



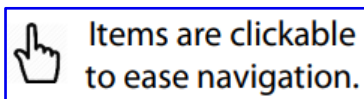
# Churchgate Street Conservation Area

## Management Plan and Guidance

Adopted December 2025



# Contents



<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Article 4 Direction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Making a Planning Application.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Planning Application Guidance for Householders .....</b>	<b>7</b>
General Principles .....	7
Porches .....	7
Canopies .....	8
Chimneys .....	9
Other Changes to a Property Exterior .....	10
<b>5. General Guidance for Householders .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Property Number/Name Signs.....	12
Exterior Lighting.....	12
Aerials and Satellite Dishes .....	14
Front Gardens and Boundary Treatments .....	15
Tree Works .....	17
Maintenance of Buildings .....	17
<b>6. General Improvements to the Conservation Area.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Road Safety.....	20
Bus Services .....	23
Parked Cars .....	23
Road and Pavement Condition.....	26
Road and Street Signage .....	27
Advertisements and Other Signage.....	29
Street Lighting .....	30
Street Furniture.....	31
<b>7. Green Infrastructure.....</b>	<b>35</b>
Flood risk.....	37
Overhead Cables.....	38
<b>8. Promoting, Funding and Reviewing the CA.....</b>	<b>41</b>
Promoting the CA .....	41
Funding the CA.....	41
Reviewing the CA.....	42
<b>9. East of Harlow Garden Community .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>10. Appendix 1: Glossary .....</b>	<b>44</b>

The maps in this document contain OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2025). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627 (2025).

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a legal duty to protect and enhance Conservation Areas (CAs). The unique heritage and architectural qualities of the Churchgate Street area, which justified its designation as a CA, are detailed in the [Character Appraisal and Management Proposals](#)<sup>1</sup> document (CMP). The CMP also includes the CA's history, justifications for introducing an Article 4 Direction (A4D) (see below), details of the original features of the buildings and some existing examples of changes.
- 1.2 This Management Plan and Guidance document (MPG) builds upon the CMP, focuses on details of the CA such as street signage, and outlines the way in which the Council will preserve and enhance the CA and provides guidance on submitting planning applications for works covered by the A4D.
- 1.3 The MPG is applicable to the Churchgate Street Conservation Area, the revised boundary of which was adopted by the Council in February 2025. A map of the revised boundary can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 The main tool available to a Council for protecting CAs is the use of an A4D. This removes certain Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) available to homeowners, as set out in legislation (the GPDO)<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.5 This means that planning permission will be required for development or changes affected by the A4D to protect buildings from changes which could cause harm through loss of original features and designs. This does not mean that planning permission would necessarily be refused, but rather affords the Council an opportunity to ensure that development has regard to the character of the CA. As detailed in the CMP, it was concluded that there is justification to introduce an A4D in the Churchgate Street CA.
- 1.6 Consequently, an A4D covering the Churchgate Street CA was made (drafted) on 3 March 2025, which is due to come into force on 4 March 2026. After this date, planning permission will need to be obtained for the works (PDRs) covered by the A4D. The A4D will be in addition to certain legislative restrictions on PDRs which are applicable to all CAs.
- 1.7 This document contains advice and guidance on submitting planning applications for works which are covered by the A4D and, therefore, require planning permission. It also details broader enhancements that could be made to the CA in the longer-term. Some of these include works relating to highways, street furniture and car parking.
- 1.8 The Council will work with organisations and stakeholders, including Essex County Council as the Highways Authority, to secure a sympathetic approach for works affecting the area.
- 1.9 As part of the preparation of this document and the accompanying CMP, Council officer site visits to the CA were carried out during clement weather in March 2024, May 2024 and October 2024.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)

<sup>2</sup> The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

## Public Consultations

- 1.10 Public consultation on the CMP was held for four weeks in September 2024. The details of how the consultation was run and the responses received can be found in the Consultation Report on the Council's website (via the link at paragraph 1.1).
- 1.11 Feedback received by the council during this consultation led to minor amendments to the CMP and additional boundary revisions to include Sheering Drive and the entirety of the St. Mary's Church churchyard in the CA.
- 1.12 A further consultation was held on the draft MPG and the draft (made) A4D for six weeks in March and April 2025, including two public drop-in exhibitions. The comments received resulted in a number of minor changes being made to the MPG. A consultation report detailing the comments received and the Council's responses and changes made can be found on the Council's website (via the link at paragraph 1.1).

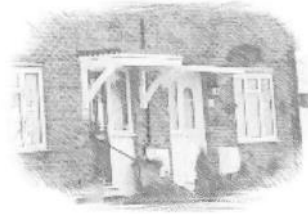
## 2. Article 4 Direction

- 2.1 The Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) covered by the Article 4 Direction (A4D) are summarised in Fig. 2.1. The A4D can be viewed on [the Council's website](#)<sup>3</sup>.

*Fig. 2.1: Parts of property where planning permission is needed for changes/development\**



**Porches**



**Canopies**



**Chimneys**



**Other exterior alterations\*\***

\* other restrictions also apply as the Churchgate Street area is a Conservation Area (see below)

\*\* including windows, window frames, doors and painting the exterior of a property

- 2.2 National legislation restricting PDRs already apply in Conservation Areas (CAs) that mean certain changes already need planning permission (this list is not necessarily exhaustive and it is recommended to review the most up-to-date legislation and the government's [Technical Guidance on the GPDO legislation](#)<sup>4</sup>):

- front and side extensions;
- rear extensions of more than one storey;
- major roof alterations on any part of the roof (including adding dormer windows and additional storeys);
- outbuildings, enclosures, pools and oil/gas containers at the front or side of a property;
- chimneys, flues and soil & vent pipes on a wall or roof at the front or side of a property if the front or side fronts a highway;
- aerials and satellite dishes on a chimney, wall or roof facing onto and visible from a highway;
- solar panels and solar thermal equipment on a wall fronting a highway.

- 2.3 Furthermore, there are certain PDRs which do not apply to nationally-listed buildings. These include adding an outbuilding, fence or other enclosure anywhere within the boundary (curtilage) of the building.

<sup>3</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance)

- 2.4 Having regard to and being in-keeping with original features and styles of surrounding properties is particularly important, to ensure development and changes, consider the presence of the varying styles that occur throughout the CA and which contribute to its architectural and historic interest.
- 2.5 The variation in styles reflects the evolution of design character, prevalent at the time the buildings were constructed and it is important, therefore, that this diverse mix is protected. More information on the building styles and ages can be found in the [\*Character Appraisal and Management Proposals\*](#)<sup>5</sup> document (CMP).
- 2.6 The additional restrictions affecting CAs and Listed Buildings help preserve the overall historic character of an area or building from inappropriate change, and ensures change is managed through the Development Management process.

---

<sup>5</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)

### 3. Making a Planning Application

- 3.1 To obtain planning permission for making changes to your property which are covered by the Article 4 Direction (A4D), a planning application will need to be submitted which, in most cases, would be a householder application. Chapter 4 provides specific advice for changes covered by the A4D and, in particular, the design and styles which are more likely to see planning permission being granted.
- 3.2 [The Council's website](#)<sup>6</sup> provides more information on how to make householder applications, including information on fees, applying using the Planning Portal, and using the 'Householder applications validation checklist' to ensure the application is valid.
- 3.3 The following are the main policy and guidance documents that should also be consulted when preparing the householder planning application:
- Harlow Local Development Plan;
  - [Harlow Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document \(and Addendum\)](#)<sup>7</sup>;
  - Churchgate Street Character Appraisals and Management Plan;
  - the government's [Technical Guidance on the GPDO legislation](#)<sup>8</sup>.
- 3.4 The Harlow Design Guide and Addendum was adopted by Harlow Council to provide bespoke design guidance for Harlow. However, it may also be helpful to consult Essex County Council's [Essex Design Guide](#)<sup>9</sup> for information on design guidance in the wider area.
- 3.5 The requirements for an application to be deemed valid include completing an application form and land ownership certificate, and providing a site location plan and appropriate plans. A heritage statement is also required as the Churchgate Street area is a Conservation Area. Full requirements for planning applications are provided on the Council's website in the [Householder Applications Validation Checklist](#)<sup>10</sup>.
- 3.6 The Council can provide written pre-application advice before a planning application is submitted. This can help applicants understand any key issues an application might face and the likelihood of it being supported. More information about what is required and the relevant fees can be found on [the Council's website](#).<sup>11</sup>
- 3.7 It may also be useful to have an informal discussion with your neighbours about your proposals before you make an application.
- 3.8 Once you submit your application, it becomes publicly available, including on the Council's website, so people can comment on it. Most applications will be decided within an eight-week timeframe. When a decision has been made, a decision notice is produced which specifies the decision, the approved plans and any conditions attached to the planning permission (and reasons for any conditions).

