

Gosport Borough Council

Lee West Area of Special Character

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2019

*Delivering
for Gosport*



GOSPORT
Borough Council

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Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide residents, landowners and developers with clear guidelines when planning proposals are under consideration within the 'Lee West' area. It also provides additional guidance to planning policies within the adopted local plan, and will be a material consideration for all proposals within the Lee West area.
- 1.2 The area this document calls 'Lee West' is in Lee-on-the-Solent (see Figure 1), and located between the Daedalus Conservation Area and the Pier Street Conservation Area.
- 1.3 This SPD considers Lee West to be an 'Area of Special Character', which is an area with distinctive character or quality. The document will assist with fully understanding what is considered special about the area, and offer guidance as to how its character can be protected through the planning process. While areas of special character are not of sufficient architectural or historical interest to achieve Conservation Area status, they are recognised as areas which are suitable for additional and detailed character assessment to help guide future development.
- 1.4 The importance of protecting additional Areas of Special Character, beyond the existing Marine Parade Area (designated in 2007), is identified in Policy LP14 (1b) of the Gosport Borough Local Plan (2011-2029). Policy LP10 also recognises the need to protect and enhance important townscape and landscape features within the Borough of Gosport.
- 1.5 As set out in the Borough's Local Development Scheme, the Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will cover the period to 2036. The Council has identified Policy LP10 and LP14 for retention and updating within the emerging Local Plan, which would include reference to the Lee West Area of Special Character.

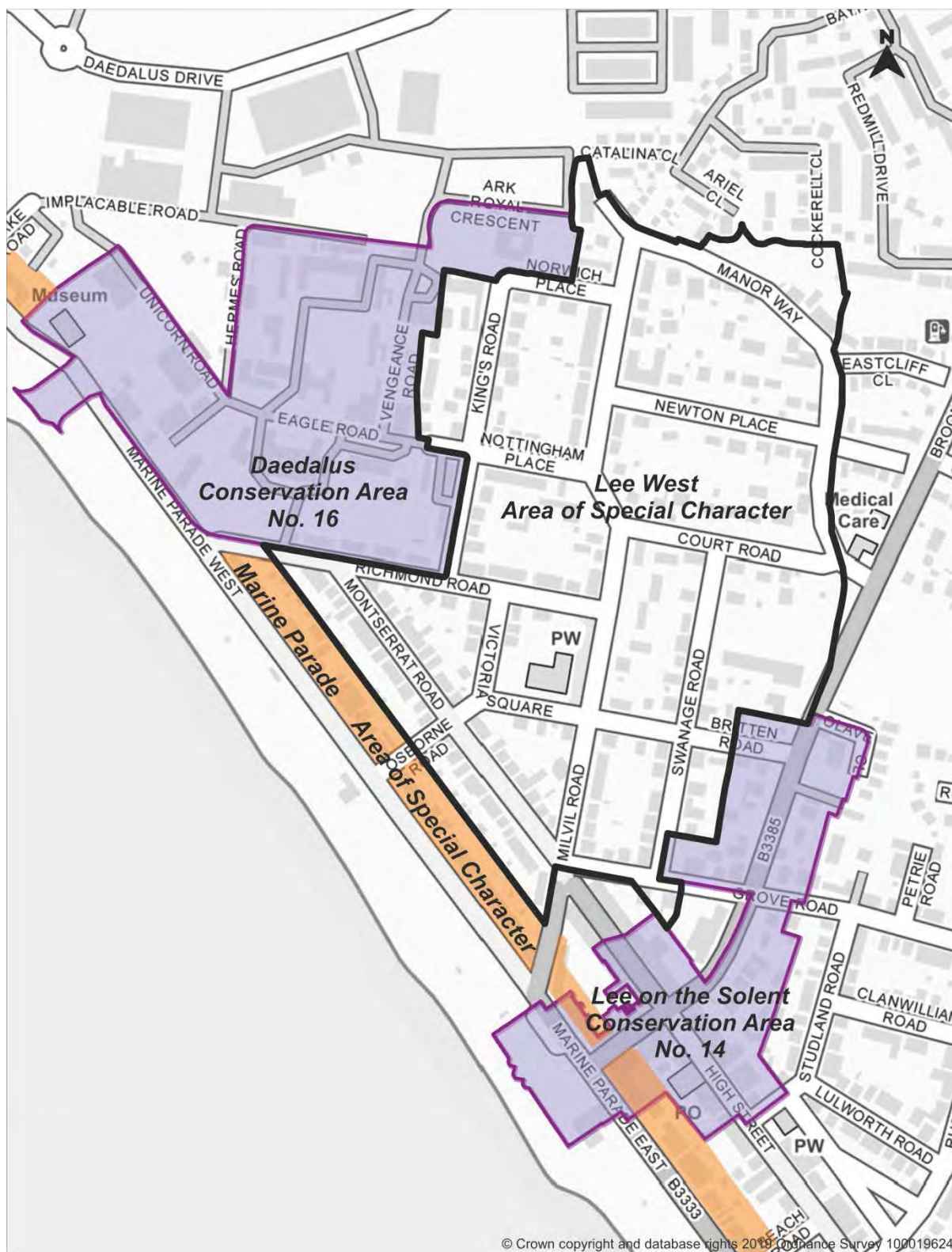


Figure 1 - Lee West Area of Special Character

Historic development of Lee West

- 2.1 The earliest map to show Lee-on-the-Solent with any clarity dates to 1610. It shows Manor Way running north from the coast, then diverting north-west to follow its existing route, prior to reverting to a northerly direction as it cut across what is now Solent Airfield, Daedalus. To the west of Manor Way the land is split into large fields.



