

# Colchester

## Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Study Area 4:

### **High Street (East) and The Castle, East Hill and East Street**



A detailed historical map of Colchester Town Centre, showing streets, buildings, and landmarks. Labels on the map include 'Young Men's Christian Association', 'Fire', 'Roman Tesselated Pavement found', 'Holy Trinity Church (Rudory) (Site for 400)', 'Roman Tesselated Pavement found', and 'T R'.

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### **High Street** (East) and **The Castle,** **East Hill** and **East Street**

Prepared by:

**J Mansell Jagger** MA (Cantab) DipTP MRTPI IHBC  
Planning & Heritage Consultant  
[manselljagger@btinternet.com](mailto:manselljagger@btinternet.com)

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Design & Layout:  
**Tristram Ariss** BA (Hons)  
Freelance Design Consultant  
[tristram@arissdesign.com](mailto:tristram@arissdesign.com)



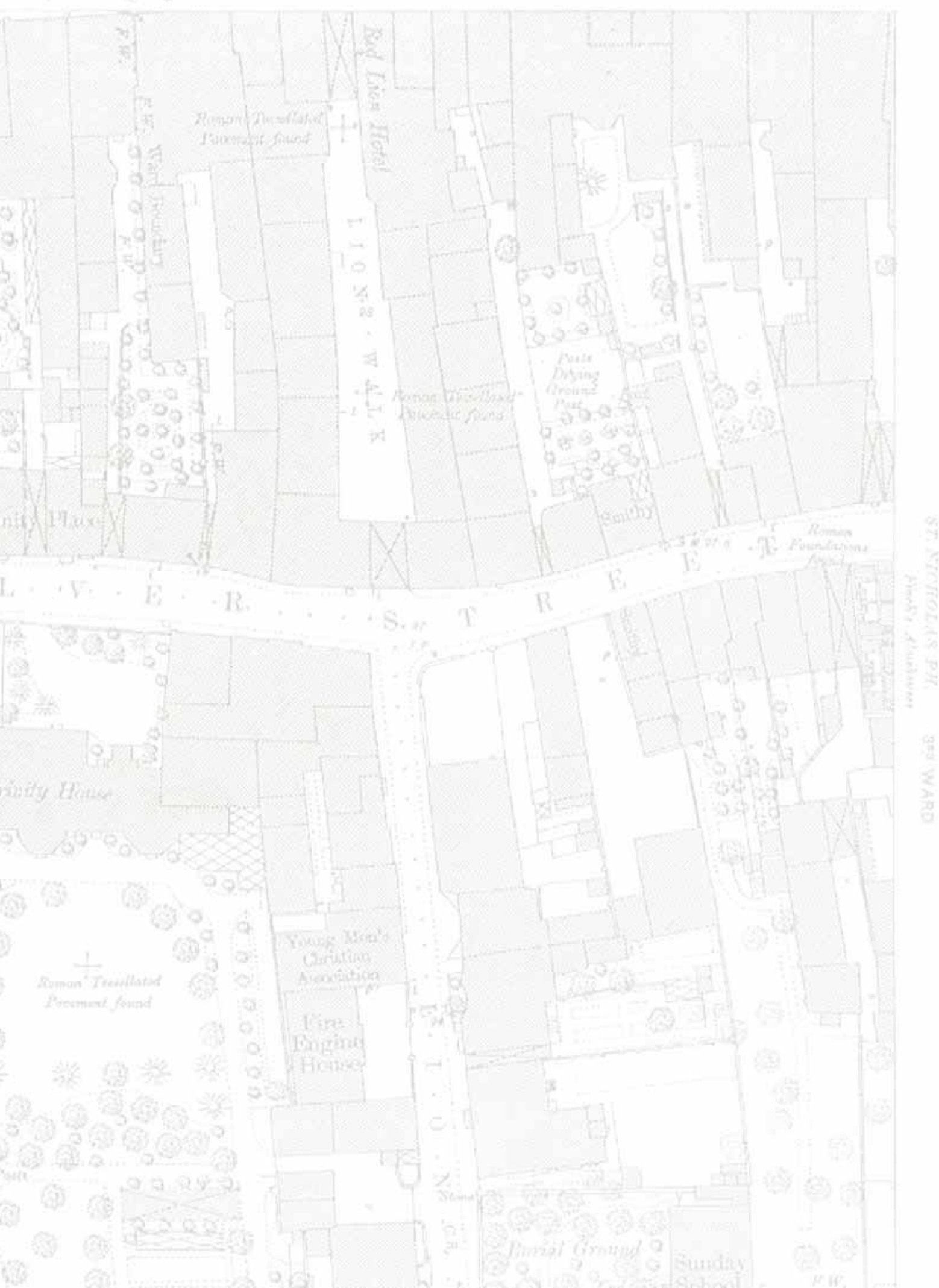
# Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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## High Street (East) and The Castle, East Hill and East Street