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-permission](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-permission)

<sup>7</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/supplementary-planning-documents-and](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/supplementary-planning-documents-and)

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance)

<sup>9</sup> [www.essexdesignguide.co.uk](http://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk)

<sup>10</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-permission](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-permission)

<sup>11</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/request-planning-advice](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/request-planning-advice)

- 3.9 While receiving planning permission allows you to carry out the development or change you applied for, you may also need to receive [Covenant Control consent](#)<sup>12</sup> and/or [Building Control approval](#)<sup>13</sup>.
- 3.10 Changes which are covered by the A4D and are made without planning permission would technically be a breach of planning control. Such breaches could harm the character of the Conservation Area, especially if there are several concentrated in a small area.
- 3.11 The Council has the ability to serve an enforcement notice in such a case, but would first work with the homeowner to encourage a retrospective planning application to be submitted.
- 3.12 In addition to the above, Listed Building Consent (LBC) is required for demolition of a Listed Building, or for alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Alterations would include making major changes, as well as comparatively minor changes such as replacing external windows or doors, or adding CCTV to a front wall.
- 3.13 For the avoidance of doubt, it is best to assume that any works to a Listed Building would require LBC. It is important to note that LBC is separate from planning permission. In many cases both LBC and planning permission will be required, but where planning permission is not required, it is likely that LBC would still be needed. To check whether your property is listed, please visit the [Historic England website](#)<sup>14</sup>.
- 3.14 Chapter 5 contains information on when enforcement notices could be served to seek urgent improvement of buildings.

---

<sup>12</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/covenant-control](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/covenant-control)

<sup>13</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control)

<sup>14</sup> [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)



## 4. Planning Application Guidance for Householders

### General Principles

- 4.1 This chapter contains guidance on preparing a householder planning application for works or changes covered by the Article 4 Direction (A4D). The guidance is based on the conditions which are attached to Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) for these types of works, as set out in legislation. Extra bespoke guidance, relevant for the Churchgate Street CA, has been added where necessary.
- 4.2 It is important to note that all planning applications are considered on their individual merits, on a case-by-case basis. There are, however, some general principles that should be followed which are set out in more detail in the Harlow Design Guide and its Addendum.

#### ***Box 4.a: Harlow Design Guide and Addendum General Principles***

**In accordance with the Harlow Design Guide and Addendum, the Council expects that any change to a property:**

1. is in-keeping with the original features and styles of the property and other properties in the vicinity;
2. ensures the property remains well-proportioned (meaning an extension or porch should be a relatively subtle addition); and
3. uses building materials which are durable, attractive and, as much as possible, match colours and materials used on the property.

- 4.3 The works covered by the A4D primarily relate to the creation or construction (for example, of a porch), but also apply to replacements or removals. This is to ensure that replacements of existing features are in an appropriate design, and that original features are retained.

#### ***Box 4.b: Replacements or Removal of Features***

1. Improvements, replacements or alterations which are like-for-like in terms of design and use of materials, may not need planning permission where they are not considered a material change.
2. The permanent removal of an original feature of a property which is covered by the A4D, such as a porch or a chimney, is considered to be an alteration and would require planning permission.
3. Where an original feature needs to be removed in an emergency, for example if it is structurally unsound, the removal and any subsequent replacement may require retrospective planning permission.

### Porches

- 4.4 As identified in the CMP, porches are not an original or prevailing feature on properties in the CA. The addition of a porch can have a notable impact on the original design of a property and the appearance of a street or group of properties, particularly where it is of a disproportionate size or uses out-of-keeping materials.
- 4.5 The A4D requires planning permission to be obtained for constructing or replacing a porch. This includes replacing a porch or enclosing a canopy to form a porch.

### Box 4.c: Porches

**A planning application for a new or replacement porch is more likely to be approved if it:**

1. has a depth of less than 1.5m, a floor area less than 3sqm, and a width of less than 25% of the width of the front of the original property<sup>^</sup>;
2. has a front entrance (rather than a door on the side);
3. has windows/glazing and roof which are proportionate to and match, as closely as possible, the windows and roof on the property (with the gable end at the front if the porch has a gabled roof);
4. is built using materials which match, as closely as possible, those used on the property (including window frames);
5. incorporates original features which could otherwise be lost (such as an arch above the front door or other decorations on the property façade);
6. has a design which maintains or improves conditions relating to privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, visual amenity and levels of daylight/sunlight.

**Additionally, where the property is in a terrace row, such an application is more likely to be approved if it:**

7. is on a property at the end of a terrace;
8. does not disrupt the uniform appearance of the terrace.

<sup>^</sup> a greater width may be acceptable if the porch is on the side rather than the front of the property

## Canopies

- 4.6 The A4D requires planning permission to be obtained for constructing or replacing a canopy where visible from a highway. Fig. 4.1 shows examples of appropriate canopies.

*Fig. 4.1: Examples of appropriate canopies*



#### **Box 4.d: Canopies**

**A planning application for a canopy is more likely to be approved if it:**

1. has a width of no more than 0.8m wider than the door and any adjacent window, and a depth of no more than half the canopy's width<sup>^</sup>;
2. is of a similar colour to the property's front door (including the canopy's fixings);
3. has a style – including its angle, thickness, width, depth and how it is attached to the property – matches any existing original canopies on nearby properties (see Fig. 4.1 for examples of appropriate canopies).

<sup>^</sup> larger canopies may be considered appropriate on properties which have a side entrance

## **Chimneys**

- 4.7 National restrictions mean that in a CA, planning permission must be obtained for works to a chimney, flue or soil & vent pipe on a roof or wall at the front of a property, or at a side if that side fronts a highway.
- 4.8 The A4D requires planning permission to be obtained for chimney works on all parts of a property. The A4D does not, however, apply to flues or soil & vent pipes.
- 4.9 Fig. 4.2 shows an example of a chimney alteration where pots have been removed, which has resulted in the uniformity of the chimney design being lost.

*Fig. 4.2: Chimney alterations*



#### **Box 4.e: Chimneys**

**A planning application for a new or replacement chimney is more likely to be approved if it:**

1. exceeds the highest part of the roof by no more than 1m;
2. is built using materials which match, as closely as possible, the features and predominant colour of the property;
3. is on a roof slope which does not front a highway.

## Other Changes to a Property Exterior

4.10 The A4D means that planning permission is required for alterations, where visible from a highway, to the exterior of a house within the CA. This includes painting/repainting walls and adding, altering or removing cladding, windows or doors (including adding windows, converting a window to a bay window, or changing window frames or door frames).

4.11 There are various examples of existing exterior changes in the CA:

- Fig. 4.2 shows an example of replacement dormer windows which are not matching;
- Fig. 4.3 shows an example of alterations to the facades of houses which disrupt the symmetry between the two houses and, in the case of the house on the right, a roof over the bay window which is disproportionate;
- Fig. 4.4 shows a notable window change, along with door changes (painting in different colours) which have disrupted the symmetry of the terrace;
- Fig. 4.5 shows the conversion of a house façade to a shop façade, which is in poor condition and has significantly altered the original features of the house

*Fig. 4.3: Alterations to doors and windows*



*Fig. 4.4: Significant window change as well as minor door changes*



*Fig. 4.5: Modification of window to become shop window*



**Box 4.f: Painting the Exterior of a Property**

**A planning application is more likely to be approved for painting an exterior wall which is visible from a highway, if:**

1. the colour broadly matches the rest of the property and walls of properties in the vicinity;
2. it can be demonstrated that it would result in the property reverting to its original colour;
3. exposed brick remains exposed.