Figure 2 - 1774 map of Lee West

- 2.2 This layout had barely altered by the date of the first detailed plan produced in 1774 (Figure 2). This more accurately illustrates the field boundaries with a regular grid of fields that in their form may be Medieval or even pre-Roman in origin. By 1774 one or two small cottages are shown beyond the core settlement: one of which survives as No. 47 Manor Way. The Ordnance Survey plan of 1886 shows little change from this earlier plan.
- 2.3 The newly formed Lee-on-the-Solent grew from the Lee Farm estate, when the entrepreneur Sir John Robinson took on a vision to develop a resort town from Solent farmland. The initial plans were drawn up by John Robinson's son Charles in the early 1880's. The lack of any local development, except farm tracks, gave Charles the freedom to design a new town on a grid layout. His broad streets, open spaces, and a wide promenade would give a fine sea frontage for prestigious properties. Roads were laid out by the late 1880's with names taken from the local 'Lee' and 'Milvil' farms, as well as from the Robinson's Swanage connections (such as 'Newton', the family home). Additional names were taken from local royal connections, including Victoria and Osborne.

2.4 Building plots were a generous regular shape and sold in 48 auctions from the 1880s to early 1900s (Figure 3). Victoria Square was earmarked for a church, while plots back from the seafront were identified for commercial properties bounded by the residential street of 'Cambridge' to the east, and 'Montserrat' to the west: thus the shape of the town was born. The auction particulars required that plots had to be fenced off within six months, with fences "no less than four foot in height" (1.2m). There was also a requirement that properties were built on a fixed building line, set back behind front gardens.

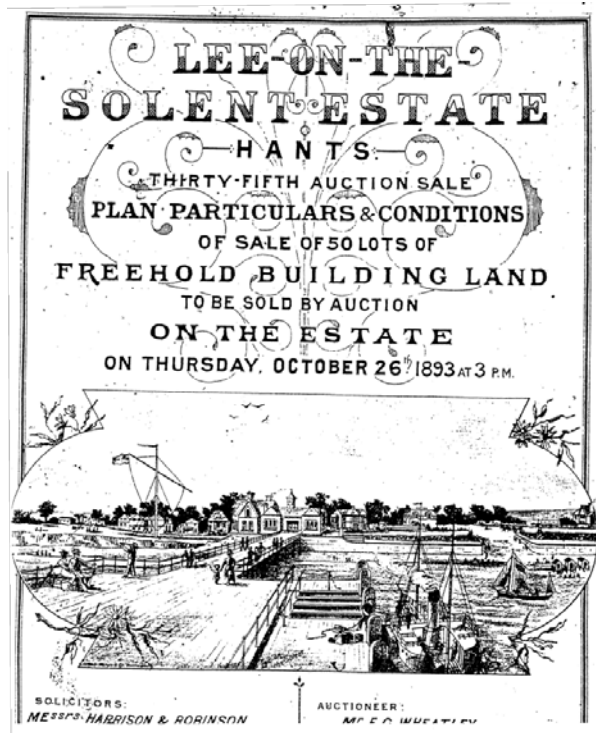


Figure 3 - 1893 Land Auction booklet

- 2.5 In 1901 the Lee Improvements Committee was formed (the forerunner of the Lee Residents Association) and they became important in encouraging the Parish Council and District Council to develop services such as sewage disposal and street lighting.
- 2.6 Estate Plans, produced when individual plots were put up for auction, show how extensive the Robinson's investment was. At its heart they developed the shops and hotel in the High Street and Pier Street area, as well as a rail link, a pier, and two large areas of parkland on Marine Parade. Beyond this core, extensive areas of new roads were laid out. The Robinson's may also have personally developed a handful of notable buildings as part of their wider strategy to attract investment into the area.
- 2.7 To the west of central Lee is Victoria Square, which was established by the Robinsons as a natural focal point for the new settlement. A temporary tin church was placed on this green until such point as the surrounding development attracted the need for a more permanent structure. Subsequently the requisition of a large area of the land west of Lee by the military changed the shape of the expanding town, with future development spreading north and east of Victoria Square.

- 2.8 The two southernmost roads within the new estate of streets were aligned parallel to the seafront (Marine Parade West and Montserrat Road); to their north they were aligned at roughly 45 degrees to the seafront. This new grid of roads filled the area between the coast and Manor Way, whilst retaining the meandering course of this latter ancient road. Figure 4 highlights the layout of the settlement by 1928.
- 2.9 The repeated auctions indicate that sales were not immediately forthcoming and the First World War undoubtedly stalled the initial aspirations of the Robinsons. During the First World War the Lee area was identified as an excellent location for the development of a seaplane base, which later became known as HMS Daedalus.



Figure 4 - 1928 aerial photograph of Lee West (*Britain From Above* website)

- 2.10 The interwar years saw the greatest period of development, with some excellent examples in the Art Deco style (such as Eric Andrewes and Cyril Bagley's Art Deco houses on Milvil Road (shown in Figure 5), with flat roofs and metal framed windows). Local architect Trevor Tatham - later a Lee Alderman - designed numerous buildings across the area, in which he developed a range of styles that varied with developer's tastes. Almost all of the buildings continued to follow traditional hipped or pitched roof designs in a mixture of styles: including mock-timber framing, red-brick, pebble-dash, or painted renders. June 1933 saw the opening of St Faith's Parish Church, replacing the temporary tin church. Figure 6 identifies the layout of the settlement by 1937.
- 2.11 In Lee West, the roads are predominantly long and straight, lined with grass verges, and with many street trees. The buildings are nearly all set back on their plots, allowing a front as well as rear garden, often with a lawn, garage and outbuildings. These design features reflect the historical development detailed above, with more

substantial residences on generous plots on Court Road, Grove Road and Newton Place.



Figure 5 - Art Deco houses on Milvil Road

2.12 By the late 1950s some of the original plot dimensions had altered, but the layout remained fixed and has subsequently changed little. Post-war development has witnessed a gradual in-filling of the remaining plots.

2.13 Figure 7 provides an aerial overview of Lee West from the 1970s, while Figure 8 shows the historical development of Lee West, as it is seen today.