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## Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area

### 1.0 Introduction

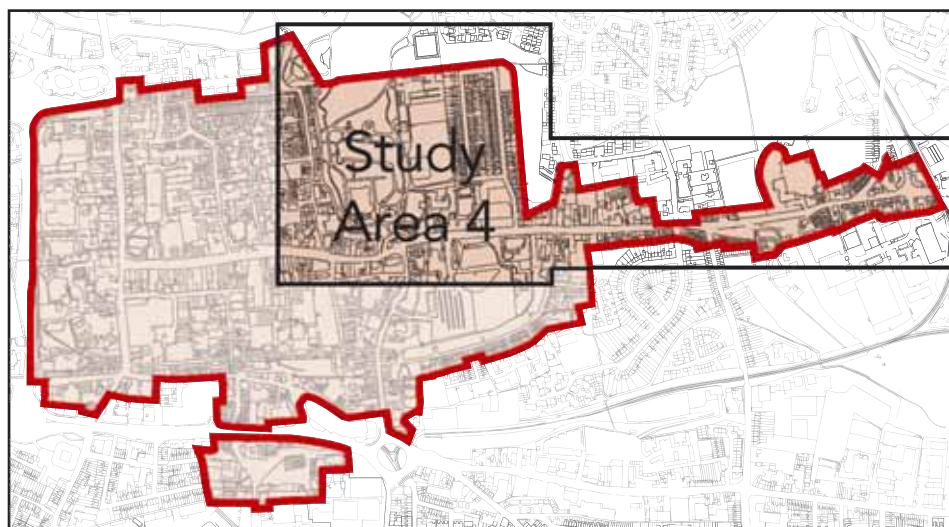


Figure 1: Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area

- 1.1 The Colchester Conservation Area No.1 was first designated in 1968, with amendments in 1978 and 1980. It covers the whole of the ancient walled town and includes parts the historic extra-mural settlements immediately outside the walls, including East Hill, Abbey Gate, St John's Green and St Botolph's.
- 1.2 *'Colchester, though not the county town, is without doubt the foremost town of Essex, and it is, what is more, a town richer than most in the country in traditions and survivals of a distant past.'* (Pevsner)
- 1.3 The Conservation Area includes the whole of the Roman town. Substantial lengths of the 1st century town walls survive, including the very impressive remains of the great west gate, known as the Balcerne Gate. The early date of these walls makes them unique in Roman Britain. However, apart from the town walls, the Roman remains are almost wholly below ground level and the character of the historic town now largely derives from the substantial number of surviving buildings of mediaeval, post-mediaeval, Georgian and Victorian date.
- 1.4 A distinctive feature of Colchester, particularly evident from the north, is its hilltop setting and close relationship with the valley of the River Colne. The High Street runs east west along the spine, with a grid of streets sloping down the hill to north and south. The Conservation Area is bounded on the south and west sides by modern dual carriageway roads, which separate St John's Green from the rest of the Area. St Peter's Street, flanked by modern development, runs along the northwest side, but on the northeast the Lower Park extends the open spaces of Castle Park well beyond the town walls. On the east side, the Conservation Area extends down East Hill and over the River Colne to East Street.
- 1.5 The social and economic development of the town centre can be readily traced through its historic buildings and structures. Roman town walls, Norman Castle, mediaeval churches, abbey and priory, mediaeval inns, the 'Dutch Quarter', Georgian town houses, and Victorian and Edwardian commercial and civic buildings, reflect the main periods of Colchester's prosperity over nearly two millennia from its first establishment as a Roman *colonia*. The Royal Commission lists 264 houses as wholly or partly built before 1714. There are a large number of good quality Georgian houses and a variety of Victorian buildings ranging from artisan terrace houses to the flamboyant Town Hall and massive 'Jumbo' water tower.