**Box 4.g: Making Changes to Windows/Doors**

**A planning application is more likely to be approved for making changes to windows/doors, which are visible from a highway, if:**

1. where replacing a single window frame/door frame<sup>^</sup>, the replacement matches<sup>^^</sup> the predominant style and colour of the existing frames on the property;
2. where replacing the majority of window/door frames, the replacements are in a style and colour which, as far as possible, matches<sup>^^</sup> those which would have been originally installed on the property;
3. where a window(s) is being converted to a bay window<sup>^</sup>, it should be ensured the property remains in-keeping with other properties, and the bay window matches<sup>^^</sup> the predominant style of the existing windows on the property.

<sup>^</sup> Deviations to the above may be acceptable at the rear of a property.

<sup>^^</sup> Some properties in the CA now have thicker window frames where windows have been replaced with more energy-efficient ones over time. It is not expected that replacement windows are replaced with ones matching the originals (i.e. thin-framed ones) if they are less energy-efficient.

4.12 Further examples of changes to properties can be seen in the [Character Appraisal and Management Proposals](#)<sup>15</sup> document.

<sup>15</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)



## 5. General Guidance for Householders

- 5.1 The previous chapter provides guidance for preparing a planning application for works or changes covered by the Article 4 Direction (A4D). This chapter, however, provides more general guidance for how residents and homeowners can ensure that other changes to their properties – for example involving lighting or changes to a front fence – are in-keeping with original features of the Conservation Area (CA).
- 5.2 The changes detailed in this chapter **do not** require planning permission, so long as they are in accordance with conditions attached to the government's Permitted Development Rights as set out in legislation (which, for example, restrict the size of a fence that could be installed without needing planning permission). The government's [Technical Guidance on the GPDO legislation](#)<sup>16</sup> provides more information.

### Property Number/Name Signs

- 5.3 A number of properties in the CA have numbers and/or name signs affixed to or beside the front door. These are generally in a design and font which reflects the heritage nature of the CA, and are small enough to not detract from the property while being large enough to be read from the street. Appropriate examples can be seen at Fig. 5.1.

*Fig. 5.1: Examples of appropriate property number/name signs*



#### Box 5.a: Property Number/Name Signs

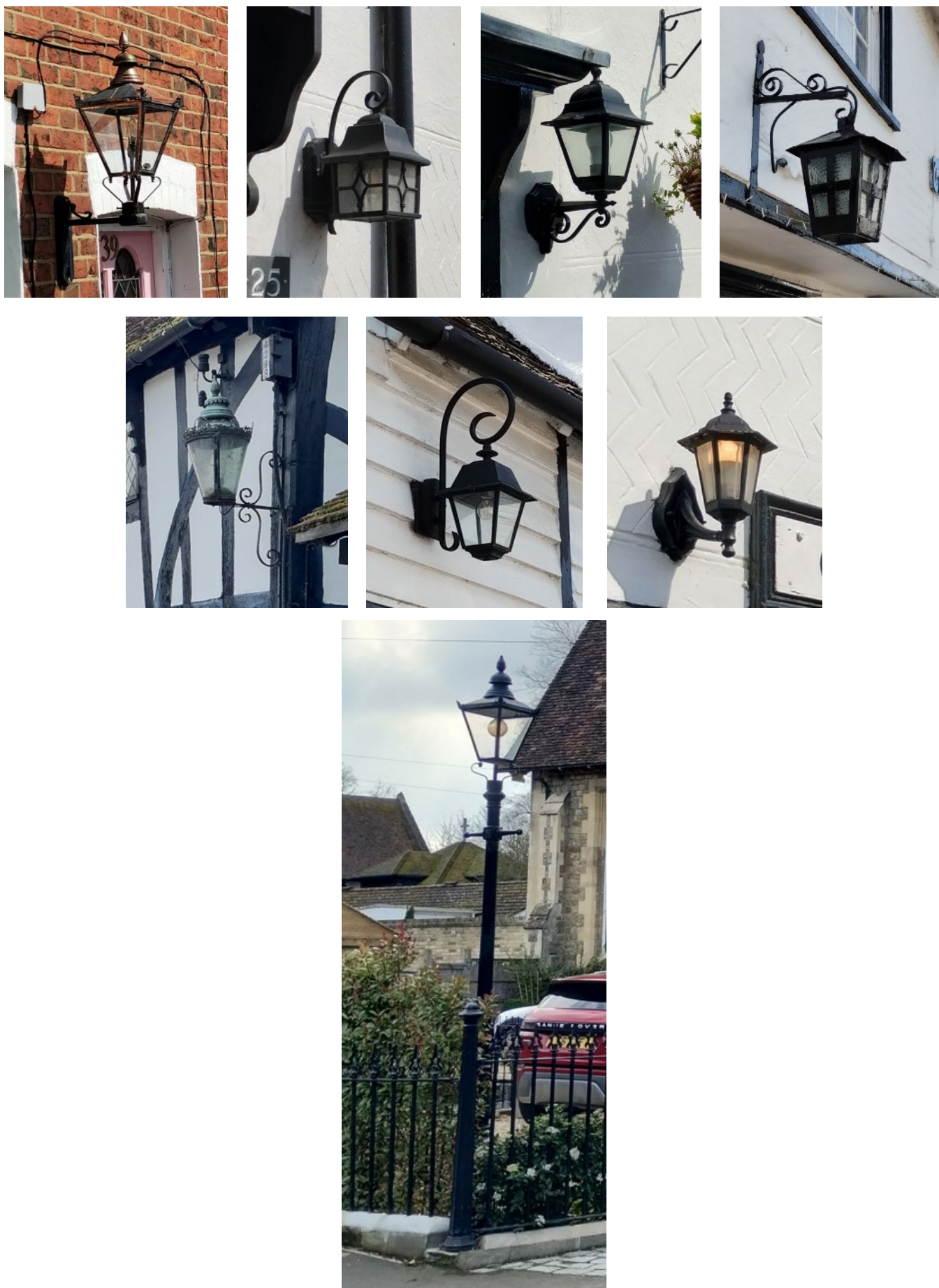
**To ensure the visual amenity and accessibility of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that** new or replacement property numbers/names are of a suitable size, in proportion to the property, and in a style and colour in-keeping with the CA (see appropriate examples at Fig. 5.1).

### Exterior Lighting

- 5.4 Fig. 5.2 shows examples of 'heritage' light fixtures which have been installed by homeowners and are of colours and styles which are in-keeping with the rest of the CA, including the use of Windsor lanterns, other lanterns and swan neck or curved brackets.
- 5.5 The availability nowadays of LED bulbs which are designed in an old style means that such light fixtures can be fully in-keeping with the style of the CA, energy-efficient, bright and in an appropriate colour temperature.
- 5.6 Fig. 5.3, meanwhile, shows two examples of less appropriate light fixtures installed by homeowners, which are of a more modern style. Such examples are, however, scarcely found in the CA.

<sup>16</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance)

*Fig. 5.2: Examples of appropriate light fixtures installed by homeowners*



*Fig. 5.3: Example of less appropriate light fixtures installed by homeowners*



### **Box 5.b: Exterior Lighting**

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that new or replacement light fixtures installed on properties are in a 'heritage' style which is in-keeping with the CA (see appropriate examples at Fig. 5.2).**

## **Aerials and Satellite Dishes**

- 5.7 Aerials and satellite dishes affixed to buildings can detract from a building's appearance and overshadow original features such as bargeboards, chimneys and other historic roof features, as well as adversely affecting the area's roofscape character.
- 5.8 However, the existing examples in the CA are generally in proportion, with aerials not unacceptably extending beyond the roofline or chimney, and satellite dishes being sited to reduce visual impact (see appropriate examples at Fig. 5.4).
- 5.9 It is expected that the use of aerials and satellite dishes will reduce over time due to the availability of stronger terrestrial signals (allowing for indoor aerials) and the increased use of online streaming services. Aerials and satellite dishes were not, therefore, considered for inclusion in the A4D because it was considered that their inclusion would be overly restrictive.