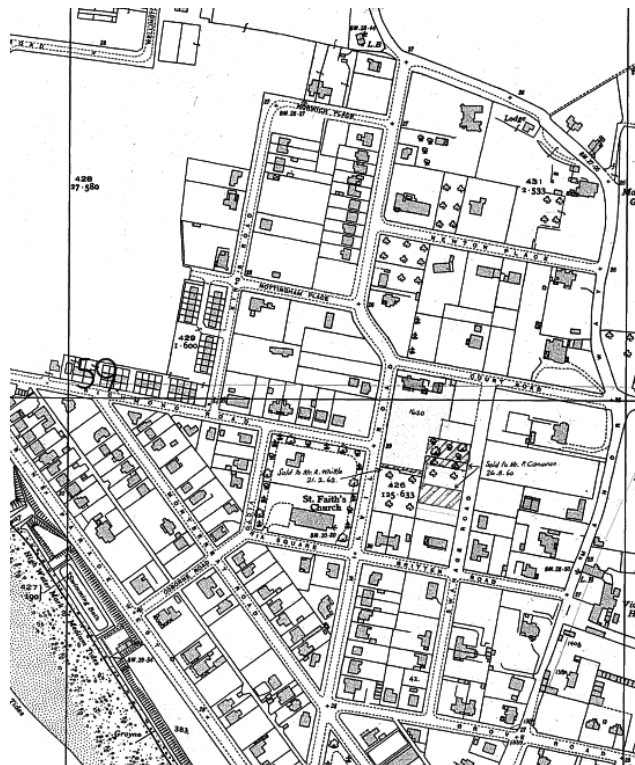


Figure 6 - 1937 plan of Lee West



Figure 7 - 1976 aerial view of Lee West, looking north

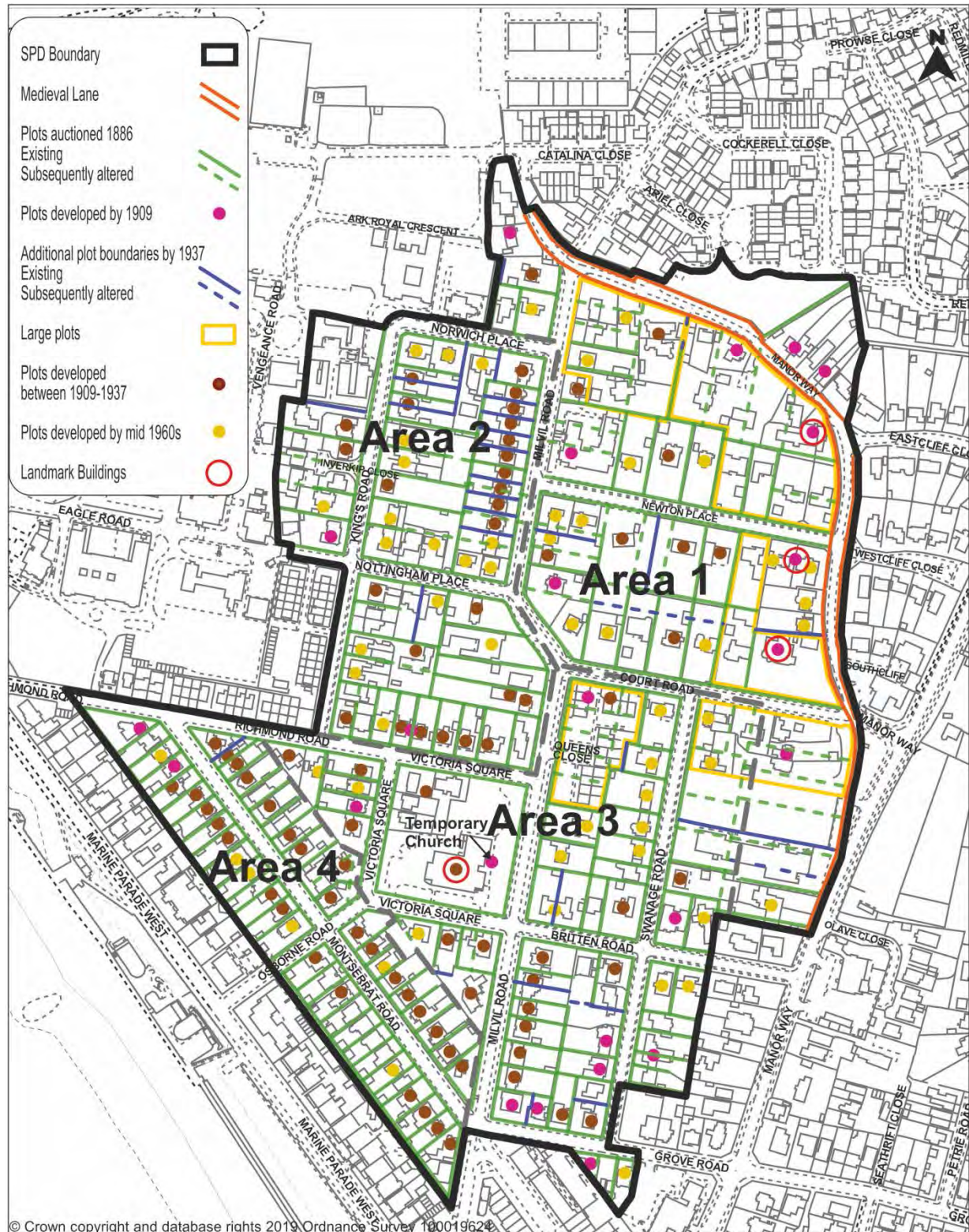


Figure 8 - The development of Lee West showing the significant survival of the 1880s plots

Policy position

- 3.1 This Supplementary Planning Document links with policies within the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (GBLP), which was adopted in October 2015. This updated Local Plan contains a specific policy on Areas of Special Character, Policy LP14, which makes provision to identify new Areas of Special Character. In addition Policy LP10 seeks to protect and enhance important townscape and landscape features within the Borough. Extracts of these policies are reproduced below:

Policy LP14: AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER (extract)

1. The Borough Council will aim to:

- a) protect the identified qualities of a designated Area of Special Character; and
- b) identify additional 'Areas of Special Character' where there is appropriate justification.