- 1.6 Like many towns, Colchester suffered from poor quality town centre redevelopment in the post-war years, but in recent times the town has demonstrated its ability both to protect its heritage and retain its vitality and significance as a retail centre, by the restoration of historic buildings and the sympathetic incorporation of a number of major developments in the historic core.

## The Conservation Area Appraisal

- 1.7 There are continuing pressures for change and development, which will need to be addressed. Colchester is a town of national significance and it is vital to ensure that its character and appearance are protected and that any new development accords with the principles of preservation and enhancement inherent in its designation as a Conservation Area.
- 1.8 Following guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15 1994), the Borough Council has decided to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal. The purpose of the Appraisal is to describe the historical development and townscape of the area and to assess its special character and significance. It should also draw out any issues that might affect the protection and conservation of the Area.
- 1.9 The Conservation Area covers a large area of diverse character. In order to assess its character and significance in greater detail, the Area is divided into six study areas based on the historic quarters and thoroughfares of the town. The study areas are covered in five separate volumes:
- Vol.1** High Street (West) and The Dutch Quarter
  - Vol.2** North Hill, Head Street and Balcerne Gardens
  - Vol.3** Culver Street, Trinity Street, Scheregate and St John's Green
  - Vol.4** High Street (East) and The Castle. East Hill and East Street.
  - Vol.5** Queen Street, St Botolph's and Vineyard Street Area.
- 1.10 Each volume contains a brief history of the town followed by a more detailed description of the historical development of the study area. This is followed by a street-by-street analysis of the townscape character of the area. A key part of the Appraisal is the statement of significance of the area and its surviving features, above and below ground. Buildings and spaces are classified according to their contribution to the character of the area and the Appraisal concludes with a statement of issues and recommendations for the future of the area.
- 1.11 An appendix sets out the current statutory protection and planning policy for the Conservation Area and includes select references.
- 1.12 Maps are included showing those buildings and spaces that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and those that detract from the area. Additionally, maps are included showing the area as it was in the 1870s at the time of the first large-scale edition of the Ordnance Survey.



## 2.0 Colchester: Historical Development

- 2.1 The origins of the town of Colchester lie in the establishment of a legionary fortress by Claudius after his successful invasion of Britain in AD 42. The site occupied a good defensible position on a spur of land with an east-west ridge, sloping steeply to the River Colne on the north with more gentle slopes to the south and east. On the east side was a large annexe, about a third of the size of the fort, though its purpose is not clear. The fortress and annexe were of identical construction with earthen ramparts and a V-shaped ditch.
- 2.2 Late in the fifth decade the legion was moved to the west of Britain and a *colonia* or chartered town was established in the now redundant fortress. Some of the military buildings were reused, but the legionary defences were filled in and a new street grid laid out, dividing the town into rectangular blocks of property or *insulae*. The annexe was given over to public buildings, including the temple of Claudius and probably a theatre.
- 2.3 The town was almost completely destroyed in the Boudiccan Revolt but rebuilt soon afterwards. Between about AD 65-80, a freestanding masonry wall, the first of its kind in Britain, replaced the earthen ramparts. The new walls and ditch enclosed the site of the fortress and annexe in a great rectangle and had six gates and between twelve and twenty-four towers. The street plan remained much the same as before, but at least one new street was constructed, a north-south street east of the temple, leading to a new south gate. The town appears to have had a piped water supply from an early date.
- 2.4 In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the growing prosperity of the town was marked by the construction of several large, well-appointed town houses and there was a remodelling on a grand scale of the southern side of the precinct of the Temple of Claudius. In the second half of the century the town defences were strengthened by the construction of an earth bank inside the masonry wall.