*Fig. 5.4: Examples of appropriately-sited aerials and satellite dishes*





### **Box 5.c: Aerials and Satellite Dishes**

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that:**

1. aerials and satellite dishes are safely removed once they become redundant;
2. new or replacement aerials or satellite dishes are sited to cause as little visual impact as possible (see appropriate examples at Fig. 5.4).

## **Front Gardens and Boundary Treatments**

5.10 The Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) relating to front gardens and boundary treatment – such as gates, fences and walls and converting gardens to hardstanding – were not included in the A4D. This is because most buildings in the CA are built close to the pavement where there is limited space and, therefore, limited opportunity to carry out works permitted by these PDRs.

5.11 In any case, there are conditions attached to the PDRs meaning most buildings in the CA would not be able to erect a front gate, fence or wall higher than 1m without first receiving planning permission. This PDR is also, by default, not applicable to Listed Buildings. Fig. 5.5 shows examples of appropriate front boundary treatments.

*Fig. 5.5: Examples of appropriate front boundary treatments*



- 5.12 Furthermore, following an intense period of rain, rainwater often flows freely over large amounts of open land. This can be exacerbated following a period of dry weather, as the ground is likely to be hard and unable to absorb the water. While housing development increases the amount of hardstanding on land, the flow of rainwater would be slowed due to the use of SuDS, the availability of drains and the ability for water to soak into porous garden surfaces, the soil of which is often more porous than open land due to being cultivated by homeowners and having more shade from the sun.
- 5.13 The presence of gardens is, therefore, an important contributor to alleviating the effects of flooding. As described elsewhere in this document, the conversion of gardens to hardstanding – for example for car parking – can have an adverse impact on the ability to mitigate the effects of flooding, as well as negatively affecting biodiversity and the visual amenity of the area. This has to be balanced, however, against the issue of cars being parked on the road.

#### ***Box 5.d: Boundary Treatments***

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that** new or replacement boundary treatments (i.e. front gates, fences or walls) are of an appearance, style and size similar to existing ones in the vicinity, with fences being open-boarded (see appropriate examples at Fig. 5.5).

#### ***Box 5.e: Front Garden Conversions***

**To minimise the risk of hardstandings contributing to potential flooding, the Council expects that** any natural garden surfaces converted to hardstanding use sufficiently porous materials.

## Tree Works

- 5.14 In addition to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), legislation requires owners wishing to top, lop or fell non-protected trees within CAs, including pruning neighbouring overhanging branches, to provide six weeks' notice to the Council of their intention before the works can be carried out.
- 5.15 This only applies to non-protected trees that have a trunk diameter of 75mm or more when measured 1.5m from ground level, or 100mm or more if the work involves reducing the number of trees to benefit growth of other trees. During the six-week period, the Council will assess whether the tree should be protected by a TPO.

### Box 5.f: Tree Works

**To ensure trees in the CA are sufficiently protected, the Council expects that:**

1. in accordance with legislation, owners carrying out certain tree works notify the Council beforehand;
2. works to trees, for example to reduce excessive shading by pruning or thinning, are carried out by experienced professionals and retain the height, natural form and character of the tree;
3. a tree which requires felling due to disease or posing a danger is replaced by a suitable new tree, preferably one which is relatively mature;
4. the planting of any new trees follows the guidance in Chapter 6 of the Council's Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space Standards Supplementary Planning Document.

## Maintenance of Buildings

- 5.16 As detailed in the *Character Appraisal*, there are a few buildings in the Churchgate Street Conservation Area (CA) where there has been a lack of maintenance over the years, meaning they do not make a positive contribution to the CA.
- 5.17 Regular maintenance can include repainting, repairing woodwork, cleaning a building façade, and the regular pruning or clearing of vegetation. More major works may require planning permission, as detailed earlier in this document.
- 5.18 Historic England contains [technical advice](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/maintenance-and-repair-of-older-buildings/)<sup>17</sup> on the maintenance of older buildings, as well as more specific [advice for homeowners](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/)<sup>18</sup>. This includes maintenance, repairs and making improvements.
- 5.19 Given the increased costs of energy in recent years, ensuring a building is as energy efficient as possible is important to ensure that money is not unnecessarily spent on heating, for example, that is negated by draughty windows. However this could conflict with

<sup>17</sup> [www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/maintenance-and-repair-of-older-buildings/](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/maintenance-and-repair-of-older-buildings/)

<sup>18</sup> [www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/)



preserving historic buildings. In July 2024, Historic England published a new [Advice Note and web-based information](#)<sup>19</sup> on energy efficiency and retrofitting in historic buildings.

- 5.20 This advice includes information on reducing energy use through repair, maintenance and reduction of energy demand, using methods such as reducing uncontrolled air leaks, maximising use of passive measures (such as internal shutters to prevent heat loss), installing secondary glazing, replacing the heating system, installing better heating controls and ensuring gutters, downpipes and drains effectively disperse rainwater.
- 5.21 The advice also includes specific guidance for historic buildings to ensure that impacts on heritage aspects are minimised, such as the use of solar slates for energy generation and the reinstatement of historic render finishes to improve thermal performance.
- 5.22 While there is no legal duty for owners to keep buildings in a good state of repair, failing to carry out regular maintenance could lead to costly repairs which, should they not be carried out, could affect the habitability, use and value of the building. The Council also has certain powers to ensure that maintenance is carried out<sup>20</sup>, as detailed below.
- 5.23 Where the condition of a building and/or land adversely affects the amenity of an area, including a CA, the Council can serve a Section 215 Notice on its owner. Such a notice requires the building and/or land to be suitably rectified. The Council can also arrange for any necessary work to be carried out and recover the costs from the owner.
- 5.24 A Section 215 Notice is usually served first in the case of buildings or land which are in a state of disrepair in a CA, after which an Urgent Works Notice and/or Repairs Notice can be served by the Council, usually only in the case of nationally-listed buildings.
- 5.25 Where an owner of a nationally-listed building has failed to keep it in reasonable repair and the building consequently becomes at-risk, a Repairs Notice can be served by the Council on the owner. Such a notice details works which are needed for the proper preservation of the building. This could include works to correct damage to bring the building back into the condition it was at on the date it was listed.
- 5.26 An Urgent Works Notice can be served by the Council on the owner of a nationally-listed building, where the building is in need of urgent work and it (or the relevant part) is unoccupied. Such a notice details the urgent work that is required for emergency repairs, for example to make a building weather-tight, prevent structural collapse or prevent unauthorised entry. The Council can also arrange for the work to be carried out and recover the costs from the owner.
- 5.27 The government (specifically the relevant Secretary of State) can also serve an Urgent Works Notice on the owner of an unlisted building in a CA, if the building's preservation is important for maintaining the character or appearance of the CA.
- 5.28 In extreme circumstances and subject to the relevant Secretary of State's authorisation, the Council could compulsorily purchase a nationally-listed building if its owner has been issued with notice for at least two months but is not undertaking proper preservation of the building.

### **Box 5.g: Building Maintenance**

---

<sup>19</sup> [www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/)

<sup>20</sup> In accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) and The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

**To ensure the heritage value of the buildings in the CA and the visual amenity and overall character of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that:**

- 1.** buildings are regularly repaired and maintained in appropriate ways which do not cause adverse effects;
- 2.** technical advice issued by organisations such as Historic England is followed;
- 3.** property owners will proactively work with the Council to reach a resolution when maintenance issues arise.