Policy LP10: DESIGN (extract)

2. Proposals will be permitted within the urban area as defined on the Policies Map, provided that:

Development form

- a) It has a high quality appearance in terms of scale, setting, layout, massing, landscaping, and appearance including details and materials;

Public realm and open space

- b) it provides, or is accessible to, high quality public spaces;
- c) it incorporates measures to protect and enhance biodiversity and landscape features;
- d) it will not significantly prejudice important townscape and landscape features;
- e) it will protect public views of important landscape and townscape features;

Safe and high quality neighbourhoods

- j) it creates a safe environment where crime and disorder and fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- k) it does not cause harm by reason of:
 - i) loss of light, privacy or outlook;
 - ii) noise, light pollution, vibration, smell, or air pollution; or
 - iii) other adverse impacts;

- 3.2 The Council intends to retain and update Policies LP10 and LP14 in the emerging Local Plan. This will include making a specific policy reference to the Lee West Area of Special Character SPD.
- 3.3 The Council adopted a Design Guidance SPD in 2014. While the provisions within the Design SPD will apply to all new proposals, there are a number of themes which are of particular relevance to this document, including guidance on:
- Integrating proposals within the existing pattern of development (Scale - Grain and Massing).
 - Using boundary treatments which are appropriate to the local area (Boundary Structures).
 - Ensuring car parking does not visually dominate the public realm (Key Design Principle 11).
 - Providing safe, accessible and convenient waste and cycle storage spaces in new developments (Key Design Principle 12).
 - Using scale, form, design and materials to respond positively to the defining characteristics of an area (Key Design Principle 13).
- 3.4 Appendix A of the Design SPD (2014) lays out a 'Key Design Principles Checklist'¹ with accompanying questions which form a useful set of key design guidelines that inform appropriate development. The Lee West SPD is designed to highlight key characteristics which are specifically relevant to the area. These characteristics will need to be considered by applicants for proposals in the Lee West area, in addition to the basic principles set out in the Design SPD (2014).
- 3.5 In line with Policies LP10 and LP14, applicants for proposals in the Lee West Area will be expected to set out how their development would protect, and where possible, enhance the qualities of the Area of Special Character, as identified by this SPD. In addition, applicants for proposals adjacent to Lee West will be expected to identify how their development has had regard to the setting of the Area of Special Character.**

¹ <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/planning-section/local-development-framework/supplementary-planning-documents/design>

Key characteristics and design guidance

Overview

- 4.1 The key characteristics within the area of Lee West, largely set by the Robinsons, were intended to ensure:
- Detached / semi-detached properties (larger in scale towards the north and east of the area).
 - A clear rhythm in the separation distances between the many buildings along the roads.
 - Massing: universally below 3 storeys (there is only one fully 3 storey building in Area 1 of recent date).
 - Bordered front and back gardens with boundary walls, fences or hedges.
 - A predominance of wide streets with grass verges and trees.
 - Buildings largely set back a uniform distance from the footpath.
- 4.2 In addition the following design principles have become established:
- Roof styles are universally hipped, gabled or pitched above eaves height (with the exception of the handful of distinct Art Deco buildings).
 - Plot arrangement with limited loss of front gardens to hard surfacing, successfully incorporating parking, lawns or shrubs.
- 4.3 Street trees play an important role in enhancing the character of the area in addition to their ecological value. The Borough Council aims to work with Hampshire County Council, which is responsible for street trees, to encourage their retention and replacement. Wherever possible, additional and appropriate street trees will be encouraged.
- 4.4 There are a number of existing Tree Preservation Orders in the area (see Figure 10), and where other trees are of a suitable quality, these will be considered for inclusion within future Tree Preservation Orders.
- 4.5 Two areas are defined as protected open space with Lee West: the setting of St Faiths Church, which includes many trees with Tree Preservation Orders, and the green space formed by the Tennis Club. Both of these areas are protected by Local Plan Policies LP35 and LP41.

- 4.6 Figures 9-11 are a series of plans showing key characteristics in Lee West. Figure 9 shows the storey heights in Lee West, which range from 1 storey bungalows to 3 storeys townhouses (0.5 of a storey is where accommodation is built within the hipped, pitched or gables roof space, usually with the incorporation of dormer windows or roof lights). Figure 10 highlights the substantial levels of green infrastructure in the area, composed of grass verges, trees and hedges, as well as areas of open space. Figure 11 shows the predominant building line within Lee West, including areas where frontages could be re-established to reinforce the character of the area.