Figure 2: Roman Colchester in about AD 250

- 2.5 Towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the town, like others in Roman Britain, appears to have entered a period of gradual decline, which was never really to be reversed. In increasingly troubled times, the defences were again improved and the town ditch widened. Many houses were demolished without replacement and the size of the cultivated areas within the walls appears to have significantly increased. The suburbs suffered dramatic decline, partly perhaps through clearance of buildings to improve the town's ability to withstand a siege. Burials now took place much closer to the walls.
- 2.6 In the 4<sup>th</sup> century there was a concentration of occupation along the main street (High Street), with small houses on either side of the street, a pattern that anticipated the later post-Roman town.

- 2.7 The Roman way of life may have continued for some time after the break with the Roman Empire, but the evidence for the first Anglo-Saxon occupation in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century, for example 'sunken-featured buildings', suggests that settlement was not concentrated in any one area but scattered amongst the ruins of the former town. It is possible that, by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, occupation was centred on St Runwald's Church and the lord's hall, close to the centre of today's High Street. The principal Roman streets, such as High Street, North Hill and Head Street, which connected the main gates (East Gate, North Gate and Head Gate), survive to this day. Queen Street connected the High Street with South Gate and to an extent seems to have followed the route of its Roman predecessor.
- 2.8 In 917 Edward the Elder drove out the Danish army that had occupied the town, though there is no trace in the archaeological record of the Danish presence. Edward, like his father Alfred, adopted a policy of creating fortified *burghs* as a way of consolidating his gains and allowing the local people to resist Danish reconquest. The Roman town defences were repaired, new streets laid out and new properties created.
- 2.9 The town continued to develop its commercial role and, sometime in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, High Street was widened to create a market place. This would have involved the realignment of the street and the demolition of frontage properties. Culver Street was laid out as a back street serving the new building plots on the south side. Other separate developments included the creation of Trinity Street, Lion Walk and Long Wyre Street on the south side of the town and East and West Stockwell Streets and the southern end of Maidenburgh Street on the north side.
- 2.10 By the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, Colchester had the status of a borough and was an important administrative and commercial centre. Besides St Runwald's, several other churches had been founded including Holy Trinity, St Peter's, St Nicholas', All Saints' and possibly St James'.
- 2.11 Following the Conquest, the town saw numerous changes under the lordship of the Norman Eudo Dapifer. He used the great podium of the Roman Temple of Claudius as a base for his new Castle and the High Street was diverted southwards to make room for the construction of the bailey bank and ditch, the diversion clearly visible today. He founded St John's Abbey (1095) and the leper hospital at St Mary Magdalen, and restored St Helen's Chapel, which may have stood on the site of a Roman chapel. The parish church of St Giles was founded in the cemetery of the abbey some time in 1171.
- 2.12 St Botolph's Priory was founded between 1100 and 1104 and has the distinction of being the first Augustinian foundation in England. It was formed by a small group of priests who were probably serving an existing minster with its origins in pre-Conquest times. It may even be on the site of a Roman church or *martyrium*. At the Dissolution, the nave of the priory church was preserved and used for parish and civic services for another hundred years.