## 6. General Improvements to the Conservation Area

### Road Safety

- 6.1 Essex County Council (ECC) [traffic count data](#)<sup>21</sup> shows the average Monday to Friday daily vehicle count for Churchgate Street is approx. 4,374. For comparison, this figure is 3,311 for Hobbs Cross Road, 18,408 for Gilden Way, 20,988 for First Avenue, 2,780 for The Stow and 1,860 for Mardyke Road.
- 6.2 Churchgate Street has, therefore, a notably higher amount of vehicle movement compared to other non-B roads such as The Stow and Mardyke Road. Compounded with the relatively narrow width of Churchgate Street arising from its historic nature, and the high number of cars parked on the street, the Conservation Area (CA) faces safety challenges arising from vehicular movements.
- 6.3 According to the ECC traffic count data, the proportion of vehicles speeding over the limit of 30mph in Churchgate Street is low, at no higher than 2.2%. However, this increases almost ten-fold to 20.5% in Hobbs Cross Road just to the south, where the counter is also located in a 30mph zone. The difference is likely due to cars naturally slowing to an extent while travelling through Churchgate Street due to the narrow street, parked cars and greater risk of pedestrians crossing the road.
- 6.4 The data suggests vehicles speeding over the 30mph limit in Churchgate Street is relatively uncommon. Particularly around the area of the Church, however, there are pinch points where parked cars and crossing pedestrians pose risks, as described later in this chapter. When approaching this area a vehicle would need to travel considerably slower than 30mph, suggesting there is a need to ensure vehicles travelling through the street are slowed overall.
- 6.5 Churchgate Street is designated by ECC as a PR2 (Priority County Route 2) road. According to the [Essex Highways Speed and Traffic Management guidance](#)<sup>22</sup>, a 20mph speed limit or zone on such a road “may be considered ... where speeds are at or below 24mph”. A mandatory variable 20mph limit “will be considered if mean speeds are at or below 35mph”. It is likely, therefore, that a specific speed survey in Churchgate Street would be required, focussing on the approaches to the area around the Church.
- 6.6 Implementing a 20mph speed limit on the stretch of road from the junction with the Gilden Way hamburger roundabout to the Primary School on Hobbs Cross Road, for example, would encompass the whole of Churchgate Street and provide a range of benefits, such as ensuring that:
- pedestrian crossings are easier and safer;
  - traffic is suitably slow when passing the primary school;
  - traffic approaching Churchgate Street is suitably slow before it meets the bends at the northern and southern ends (see below).
- 6.7 There are also other measures that could assist the reduction of vehicle speed. However, as stated by the guidance above, many of these would not be suitable; for example, there is insufficient space for build-outs (road features requiring drivers to give way), rumblewave surfacing is not suitable in residential areas due to noise and vibration, and coloured road surfacing is not normally supported due to environment and maintenance implications.

---

<sup>21</sup> [www.essexhighways.org/highways-information-map](http://www.essexhighways.org/highways-information-map)

<sup>22</sup> [www.essexhighways.org/uploads/lhp/mg/02\\_ecclhpmembersguidespeedtma.pdf](http://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/lhp/mg/02_ecclhpmembersguidespeedtma.pdf)

- 6.8 Options could, however, include the use of a speed limit sign in conjunction with a sign that welcomes drivers to the area, the use of Vehicle Activated Signs or Speed Indicating Devices to alert drivers if they are speeding, and/or modification of road markings (see below). If these are not feasible, and as a last resort, the use of road humps or speed cushions is possible, but these can have negative impacts on emergency vehicles and buses.
- 6.9 A Community Speed Watch, which is a traffic monitoring scheme that is co-ordinated by Essex Police but managed and run by volunteers, could also be considered. Operational logs are used by the police to send warning letters to drivers breaking the speed limit for the first time, with subsequent breaches of the limit leading to police action.
- 6.10 Introducing a weight limit (or similar restriction) could assist in reducing the number of lorries and other large vehicles passing through the street.
- 6.11 There are currently very few road markings in the CA, mostly only found at the southern end where Hobbs Cross Road becomes Churchgate Street and at the northern end where Sheering Road meets Churchgate Street. This is, in part, due to the lack of parking restrictions on the street.
- 6.12 To ensure the safety of pedestrians and drivers, and to avoid damage occurring to buildings which were built close to the road, road markings and road signs should be sufficient to warn of dangers, structures or obstacles.
- 6.13 With regards to safety improvements, there should be a particular focus on the northern and southern ends, where Sheering Road meets Churchgate Street and Hobbs Cross Road becomes Churchgate Street, respectively. Since late 2020, Essex County Council collision data indicates there have been four collisions in the CA – two at the northern end and two at the southern end. There was also an additional incident reported at the southern end in October 2024.
- 6.14 At the northern end, this is particularly an issue when approaching from the east, where Sheering Road bends south to effectively become Churchgate Street, and Sheering Road continues westwards. This is shown at Fig. 6.1.
- 6.15 Drivers may expect this to be a T-junction, with cars approaching from Churchgate Street required to give way. In reality, cars wishing to continue along Sheering Road must give way to cars approaching from Churchgate Street, but this is not immediately obvious and the view of approaching cars is limited due to the bend.

*Fig. 6.1: View when approaching Churchgate Street from the east along Sheering Road*



- 6.16 At the southern end, there is a similar bend where Hobbs Cross Road becomes Churchgate Street (see Fig. 6.2). Drivers approaching Hobbs Cross Road from the south-east are required to slow down but, as indicated by the traffic counters in this location, a fifth of drivers are speeding above the limit of 30mph and may not be suitably prepared for the bend into Churchgate Street.

*Fig. 6.2: View when approaching Churchgate Street from the south-east along Hobbs Cross Road*



#### **Box 6.a: Road Safety**

##### **The following actions would assist in improving road safety:**

1. carrying out a speed survey to establish the feasibility of a 20mph speed limit;
2. installing speed reduction measures;
3. implementing a Community Speed Watch;
4. introducing a weight limit or similar restriction for Churchgate Street;
5. surveying the current road markings and road signs in the CA to establish if they are sufficient or need amending or replacing (with a focus on the entrances to Churchgate Street).



## Bus Services

- 6.17 In 2016, the regular Route 7 – connecting Churchgate Street to the town centre – was withdrawn and replaced by the Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT) route HSB01, which provided two services three times a week. However, this was withdrawn in June 2025. The only service available now is the EFCT Harlow's Integrated Shopper Bus, which runs on three days a week to the town centre, but must be booked in advance.
- 6.18 The two bus stops in the CA (one southbound and one northbound, both located opposite the Church) are, therefore, not currently served by a regular bus service. The nearest serviced bus stops are located on Gilden Way, around 500m from the centre of the CA. The sheltered bus stop in the CA also displays out-of-date information about services which no longer operate.
- 6.19 Providing a regular bus service to link Churchgate Street with the town centre is essential for ensuring the CA does not become disconnected from the rest of Harlow. This is particularly important for those who cannot travel by car and have restricted mobility meaning they cannot access the Gilden Way bus stops.

### Box 6.b: Bus Services

The council will, through its Bus Users Group and the securing of appropriate developer contributions, **seek the reinstatement of a regular bus service linking Churchgate Street with the town centre**, to encourage greater use of public transport and to provide vital transport for those who cannot travel by car.

**The council expects** that Essex County Council, as the body responsible for bus service information at bus stops, will ensure such information at the Churchgate Street bus stops is up-to-date and that information which becomes out-of-date is promptly removed.

## Parked Cars

- 6.20 Churchgate Street is a relatively narrow road with pavements which are also narrow in most places. Most of the properties in the street do not have front gardens or driveways, meaning there is limited opportunity for off-road car parking. As a result, even during busier times of the day and week, there are a significant number of cars parked on the street, many of which are also partially parked on the pavement. Examples are shown in Fig. 6.3.
- 6.21 This creates obstacles for drivers and pedestrians and can make the pavement impassable for people with prams or users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters. In terms of conservation, the parked cars also create clutter and harm visual amenity by disrupting views of buildings and the street, as detailed in the [Character Appraisal and Management Proposals](#)<sup>23</sup> document.
- 6.22 Most of the gardens to the front of non-listed properties have already been partially or wholly converted to become hardstanding for parking cars. While this is not encouraged due to the adverse consequences, including reducing areas for biodiversity and increasing surface run-off after rain which exacerbates flooding, it is recognised that such residents felt this was a necessity to ensure they could park cars off-road.
- 6.23 There are currently no parking restrictions in Churchgate Street, apart from areas such as the bus stop and where the road bends at the northern and southern ends of the street.

<sup>23</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)

However, even the partial introduction of restrictions would impact residents by reducing the availability of car parking. The necessary yellow road markings and/or signs required for restrictions would also be unsightly and adversely affect the CA.

