertising***

All businesses need to announce their presence, and Clacton is no exception. There is furthermore a seaside aesthetic that has developed over the years which controls the way advertising is approached in areas like the Clacton seafront. On the other hand, successful marketing identifies and promotes a unique product wherever possible. In this case, the qualities which underlie the recommendation for Area designation, constitute much of the unique character which Clacton and its constituent businesses and services could utilise in marketing. Advertising styles sympathetic to the historic quality of the proposed Area would enhance the appearance of the seafront and reinforce its distinctive qualities.

### ***Pier Avenue***

The restoration of the surviving Victorian buildings lining the seaward end of Pier Avenue – within the proposed Conservation Area would be a substantial enhancement. Much remain of historic interest, particularly on the western side where facades similar to the Royal Hotel can be seen. Enhancements should consider the removal of any current cladding and the reinterpretation of advertising and signage to reflect the character of the building facades rather than to mask them.

### ***Post-war buildings***

There are a few post-war redevelopments, which are negative features in the proposed Area because of their unsympathetic bulk, materials, detailing, or a combination of these. Buildings erected in the three decades following the Second World War are often less adaptable than older examples, and in the event of these buildings becoming outworn, their replacement should be encouraged rather than their piecemeal alteration.

### ***Derelict and underused buildings***

Buildings of any age need viable uses to generate income, which can be put towards maintenance and improvement. Buildings starved of funding become eyesores, lose value and help to depress the economic wellbeing of their surroundings. It is hoped that Area designation will create a renewed interest in the seafront area and help lead to the rehabilitation of such buildings.

## **SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: CURTILAGES**

### ***General: side forecourts of properties***

Consideration has been given above to the problems associated with a lack of care and concern over side elevations and forecourts to buildings with more prominent frontages.

### ***General: forecourt boundary walls***

Most of the original buildings in the proposed Area would originally have had forecourts enclosed by masonry walls, some topped by cast iron railings: both kinds would have been enhanced by gates framed by decorative piers. Where these remain, notably in Orwell Road, they make a positive contribution to the character of the streets and of the proposed Area in general. Their removal, usually to enable parked cars to occupy front gardens or for coaches to access the larger hotels, is part of the visual degradation of the seafront area. Some front walls have been replaced over the years, though this is often to a different design and with unsympathetic materials, usually of too 'rustic' a character to reflect the urbane qualities of the original Victorian properties. A programme to restore front boundaries and the walls dividing properties, with access arrangements to reflect modern requirements, would constitute a powerful visual enhancement.

A comprehensive scheme might be considered as a general environmental improvement for the open forecourt and backland areas between Colne Road and Beach Road.

### ***Alton Lodge***

This substantial house behind Beaumont Hall has a considerable private area which is almost entirely laid with tarmac behind an unkempt frontage wall. A more sympathetic choice of surfaces and their rearrangement behind a restored front wall would improve the appearance and value of Alton house and enhance the street scene.

### ***Waverley Hall Hotel***

The Waverley Hall Hotel appears to have recently changed hands. It has been renovated and has been re-opened as "Days Inn". However, it would be an undoubted enhancement if the appearance of the corner car park, the service entrance to the hotel and the surroundings of the hotel annex, all on Penfold Road, were considered afresh. A range of suitable hard surfaces, soft landscaping and planting would be a strong indication of a healthy future for this prominent and potentially attractive building, and serve to lift

the quality of Marine Parade West in concert with the public gardens on the seaward side of the main road.

## **SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

### ***General: paved surfaces and street furniture***

There should be a general reconsideration of paved surfaces and street furniture to reflect the underlying Victorian character of the proposed Area. This is not necessarily to suggest pastiche: the gateway features to the public gardens on Marine Parade West - derived from the designs of the listed lampposts - are an excellent example of the reinterpretation of traditional features. While cast iron furniture and unit paving would relate to well to surviving Victorian architecture, this could be treated in a more contemporary way as long as the scale and finishes are suitable.

### ***General: street trees***

As a part of the above, additional street trees should be considered to soften the outlines of surrounding buildings and break up the relative starkness of some of the more open backland areas. Agate Road is a potential example of the former: the seaward end of Colne Road is a possible candidate as the latter.

### ***Shopfront forecourts, Rosemary Road***

A particular example of the above can be found at the shopfront forecourts along Rosemary Road. The pavement width, even taking the additional width of the shopfront areas into account, is probably too narrow for demarcation by items such as bollards. However, some form of paving design to reflect ownership boundaries and add variety to the street scene could be considered.

### ***Martello Tower***

The Martello Tower is an important landmark and makes an obvious defining edge for the proposed Area. Its *glacis* is attractively planted. The tower itself has recently been repaired and converted to a restaurant. The former coast guard look out has been retained. The outer lip of the moat is fringed with a dense hedge, which is unhistorical and prevents proper appreciation of the tower, its access bridge and its unusual defences in general.