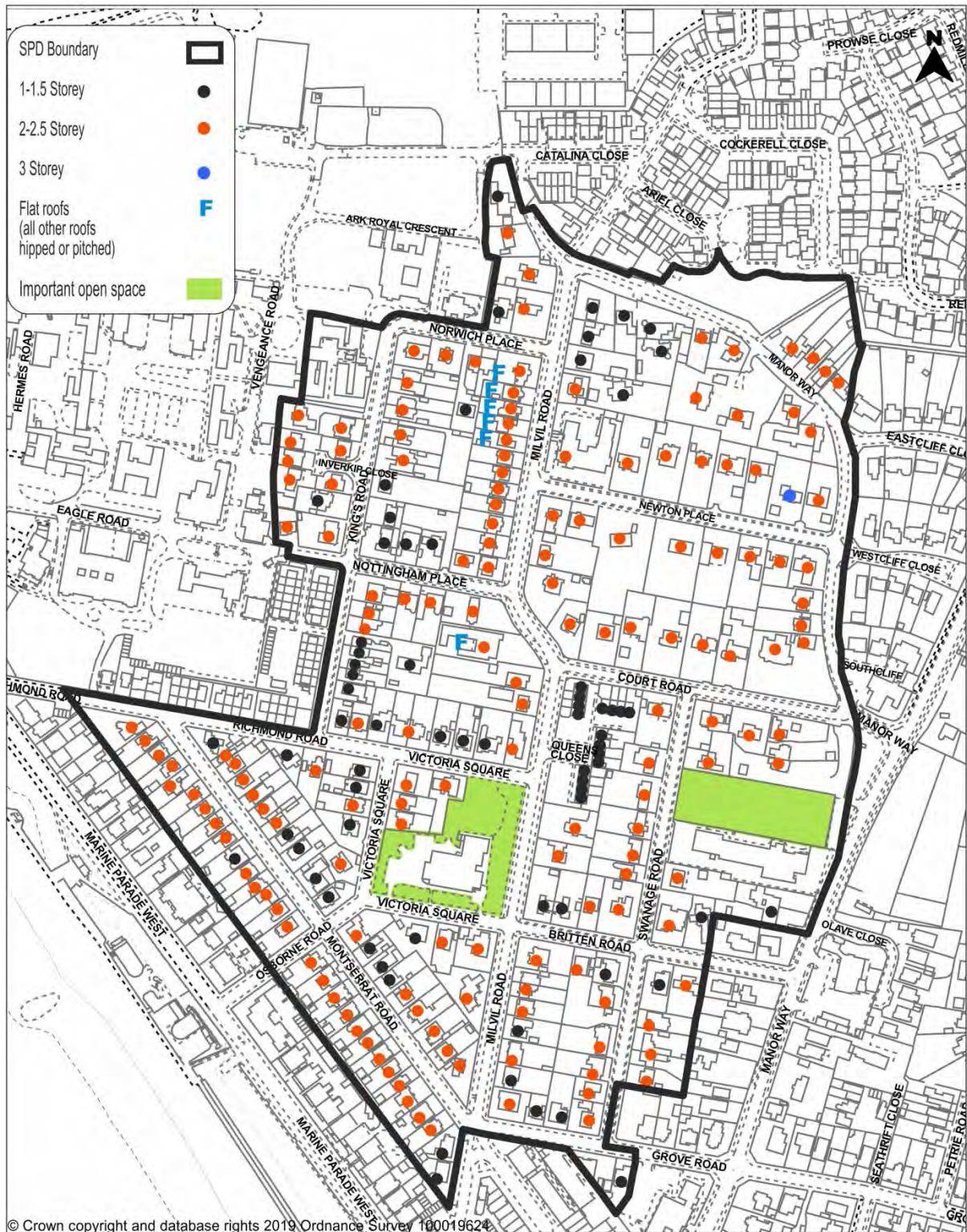


Figure 9 - Storey heights in Lee West



Figure 10 - Green infrastructure in Lee West

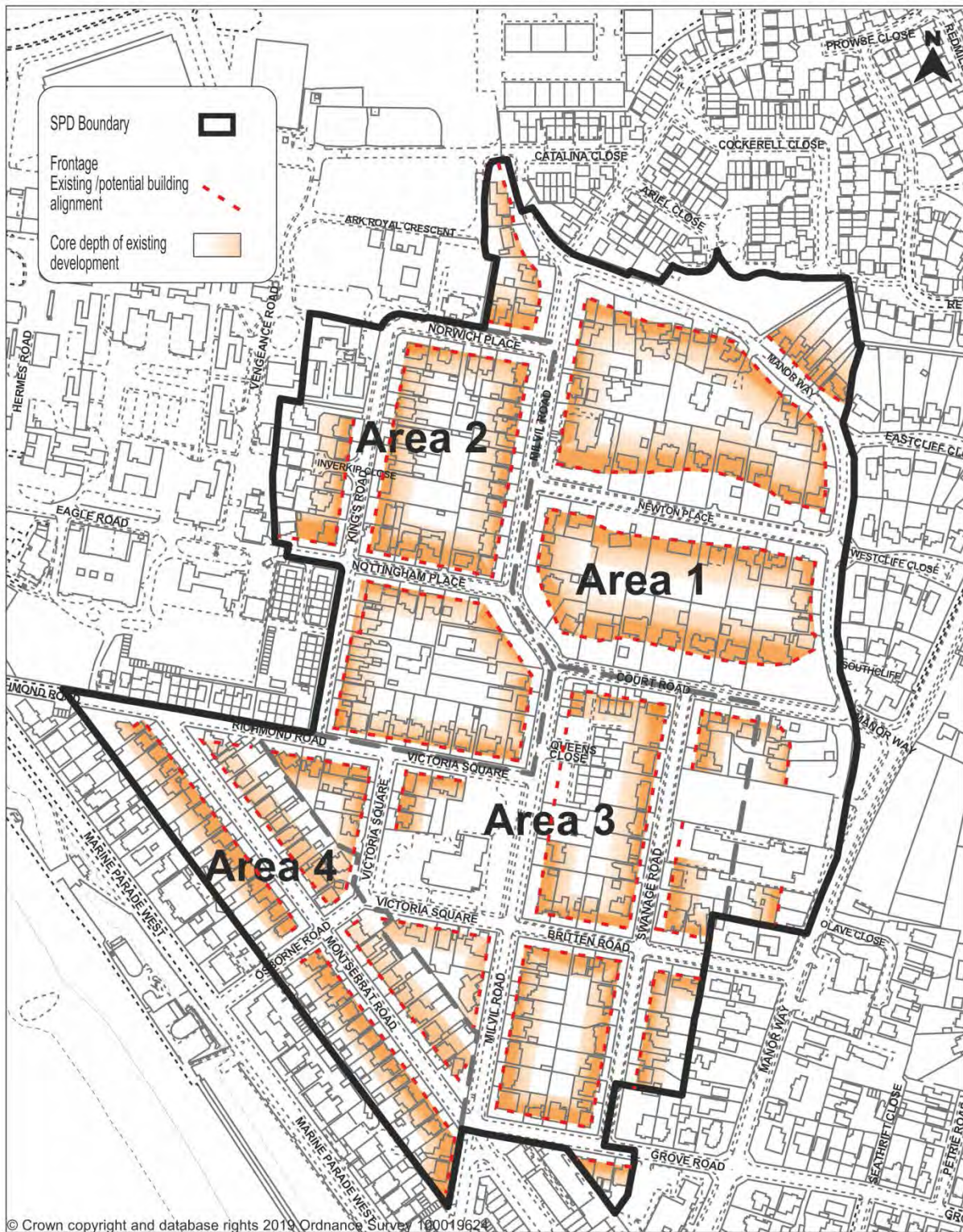


Figure 11 - Plan showing building lines and green spaces

4.7 In light of more recent development in the Lee West area, it is considered appropriate to provide further design guidance to protect and enhance the key characteristics and design principles which are integral to the special character of Lee West. To assist with highlighting their characteristics, Lee West area has been divided into four

smaller areas, which have their own distinct character (see Figure 12). These are explained in more detail in the following section.