- 6.24 It may be possible to introduce small areas of parking restrictions, for example near the Churchgate Stores shop and the Church, where limited restrictions already exist due to the presence of the bus stops. This would, at least, reduce on-street car parking in the busiest part of the street.

*Fig. 6.3: Cars parked on the road, many partially on the pavement*



**Box 6.c: Parked Cars**



**Carrying out a car parking survey would improve the situation of parked cars,** by establishing the existing requirements for car parking and how well these are being met, and establishing the feasibility of parking restrictions on Churchgate Street, particularly in the area around the Church.

## Road and Pavement Condition

- 6.25 Within the CA, there are examples of 'patchwork' repairs to the road, along with small potholes. There are also places where the pavement undulates or is spread over two levels and where there has been damage to kerbs. Examples can be seen at Fig. 6.4.
- 6.26 Many of these repairs have been caused by utility providers and other private companies carrying out works on the roads, such as installing underground cabling.

*Fig. 6.4: Examples of poor road and pavement surfaces*





#### **Box 6.d: Road and Pavement Condition**

**Adding the CA's roads to Essex County Council's annual road resurfacing programme**, to ensure unsatisfactory road and pavement surfaces and kerbs can be renewed as soon as possible, would assist in improving the road and pavement condition.

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that** future roadworks, including those carried out by private companies, are completed to a high standard and using in-keeping, appropriate materials.

### **Road and Street Signage**

- 6.27 Road and street signage in the Churchgate Street Conservation Area (CA) is generally well-proportioned and small signs are often attached to existing lampposts or telegraph poles, avoiding the clutter of additional posts.
- 6.28 However, there are a small number of signposts which are in an out-of-keeping design. For example, those shown at Fig. 6.5 are grey or bare steel which contrast with the 'heritage' style lampposts which are black. (More information on street lighting can be found later in this chapter.)
- 6.29 Figs. 6.6 and 6.7 shows examples of more appropriate signposts, although in the example in Fig. 6.6 there is scope for the two posts to be consolidated into one.

*Fig. 6.5: Examples of inappropriate signposts*





*Fig. 6.6: Example of where two signposts are of a more appropriate design and colour, but consolidated into one*



*Fig. 6.7: Example of a signpost which is of a more appropriate design and colour*



6.30 The street name signs for public streets in the CA are in the traditional blue-and-white style which are found across the district (see Fig. 6.8), with subtle black supports. The signs are not in a style which is necessarily in-keeping with the styles and features found in the CA. However, its usage, which is also found in the other pre-New Town parts of Harlow, represents the strong link between the older and newer parts of the town.

*Fig. 6.8: Street name signs in the CA*



## Box 6.e: Road and Street Signage

To ensure the visual amenity and accessibility of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that:

1. if a sign/post needs replacing, consideration is given to whether the sign is small enough to be attached to another existing post, meaning the post can be removed (see Fig. 6.6 for an example of where this could be possible);
2. if a new or replacement post is required, it matches appropriate existing posts (see examples at Figs. 6.6 and 6.7), and be of a black colour, preferably with some decoration near the base as found on the 'heritage' lampposts;
3. in addition to the above two points, additional signs/posts are only installed where necessary to assist with road safety or provide essential information, and are in an appropriate location where they do not create pinch points;
4. street name signs are protected from damage during any works taking place around them;
5. particular regard is given to signage around nationally listed or landmark buildings.

## Advertisements and Other Signage

6.31 There are isolated examples of temporary advertisements, information signs and A-boards in the CA. Examples which are deemed appropriate are shown at Fig. 6.9.

*Fig. 6.9: Examples of advertisements and other signage*



## Box 6.f: Advertisements and Other Signage

**To ensure the visual amenity and accessibility of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that** free-standing signage, A-boards and advertisements displayed on buildings or notice boards should be in proportion to the host building, not detract from the visual amenity of the CA and not pose a risk to the safety of pavement or road users.

Note: Certain advertisements may require 'express consent' from the Council, in accordance with legislation<sup>24</sup>, in which case Policy PL13 (Advertisements) or successor of the Harlow Local Development Plan would apply.

## Street Lighting

- 6.32 Street lighting is an important aspect of the public realm. During the day, inappropriately coloured or designed lampposts can be particularly visible and disrupt views. At night, the way a street light illuminates the area can change its feel, both in terms of visual appeal and perceptions of safety.
- 6.33 The street lighting in the Churchgate Street Conservation Area (CA) is generally appropriate and at least partially of a heritage style. However, as shown in the example at Fig. 6.10, lampposts which are bare steel with a modern light fixing are out-of-keeping with the CA.

*Fig. 6.10: Example of inappropriate street lighting*



- 6.34 The examples at Fig. 6.11 show two styles of 'heritage' lamppost which are more appropriate. As well as the posts being black in colour, the arm which the lamp fixture is attached to is curved in two of the examples.

<sup>24</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) – see [www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements) for more information.



- 6.35 There are also decorative features near the base of the posts, and the presence of ladder bars near the lamp fixture are a disused feature which were used by lamplighters to rest ladders against while the gas lamps were lit.
- 6.36 The light fixtures of these examples, however, do not match the heritage design of the lampposts. While they are smaller, more energy efficient and direct light in a better way, they are not fully in-keeping with the buildings of the CA. Rear caps could be used on larger 'heritage' light fixtures to ensure that light spillage is minimised.

*Fig. 6.11: Examples of more appropriate street lighting in the Churchgate Street CA*



#### **Box 6.g: Street Lighting**

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that:**

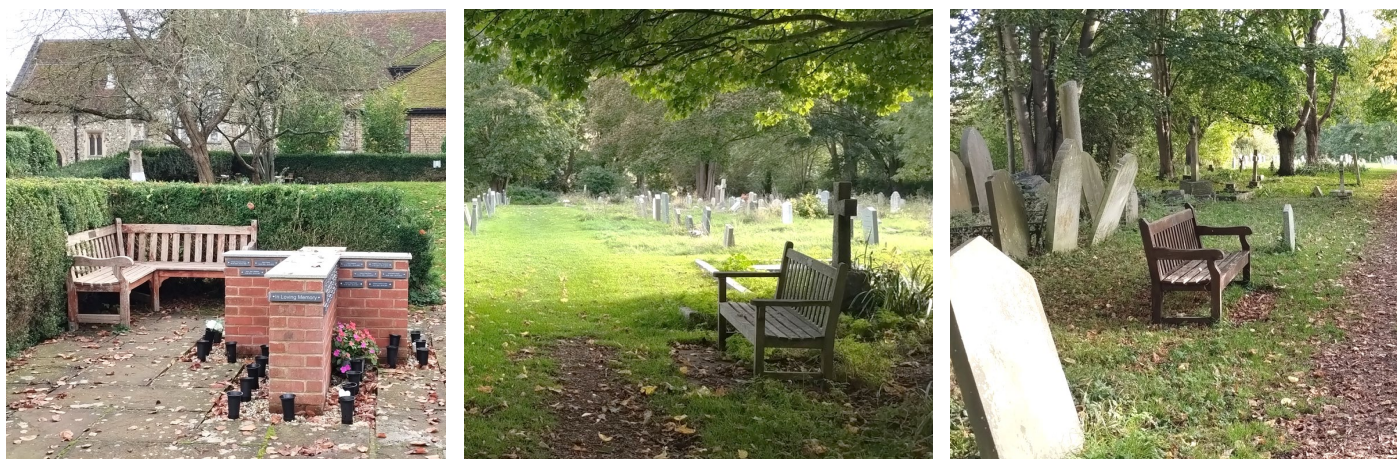
1. new or replacement lampposts are designed in a 'heritage' style (see Fig. 6.11), including the light fixture;
2. out-of-order lampposts with broken lamp fixtures are repaired or replaced.

#### **Street Furniture**

- 6.37 The only seating opportunities in the CA are at the Churchyard (which has been added to the CA) and at the War Memorial, as shown in Fig. 6.12, as well as at the bus stop on the western side of the street. While the pavements are relatively narrow and already face pressure because of on-street parking, there may be opportunities for bench installations along Churchgate Street.