### ***Agate Road car park***

The Agate Road car park is conveniently located for the seafront but it does afford views of the backs of properties in a prominent location. Some reassessment of the boundaries to the car park are called for, with the intention of helping to improve the appearance of these back elevation. Additional tree planting might be considered because the scale and height of any intervention will be critical.

### ***Seafront east of Pavilion***

Compared to the varied and attractive public gardens along Marine Esplanade West, the corresponding area east of the Pier is disappointing. The design is unimaginative and there are few seats. It is to be hoped that the special qualities of this part of the seafront, in particular the maturing tree screen dividing it from the main road, might help to generate appealing designs. Below the esplanade level, a pair of public conveniences stands behind a small space, which is unkempt and needs attention of not a fresh look at design.

### ***Carnarvon Road/Church Road/Holland Road/Rosemary Road junction.***

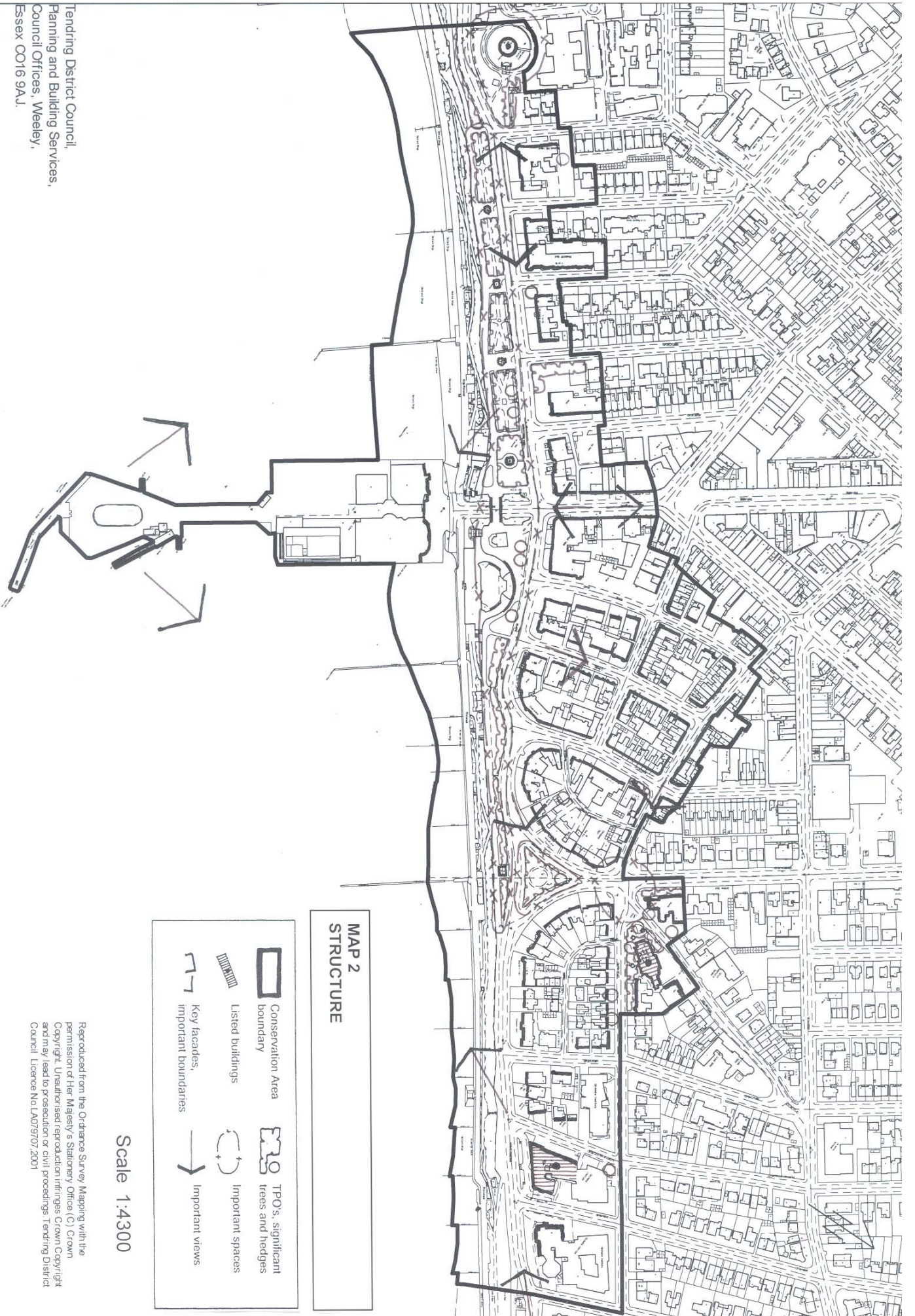
This five-way junction stands at the point where a major access route arrives at the sea. Its components include this main road, lesser roads though of importance for local movement, considerable areas of footpath, an important pedestrian crossing, a number of distinctive though slightly underpowered public buildings, varied other private buildings, and a number of attractive trees in public and private ownership. The positive factors do not have sufficient weight to balance the poor quality of the general environment resulting from the car-related road and paving layout and the considerable areas of bland tarmac that result. This junction deserves a comprehensive reworking as a major gateway to the seafront and as a significant access point to the town centre from the east.