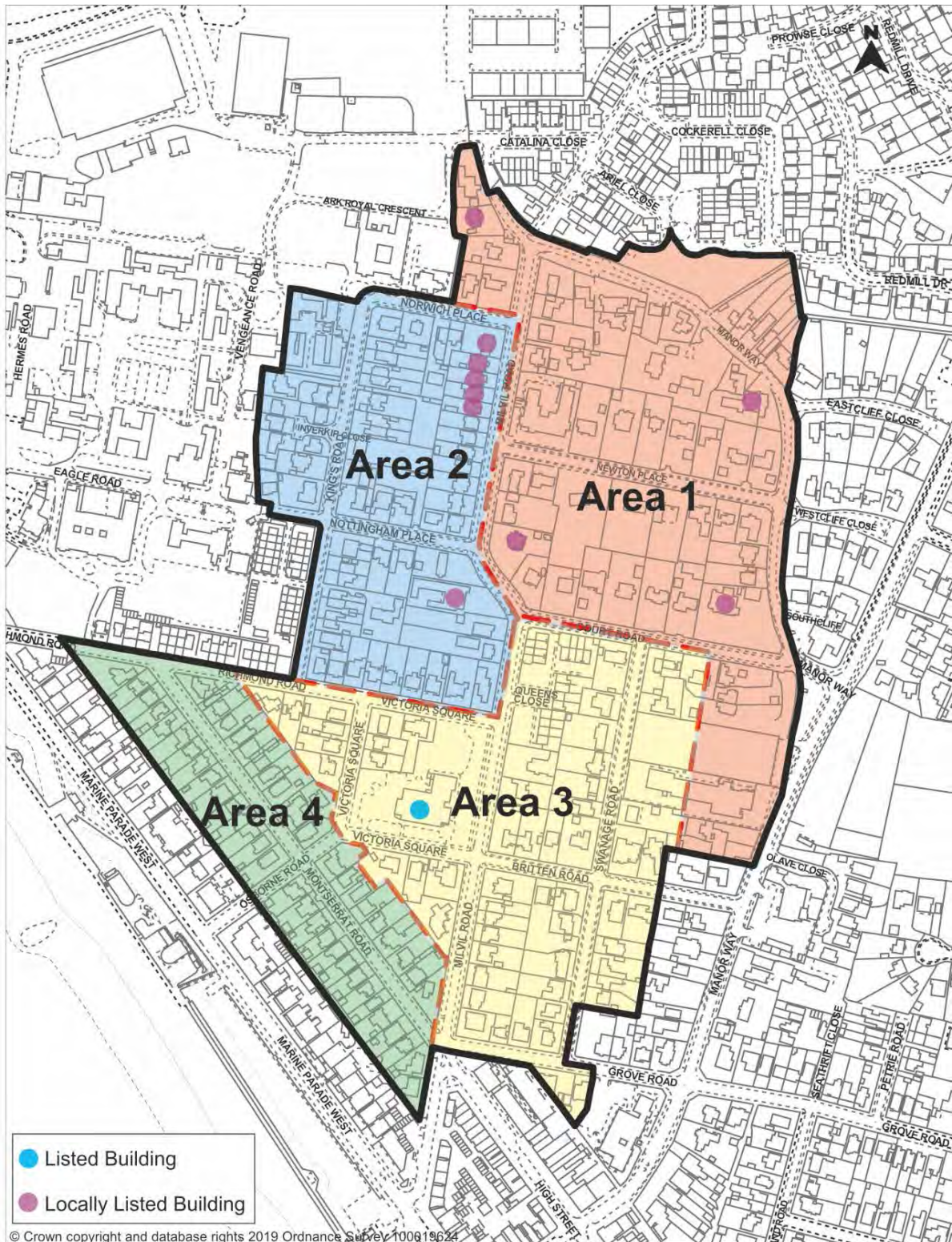


Figure 12 - The four smaller areas of distinct character

Area 1: Manor Way to Court Road / Milvil Road

- 5.1 The course of Manor Way reflects the meandering medieval route that led from Lee, northwards (see Figure 13). Typical of well-established ancient routes it is characterised by high hedges, a higher density of trees, and loosely defined grass verges. A more varied built form represents several phases of development: many of which are screened by hedgerows and partially nestling in the natural landscape. Manor Way is the only road in the area that is not straight, and neatly defines the north-eastern boundary to the area of special character.