*Fig. 6.12: Seating at the War Memorial and in the Churchyard*





- 6.38 As well as providing a seating area, the bus shelter at the bus stop also serves as a book-sharing point with an event noticeboard. It is, therefore, an important multi-functional feature of the CA. Its wooden materials means it is particularly vulnerable to natural degradation, so regular maintenance is important.
- 6.39 There is little to no evidence of litter in the CA which suggests the provision of public bins is appropriate. The public bins and utility boxes in the CA (and bollards, of which there are only isolated examples) are generally of a proportional size and in a subtle colour and design, as shown in Fig. 6.13. Some, however, would be more in-keeping were they in a dark green colour, while others are in need of cleaning or replacement (see less-appropriate bin examples at Fig. 6.14).

*Fig. 6.13: Examples of appropriate street furniture*





*Fig. 6.14: Examples of bins in inappropriate colours and/or in need of cleaning or replacing*



6.40 Householder bins can be a problem in areas, particularly CAs, when they give rise to clutter and dominate the street scene, and where there is insufficient storage so that they are left in front of properties or gardens. However, most of the buildings in the CA benefit from areas where bins can be stored when they are not due to be emptied. Examples of bin locations in the CA, which are mostly relatively subtle, can be seen at Fig. 6.15.

*Fig. 6.15: Examples of bins in suitable storage*



### **Box 6.h: Street Furniture**

**The installation of benches along Churchgate Street and in Glebe Open Space** would provide more opportunities for seating.

**To ensure the accessibility and visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that:**

- 1.** the replacement or introduction of new bollards, bins and utility boxes are carefully considered in terms of their necessity, siting, design and colour, avoiding creating unnecessary street clutter;
- 2.** new developments or changes to existing buildings provide appropriate areas for bin storage;
- 3.** the wooden bus shelter, which is multi-functional, is regularly maintained to protect it from natural degradation.



## 7. Green Infrastructure

- 7.1 As detailed in the [Character Appraisal and Management Proposals](#)<sup>25</sup> document, the main open space in the Conservation Area (CA) – Glebe Open Space. Arising from the CA boundary revisions adopted in February 2025, as part of the management proposals, the entire Churchyard of St. Mary's Church is now also within the CA and forms another key open space.
- 7.2 Glebe Open Space and the Churchyard, shown in Figs. 7.1 and 7.2, are well-maintained with grass that appears to be regularly cut and kept tidy.

*Fig. 7.1: Glebe Open Space*



*Fig. 7.2: Churchyard of St. Mary's Church*



- 7.3 There are also other Green (and Blue) Infrastructure assets which contribute to the character of the CA, including a number of mature trees and hedges and the brook.
- 7.4 27 of the mature trees in the CA benefit from being protected under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), a third of which have been protected for over 30 years and another third for over 15 years. The TPOs are demonstrably effective in protecting these trees which form a key element of the heritage assets of the CA.

<sup>25</sup> [www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/conservation-areas)



- 7.5 Most of the TPO trees are currently clustered around Millhurst, Meadham and Chantry House. Examples of trees worthy of gaining TPOs could include prominent trees such as those near the Church, as shown in Fig. 7.3.

*Fig. 7.3: Example of prominent trees*



- 7.6 The *Character Appraisal* document details the footpaths (both designated Public Rights of Way and de facto public paths) in the CA. The footpaths are in good condition with suitable access and ground conditions, except the one to the north of Sheering Road.
- 7.7 As shown in Fig. 7.4, in the summer (left-hand photo) this narrow footpath becomes overgrown with vegetation and is virtually impassable. A subsequent site visit the following autumn showed the footpath was in better condition, but is still hindered by vegetation. Overhanging vegetation can also cause problems on footpaths and open spaces.

*Fig. 7.4: The footpath to the north of Sheering Road (summer and autumn)*



## Box 7.a: Green Infrastructure

### The following actions would assist in enhancing the Green Infrastructure in the CA:

1. planting more flower displays in beds, hanging baskets and/or boxes in Glebe Open Space and the Churchyard of St. Mary's Church;
2. planting flower displays elsewhere in the CA, subject to availability of space;
3. protecting further trees using TPOs, particularly in the central part of the CA;
4. ensuring the footpaths are routinely cleared of vegetation and have suitable ground conditions, including – where possible depending on land ownership – the clearing of overhanging vegetation.

**The Trees guidance in Chapter 5**, primarily for householders, is also relevant to Green Infrastructure.

## Flood risk

- 7.8 The area most at risk in Churchgate Street is the southern end near the brook, which is designated by the Environment Agency as Floodzone 2 (and Floodzone 3 immediately around the brook).
- 7.9 In 2023 there was a flooding event in this area. Essex County Council (ECC), as the Lead Local Flood Authority, has advised that this was due to an unusually intense and short period of rain that impacted the brook.
- 7.10 Due to the nature of climate change and the overall trend for the climate warming, there is a possibility that the UK will experience more intense periods of rainfall due to the ability for warmer air to carry more moisture. It is, therefore, important that drainage around the brook is sufficient and that as much mitigation is in place to ensure that the effects of any flooding are minimised.
- 7.11 The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in the East of Harlow Garden Community, including new ponds and swales, is likely to help alleviate the impacts of any future flooding. For example, ECC has advised that there is evidence that SuDS in the new Gilden Park development has alleviated the impacts of flooding, particularly in the underpass.
- 7.12 Furthermore, following an intense period of rain, rainwater often flows freely over large amounts of open land. This can be exacerbated following a period of dry weather, as the ground is likely to be hard and unable to absorb the water. While housing development increases the amount of hardstanding on land, the flow of rainwater would be slowed due to the use of SuDS, the availability of drains and the ability for water to soak into porous garden surfaces, the soil of which is often more porous than open land due to being cultivated by homeowners and having more shade from the sun.
- 7.13 It is important to note that flooding risk is always considered as part of planning applications for any proposed development, assessed against the requirements of national and local planning policies. For example, a planning application for development relating to Chantry House, near the brook, was refused in 2024, in part due to a lack of sustainable drainage measures that would ensure the site and its surroundings are not exposed to increased flood risk.

- 7.14 The masterplan and planning applications for the East of Harlow Garden Community will similarly have to demonstrate sufficient mitigation against flood risk for the immediate and wider area through, for example, sufficient use of SuDS and other drainage infrastructure.

**Box 7.b: Flood risk**

**To ensure flood risk is minimised, the Council expects that:**

1. development proposals accord with national and local planning policies and guidance (including the Harlow Local Development Plan or successor) by incorporating measures such as SuDS;
2. the Environment Agency will continue to work with the Council and Essex County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) to ensure any necessary flood mitigation measures around the brook are carried out.

**Overhead Cables**

- 7.15 Electricity services are underground in the CA and there are, therefore, no overhead electricity cables in most of the CA. However, there are several telegraph poles which provide telephone cables.
- 7.16 The poles and cables can disrupt the longer views across the CA, particularly from the highest part of the CA when looking downhill, although telephone cables are relatively thin and have less of an impact compared to electricity cables. Examples can be seen at Fig. 7.5.



*Fig. 7.5: Examples of telephone cables across Churchgate Street*



7.17 Fibre broadband 'to the property' (FTTP) and cable broadband services, usually requiring underground cabling, are becoming increasingly available. This, along with the planned national move for 'analogue' telephone services to be replaced by internet-based services, means that many of these overhead telephone cables will become redundant over time.

7.18 This will eventually lead to the possibility of cables and poles being removed.

#### **Box 7.c: Overhead Cables**

**To ensure the visual amenity of the CA is retained and enhanced, the Council expects that** where a cable(s) and/or a pole(s) become redundant, they are removed as soon as possible.

## 8. Promoting, Funding and Reviewing the CA

### Promoting the CA

- 8.1 There is currently very limited celebration or information about the historic importance of the Churchgate Street Conservation Area (CA), aside from a small information board at the edge of Glebe Open Space, as shown at Fig. 8.1.