### ***Church Crescent***







This small street seems to have been regarded purely as a rear access to properties in Anglefield and Marine Parade East. It has an identifiable character, as it contains a number of houses and its curved plan and intimate scale contrasts with its more open surroundings. The reworking of the street as a "mews court", with careful consideration of paving, and street furniture, and the mitigation of the effects of some of the rear court areas behind Anglefield and Marine Parade East, would be an enhancement.

## **Further Information**

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



**MAP 2  
STRUCTURE**

- |   |                                   |   |                                    |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Conservation Area boundary        |  | TPOs, significant trees and hedges |
|  | Listed buildings                  |  | Important spaces                   |
|  | Key facades, important boundaries |  | Important views                    |

Scale 1:4300

Tending District Council,  
Planning and Building Services,  
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1. The small public area to north of the Martello Tower is quite a pleasant space. However it does not connect with anything, the railings to the right allows views over the neighbouring private development, while the hedging on the right prevents appreciation of the tower of its defences. This report recommends improvements.



2. The views from the glacis of the Martello Tower along Marine Parade West includes the McCarthy and Stone development whose form reflects the former Beaumont Hall which stood on this site. Beyond there is a progression of earlier and more recent properties, all of which make some positive contribution to this location.



Two examples of the lack of attention to side elevations of prominent buildings:  
 3. (above) the Edith Road elevation to the Seaview Hotel and 4 (right) the Penfold Road annex to the Days Inn Hotel (formerly Waverley Hall Hotel). Though in both cases the general fabric of the main building contributes to the interest of the area. Patched and crumbling.....



Tarmac, accidental vegetation, poorly-maintained boundaries and the loss of the frontage Boundary walls are examples of general problems which are not only detrimental to the character and appearance of their surroundings, and must affect the commercial well-being of the businesses concerned and of Clacton in general.



9. Orwell Road retains more of its original character than many other locations on the seafront. Virtually all the visible properties are Victorian, though the degree of subsequent alterations varies. The survival of the original front boundary walls to Edensor (third from left) is particularly relevant.



10. The Sandles Inn on Rosemary Road is prominent on the previous view from Orwell Road. Closer to its sash windows, projecting bays and its tiny belvedere can be appreciated. Less happy is the unfortunate building to the right, the lowest-common-denominator-design of which is a negative feature in the street scene.



11. Commercial properties on Rosemary Road retain an attractive scale and a bustling atmosphere. The buildings and their shopfronts retain many original features. The pavement is probably too narrow for much additional street furniture but a fresh look at paving would enhance the appearance of



12. The north end of Colne Road demonstrates the visual primacy of the Royal Hotel and the unfortunate effects when unscreened rear elevations and yards are open to public view. As an intermediate area between hotels and Clacton's main shopping street, Colne Road could with advantage be improved in visual terms.



5. These Victorian Paired Villas have many original details-the decorative chimneys are particularly notable-though the facades are changed behind modern glazed extensions. Though they are useful and generally well-constructed, it is not beyond hope that these extensions might someday be replaced with more sympathetic items.



6. The Royal Hotel, critical to the early development of Clacton and still an enormously important building given its location and its wide visibility along the seafront and in the streets behind. The survival of original details is delightful and an indication of the character of so many nearby buildings.



8. Clacton Pier as viewed from the excellent public gardens on Marine Parade West. Though clearly the different buildings and dates, the Pier buildings have some interesting details of, notably the Art Deco windows of the nearest main block. Development behind is varied and agreeably small scale.



7. Pier Avenue, illustrating the survival of many of the original buildings and a significant proportion of their original detailing. The Magic City fascia at the north end may well be only skin-deep, with the opportunity for a more sympathetic kind of advertising..



13. Public buildings surround the junction between Holland Road and Carnarvon Road. This important location is let down by the dominance of road considerations and the bleakness of the surrounding pavements. The trees are particularly important, but the area needs comprehensive consideration.



14. Varied properties in Church Road. The two stuccoed houses must be very early developments and appear to be only the beginning of an unfinished terrace. Prominent in this view is the Red Rose Hotel, apparently empty with unsympathetic alterations and signage.



15. Originally a pair, these two prominent properties where Anglefield becomes Marine Parade East demonstrate the effects of building alterations over time. Apart from its inconsequential and poorly sited sign, the Melrose Hotel on the right retains more original details and looks the classier establishment as a result.



16. The former Grand Hotel of 1892-97 by Gale and Farthing of Smith Son and Gale has limited decorative appeal: its importance is as the earliest use yet known of a completed and coherent structural steel systems. It is extremely prominent in longer seafront views and is with the Towers a sensible termination to the Conservation Area.