Figure 3: Colchester in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century



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- 2.13 The overall pattern of streets and building plots established during the late Anglo-Saxon and early mediaeval periods lasted pretty well intact until after the Second World War. However, although the frontages of the principal streets were built up, a considerable amount of land inside the walls was taken up with gardens and other cultivated areas. One substantial area, now the Bus Station and gardens of East Hill House (formerly known as the 'Berry Field'), seems to have remained open since Roman times and was for many centuries the site of St Denis' Fair. The town walls were repaired and strengthened in the 1380s at the time of the Peasants' Revolt.
- 2.14 The surviving, ruined Roman buildings provided a ready-made source of stone and tile for the construction of the principal buildings such as the churches and castle.
- 2.15 In the Middle Ages the prosperity of the town was based on the cloth trade, its markets and the presence of the religious institutions. However, in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries the Black Death dramatically reduced the population of the town and the economy must also have been severely affected by the closure of the Abbey and Priory at the Dissolution in the 1530s. However, the town received a boost with a reinvigorated cloth trade, particularly in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of refugees from the Low Countries fleeing religious persecution. Many of them settled in the area north of the High Street, still known as the 'Dutch Quarter'. They introduced the 'bays and says' for which the town became famous and which were the mainstay of the economy throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.16 A substantial number of houses dating from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries survive in the main streets, particularly in North Hill, Trinity Street, Scheregate, the east end of High Street and East and West Stockwell Streets. A number of suburbs had grown up outside the town walls, for example East Hill which also retains a number of mediaeval and post-mediaeval buildings.
- 2.17 The characteristic buildings of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries are timber-framed, often jettied, with steep-pitched tiled roofs and plastered, gabled fronts. The mediaeval pattern of narrow-fronted 'burgage' plots at right angles to the street can still clearly be seen in several of the main streets including High Street and Long Wyre Street. Many of the mediaeval High Street properties would have had shop with chambers over on the street frontage, with an open hall behind, and further buildings at the rear. Away from the High Street where the pressure on land was less intense, many of the superior houses had halls built parallel to the street with cross wings at one or both ends, sometimes often with projecting (jettied) first floors.
- 2.18 Later, with the introduction of chimneys, open halls were floored in and new houses built with two full storeys, sometimes with continuous jetties. The fashion for jetties continued into the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.19 The Siege of Colchester in the English Civil War resulted in the destruction and damage of many key buildings, including St Botolph's Priory, where the former priory church was almost destroyed. The mediaeval East Gate was damaged in the Siege and cleared away in 1674. In 1722 Daniel Defoe reported that the town 'still mourns in the ruins of a civil war' and referred to its 'battered walls, breaches in the turrets and ruined churches'.
- 2.20 The local tradition of building timber-framed houses, plastered on the outside, continued into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The recovery of the economy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is demonstrated by the number of good quality Georgian houses erected in the principal streets and also in the fashionable 'modernising' of older properties. Red brick was the predominant building material, with plain clay tiles for the roofs, but stucco also became fashionable, particular towards the end of the period. There are good groups of Georgian buildings in East Hill, North Hill, the east end of High Street, Queen Street, East and West Stockwell Streets and Abbey Gate Street.