*Fig. 8.1: Information sign at Glebe Open Space*



- 8.2 The following are examples of how the CA and its heritage importance could be enhanced and better promoted:
- suitably-styled 'village signs' or similar placed at the northern entrance to Churchgate Street (for example, on the council-owned land to the west of the junction with the approach from Gilden Way) and near Churchgate Stores and the Church;
  - reinstallation or replacement of original features, such as original kerb stones and the wooden gates that formed part of the Lych Gate;
  - additional information boards detailing the history of the CA and important features such as its listed buildings, Lych Gate and St. Mary's Church.
- 8.3 Further promotion of the CA could involve local organisations such as Harlow Museum, the Harlow Civic Society, the Harlow Art Trust and Churchgate Street Residents' Association, and national organisations such as Historic England. Given Harlow's importance as a Sculpture Town, a bespoke piece of sculpture could be commissioned for the CA, or an existing piece of artwork could be relocated to the area.

#### **Box 8.a: Promoting the CA**

##### **The following actions would assist in promoting the CA and its history:**

1. installing new signage and information boards at appropriate points in the CA, which are designed to be in-keeping and preferably affixed to existing fencing or poles;
2. reinstallation or appropriate, in-keeping replacement of historic features which have been lost, removed or damaged;
3. further promoting the CA as a significant heritage asset, both locally and regionally.

### Funding the CA

- 8.4 Given the financial constraints that both district and county councils currently face, funding for protecting and enhancing a CA may prove difficult to secure.
- 8.5 However, there are other funding sources such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which provides financial assistance in specific circumstances where schemes will preserve, enhance and better reveal the interest of an area, as well as improving public awareness and understanding.
- 8.6 Section 106 agreements may be a further source of funding to ensure nearby development has a positive impact on the CA, but given the development constraints in the CA itself, there are likely to be limited opportunities for such funding. However, there may be opportunities for such funding arising from the development at the East of Harlow Garden Community where it meets the relevant Section 106 tests.
- 8.7 Historic England runs a programme of Partnership Schemes in CAs, forming partnerships with Councils and other relevant authorities to unlock funding for CAs, particularly for homeowners to assist in carrying out repairs to buildings. In the last decade, the Old Harlow Partnership Scheme has enabled the delivery of refurbishment in parts of Old Harlow.

**Box 8.b: Funding the CA**

**The following actions would assist in promoting the CA and enhancing its amenity and facilities:**

1. seeking funding from sources such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Government's Pride in Places Programme, Section 106 agreements and the Old Harlow Partnership Scheme;
2. establishing a Partnership Scheme with Historic England.

**Reviewing the CA**

- 8.8 Subject to resources, the Council has a rolling programme of reviewing each Conservation Area in turn and it is assessed whether extra protections, such as Article 4 Directions, are required.
- 8.9 Any issues in the CA would also be picked up through the Development Management process if/when planning applications are submitted for proposals in or affecting the CA.



## 9. East of Harlow Garden Community

- 9.1 The Conservation Area (CA) is already physically separated from the location of the East of Harlow Garden Community, by the presence of more-recent developments to the east, including Elmbridge, Cobbins Way and Windmill Fields. This means that Churchgate Sreet CA feels relatively self-contained and distinct in character.
- 9.2 For example, because of the topography of the CA which is detailed in the *Character Appraisal*, long-distance views are truncated by Chantry House and Chantry Gardens (to the south) and Auckland House (to the north). There are only a few glimpses into and out of the CA from other viewpoints, particularly of the Church which is the tallest building in the CA.
- 9.3 Masterplanning guidance for the new East of Harlow Garden Community was adopted by both Epping Forest District and Harlow District Councils in Summer 2024, in the form of the [East of Harlow Masterplanning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPD)<sup>26</sup>.
- 9.4 The SPD is now a material consideration, meaning it must be considered when developers prepare the masterplan (and subsequent planning applications) for the Garden Community.
- 9.5 To ensure that the self-contained nature of the CA is preserved, and that it is not impacted by the Garden Community, the SPD is clear that the masterplan must respect and consider existing communities.
- 9.6 More information can be found within the SPD, while a summary of the relevance for the Churchgate Street Conservation Area (CA) can be found in the *Character Appraisal*.

---

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/supplementary-planning-documents-and>

## 10. Appendix 1: Glossary

<b>A4D (Article 4 Direction)</b>	Direction removing some or all development rights permitted by The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Article 4 Directions are issued by local authorities.
<b>Bay window</b>	A window space projecting outward from the main walls of a building, forming a bay in a room.
<b>BI (Blue Infrastructure)</b>	Water features such as rivers, lakes and ponds.
<b>Building Control Approval</b>	Building Control regulations apply to most building work, so approval is needed before you construct or change buildings in certain ways. Building regulations approval is different from planning permission and both may be required.
<b>CA (Conservation Area)</b>	An area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is administered by the Council as a Designated Heritage Asset and benefits from additional planning controls to protect it from undesirable changes.
<b>Canopy</b>	An overhead roof or structure that provides shade or shelter, typically over a door, window, or shopfront.
<b>Cladding</b>	Material applied to the exterior of a building to provide a decorative and protective layer.
<b>Covenant Control Consent</b>	A restrictive covenant is an agreement in a deed which restricts the use of land and it stays with a property. Changes to a home's appearance or use, for example, might be restricted through a covenant and consent would be needed to make changes covered by the covenant. Covenant permission is separate to planning permission and building control approval.
<b>Dormer</b>	A window that projects from a sloping roof.
<b>East of Harlow Garden Community</b>	One of the four main Garden Communities being designed as part of the HGGT. It is located in the east of Harlow and crosses the boundary into the Epping Forest district.
<b>Façade</b>	The front face or elevation of a building.
<b>Floodzone 3</b>	Land assessed as having a greater than 1 in 100 annual probability of river flooding (>1.0%), or a greater than 1 in 200 annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.
<b>Green Infrastructure</b>	Natural and semi-natural green features such as allotments, play areas, wooded areas and meadows.

<b>GPDO (General Permitted Development Order 2015)</b>	Statutory instrument (as amended) that grants automatic planning permission for certain types of development.
<b>Heritage asset</b>	A building, monument, site, or place that is considered to have historic, architectural, or cultural significance.
<b>HGGT (Harlow and Gilston Garden Town)</b>	Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire District Councils are working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and Essex County Council to deliver transformational growth in the form of a Garden Town, with clear design principles tailored to the unique characteristics of Harlow and the Gilston area.
<b>Highway</b>	Road, pavement, public footpath, bridleway, unadopted street or private way (unless otherwise stated)
<b>Hipped</b>	A roof with all sides sloping downwards to the walls, usually with a fairly gentle slope.
<b>HLDP (Harlow Local Development Plan)</b>	Development Plan Document setting out the overarching strategy for an area, with designations, allocations and policies against which planning applications are determined. Accompanied by a Policies Map.
<b>LBC (Listed Building Consent)</b>	Permission required for any alterations to a listed building that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.
<b>Listed Building</b>	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest, and is nationally listed by Historic England as either Grade I, II or II*.
<b>Locally Listed Building</b>	Buildings which do not quite meet the criteria for being nationally listed by Historic England, but which are still of architectural or historical importance in the local area and are on the Council's Local List.
<b>Nationally Listed Building</b>	See 'Listed Building'.
<b>Outbuilding</b>	A smaller building separate from the main property, such as a shed, barn, or garage.
<b>PDR (Permitted Development Rights)</b>	Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).
<b>Planning application and permission</b>	A planning application must be submitted to the Council for many types of works to buildings, construction of new structures and changes of use of land or buildings. The application is determined against policies in the

Harlow Local Development Plan and national planning policies. If the application is given permission, certain conditions may be attached to it.

<b>Public realm</b>	Spaces that are open and accessible to people, including pavements and open spaces.
<b>Soil and vent pipe</b>	A pipe that removes sewage and greywater from a building and allows the venting of gases.
<b>Supplementary Planning Document</b>	Document which adds further detail to policies in a Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.
<b>Topography</b>	Elevation changes and the contours of the land surface, providing detailed information about its slopes, heights, and depths.
<b>TPO (Tree Preservation Order)</b>	An order which enables the legal protection of a tree to ensure that certain works to the tree, or its removal, are not carried out unless permission is received.