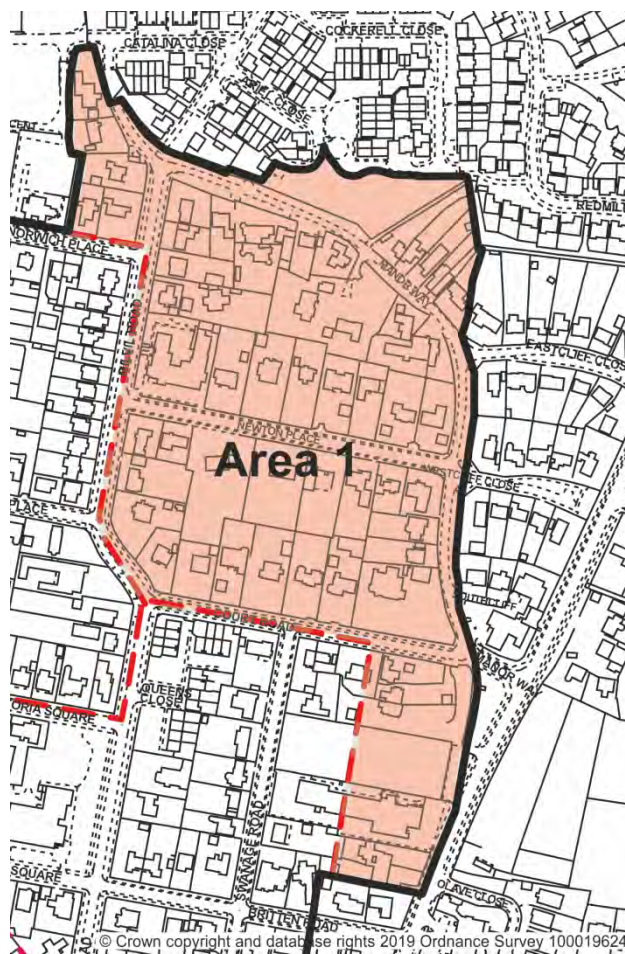


Figure 13 - Area 1 of Lee West

- 5.2 When the vicinity of Manor Way began to be developed in the later Victorian period it soon diverted from typical plot widths to a few larger plots with large volume properties. This character subsequently set the scene for the area to the east of Milvil Road and north of Court Road where larger plots and a lower density of development predominate and follow a more irregular building layout: albeit with frontages largely set well back from property boundaries (noticeably so along Newton Place and the north side of Court Road).
- 5.3 Trees, hedgerows and larger gardens play a significant part in the character of the area (see Figure 14), as does the wider spacing of many of the properties. Where hedgerows do not define boundaries, higher walls or fences are common. The grass verges and street trees add to the character of the area (Figure 15).
- 5.4 New development should avoid sub-dividing plots to create too high a density, and be mindful of the harmful impact multi-occupancy can risk through the knock on effect of parking, hard landscaping, loss of green space or defined frontage boundaries.

- 5.5 Locally Listed dwellings (No.71 Manor Way, 42 and 47 Milvil Road, and No.1 Court Road) play an important part in reflecting the historic interest of the area and its origins in the late 19th Century. Where planning permission is required for works affecting these properties, the policy position stresses the importance of protecting their individual character and setting.
- 5.6 All buildings have hipped, pitched or gables roofs and only one is fully three storeys in height (i.e. with a full third floor above eaves line, not a floor level partly built into the roof pitches). There is a variety of external elevation treatments, with good examples of well-considered red facing brickwork, clay tile roofs, mock-timber framing, and the use of render.

Key characteristics

- Heavier tree/hedge cover.
- Medieval Lane.
- Looser definition to frontages (except in parts of Milvil Road).
- Larger plots.
- Larger houses at low density.
- Properties are almost all 1 to 2.5 storey, with only one fully 3 storeys.
- Regular sized plots largely from 1886 sales (some merged to create even larger plots), but with more irregularity on Manor Way.
- Hipped, pitched or gabled roofs.
- Locally Listed landmark houses (part of original phase).
- Grass verges with street trees (except Manor Way).
- Boundary treatment: mix of walls and fences (often around 1.5-1.8 m in height) as well and hedges.
- Front gardens.



Figure 14 - Manor Way, looking east



Figure 15 - Newton Place, showing boundary walls, verges and mature trees

Enhancement opportunities

- Encourage soft landscaping and street trees.
- More Tree Preservation Orders could be considered.
- Avoid the loss of front gardens to car parking. Where hard landscaping for parking is considered appropriate, it should remain a modest percentage of each front garden space: this being especially important in this area with its larger gardens.
- New development to follow the established spacing, rhythm and scale.

Area 2: Milvil Road to Daedalus Conservation Area

- 5.7 The layout of this area was mostly fixed by the 1880s, with modest change by the 1930s: thereafter its plan form has remained largely static, as shown in Figure 16. The plots and spacing of the properties are regular (those on the west side of Milvil Road being more compressed). Other positive characteristics include the retention of many front boundary walls and fences (on average lower than in Area 1, and most are around 0.5 m in height).



Figure 16 - Area 2 of Lee West

- 5.8 All properties are between 1 and 2.5 storeys in height and, with the exception of the unique group of Art Deco buildings on Milvil Road (Figure 17), all have hipped, pitched or gabled roofs. Properties are nearly all developed to a uniform set-back depth from their front boundaries, with the main built mass of each property developed within the front half of the plots.
- 5.9 The area benefits from a number of mature gardens, grass verges, and some prominent trees. Enhanced soft landscaping will be encouraged through the planning process. The loss of boundary walls, fences, hedgerows and front gardens would erode the special character of the area.
- 5.10 The Art Deco properties are on the Local List of buildings of historic or architectural importance and make a distinct and positive contribution to the character of the area and are a well-known local landmark. Where planning permission is required there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and reinforcing this distinct character.



Figure 17 - Art Deco properties on Milvil Road

Key characteristics

- Medium density.
- Plots largely of 1886, with some fixed by 1930s.
- Regular pattern of plots and regular spacing of properties.
- Properties set back on a consistent depth from the footpath.
- Properties largely developed within the front half of plots with regular sized front gardens.
- Mature gardens some notable trees.
- Verges and street trees.
- Boundary walls and fences, most around 0.5m in height.
- Some Locally Listed Art Deco properties on Milvil Road with flat roofs.
- All other properties hipped, pitched or gabled roofs.
- All properties 1 to 2.5 storey, domestic scale, with some moderately larger buildings on some corners (Figure 18).



Figure 18 - Prominent corner property on King's Road

Enhancement opportunities

- Encourage retention of front boundary walls and fences, at an appropriate height.
- Avoid the loss of front gardens to car parking.
- Encourage soft landscaping and street trees.
- Consider Tree Preservation Orders, where relevant.
- Reinforce rhythm and alignment of predominant building plots.
- Ensure all new buildings fit within the established scale.

Area 3: Victoria Square to Swanage Road

- 5.11 The heart of the development to the west side of Lee town centre was Victoria Square: laid out by the Robinsons in the 1880s to create a community focus (Figure 19). The plots around the square and across this area are largely regular in size following the pattern established in the 1880s (excepting the opening out of some plots to create the group of single story bungalows towards the corner of Milvil Road and Court Road). Properties are once again nearly all set back from established boundaries with walls, hedges or fences,



Figure 19 - Area 3 of Lee West

and except in parts of Victoria Square and on Grove Road, grass verges dominate the streetscape.

- 5.12 All buildings are between 1 and 2.5 storeys in height with the single landmark building being St Faiths Church (Listed Grade II). The setting of the church, with its many trees and green open space (Figure 20), is without doubt one of the most important attributes of the area and every opportunity to protect or enhance this setting is key to preserving the role and function of this historic space within the wider development.
- 5.13 There are a notable group of buildings along the south side of Victoria Square, and southern part of Milvil Road, which integrate mock-timber framing within part of each building. Once again, buildings largely follow a consistent rhythm in spacing (with the exception of the east side of Milvil Road, from Britten Road to Court Road, where future development could consider re-establishing the wider, more established pattern of development).
- 5.14 Trees and soft landscaping play an important role across this area and the 'wall to wall' hard landscaping of front gardens and the loss of clearly defined boundaries marked by walls, fences or hedges, could, in time, significantly harm the special character of the area.

Key characteristics

- Medium density.
- Regular plots largely of 1880s origin, with some established by 1930s.
- Notable open spaces (Victoria Square and the tennis courts).
- Prominent groups of trees in Victoria Square and south of tennis courts.
- Mature gardens with a mix of established shrubs.
- Established boundaries marked by hedges, fences or walls: generally lower to frontages (See Figure 21).
- Verges with street trees, except on parts of Victoria Square and Grove Road.
- Overall a regular depth to frontages, and properties largely developed on the front half of plots with regular sized front gardens.
- Landmark building Grade II Listed, St Faith's Church, and surrounding open space.
- Roof forms universally hipped, pitched, or gabled above eaves.
- Notable group of mock-timber detailing to properties on the southern side of Victoria Square and southern part of Milvil Road.
- All properties built to a domestic scale between 1 and 2.5 storeys in height.



Figure 20 - View down Milvil Road with St Faith's Church and Victoria Square to the left



Figure 21 - View of Swanage Road, showing building form and boundary walls

Enhancement opportunities

- Retain front boundaries and gardens.
- Avoid the entire loss of front gardens to car parking.
- Encourage soft landscaping and street trees.
- Consider further Tree Preservation Orders, where relevant.
- Reinforce building alignments and rhythm of historic development plots.

Area 4: Monserrat Road and Osborne Road

5.15 Monserrat Road has a tightly defined character of buildings built within the 1880s plots: with only one plot added by the 1930s. As shown in Figure 22, this creates a very balanced and well defined character in the rhythm of the layout; spacing between properties; uniform layout of plots (with a high level of consistency in how far the buildings are set back from their frontages); and with the mass of each property located on the front half of each site (excepting the triangular shaped corner plots).



Figure 22 - Area 4 of Lee West

- 5.16 No building is above 2.5 storeys in height, and hipped, pitched or gables roofs are universally evident. With a number of properties developed before 1937 there is a distinct pre-war character to the built form, with steep roofs being common.
- 5.17 The area retains many front gardens and boundaries with walls, hedges or fences (see Figures 23 and 24). Monserrat Road marks the distinct change from the Marine Parade Area of Special Character (which has larger volume buildings), and has a very strongly defined traditional residential character which naturally leading towards the key focal point of Victoria Square.
- 5.18 The area would benefit from more trees and soft landscaping, and future applications should carefully consider the importance of integrating soft landscaping to help retain and reinforce the characteristics of the Area of Special Character.

Key characteristics

- All but one plot boundary established by 1886.
- Regular sized plots.
- Regular form of buildings.
- All roofs hipped, gabled or pitched above eaves.
- Nearly all properties set back to a uniform depth.
- Most plots defined by front garden walls or fences (often between 0.5m and 1m in height).
- All properties built to a domestic scale between 1 and 2.5 storeys in height.
- The main mass of each property is developed on the front half of plots (except the triangular corner plots), each with largely uniform gardens.



Figure 23 - View north-west down Montserrat Road



Figure 24 - Building form and boundaries in Montserrat Road

Enhancement opportunities

- Avoid the entire loss of front gardens to car parking.
- Encourage soft landscaping and trees.
- Re-establish missing front boundary walls or fences, between 0.5m and 1m in height as appropriate.
- Ensure future development follows the pattern of the existing established built form in scale, mass, and rhythm.

Conclusion

- 6.1 This SPD is designed to help recognise and reinforce the distinct character of Lee West. Development proposals that help to retain and enhance this special character, subject to all other planning requirements, are likely to be supported through the planning process.
- 6.2 Prior to embarking on an extension, alteration, or new build it is always important to check whether planning permission is required for the works being considered. The General Permitted Development Order does allow for a degree of development without the need for permission. Where this presents risks to the Area of Special Character future controls may be considered necessary to limit harm. However, all applications will need to consider the SPD, and will be judged on how they positively contribute to the existing character of the area, whether they have no noticeable impact, or whether they are considered harmful.
- 6.3 Planning applications within the Lee West area will need to set out how their proposal would protect, and where possible, enhance the qualities of the Lee West Area of Special Character, and how they have had regard to the latest Local Plan design policies and the provisions within the Council's Design SPD (see paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4). Applicants for proposals adjacent to Lee West will be expected to identify how their development has had regard to the setting of the Area of Special Character.**

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

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Gosport Borough Council
Town Hall, High Street,
Gosport,
Hampshire,
PO12 1EB

Tel: (023) 9258 4242

www.gosport.gov.uk



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