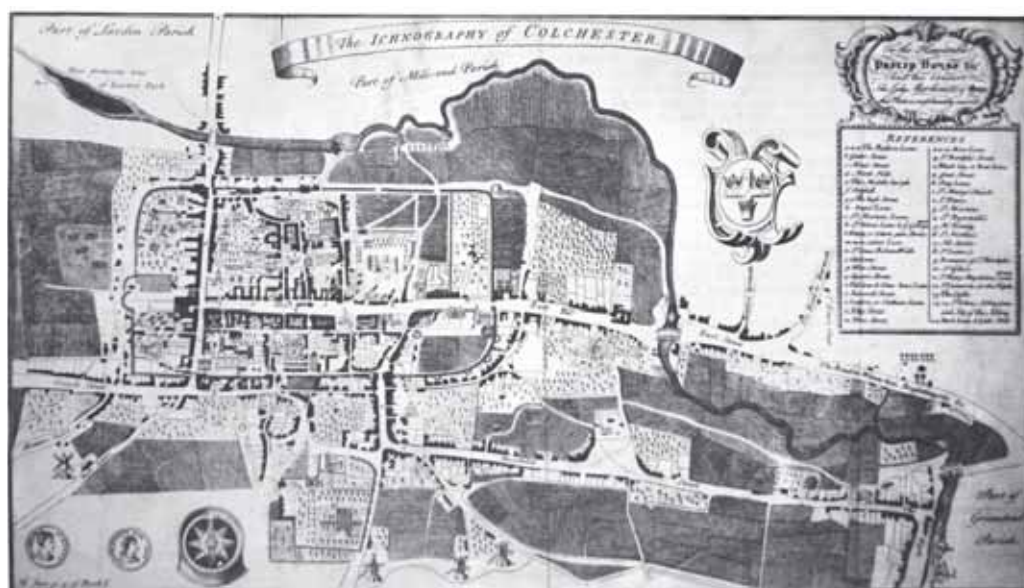




Figure 4: Colchester in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

- 2.21 In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a grand new Corn Exchange was built at the North Hill end of the High Street (later the Essex and Suffolk Fire Office). The Theatre Royal was established in Queen Street in 1812.
- 2.22 Under the Improvement Commissioners, established in 1811, the main streets were paved, obstructions removed and street lighting introduced. The town walls, no longer needed for defence, were neglected, built over, or robbed for stone. With the growing demands of traffic in and out of the town, all the remaining gates, except Scheregate, were demolished.
- 2.23 Deane's plan of 1748 (*figure 4*) shows the frontages of the principal streets largely built up. But it also shows just how much of the town was still undeveloped and given over to gardens. A large part of the garden of East Hill House, built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, survives to this day.
- 2.24 The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of significant expansion. Colchester became a garrison town during the Napoleonic Wars, with the first barracks to be erected since the Roman occupation. The military presence was expanded during the Crimean Wars and later in the century, and to this day Colchester remains an important garrison town.
- 2.25 The century saw a boom in retail trade and commerce and the coming of the railways and the development of The Hythe provided the essential transport for the developing industries, such as flourmills, breweries, foundries and engineering works.
- 2.26 In the High Street many older buildings were demolished and replaced with new shops and banks in the confident styles that characterise Victorian and Edwardian architecture. The Corn Exchange moved to new premises in the High Street in 1844 and the local Cooperative Society opened its first shop in 1861. Queen Street, Long Wyre Street and St Botolph's Street also have good groups of substantial shop buildings in a variety of styles and materials.
- 2.27 A number of churches and chapels were built, reflecting the religious revivals throughout the century, including St Botolph's Church, the Baptist Church in Eld Lane, the Roman Catholic Church in Priory Street and a new Congregational Church to replace the old Meeting House in Lion Walk.



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- 2.28 The density of building increased as the back yards and gardens were developed as tenements of cheap housing, for example Smith's Yard and Albion Court off Long Wyre Street and All Saints' Court off Culver Street. By the 1870s the area around Vineyard Street and Osborne Street had become densely built up with houses and cottages backing onto the town walls and packed into courtyards. Later in the century, terraces of houses were built in Priory Street and Northgate Street. As might be expected there were numerous inns and drinking houses.
- 2.29 The predominant building material was still red brick but, with the ability to transport materials over greater distances, grey gault brick became increasingly popular in the first half of the century, together with slate for the roofs. In the second half of the century, stone became fashionable as a decorative material.
- 2.30 By the turn of the century Colchester had acquired two of its best-known landmarks, the 'Jumbo' water tower and the Town Hall, and the main built-up parts of the town centre and inner suburbs had become quite densely developed. However, it is remarkable how much open space still remained, even in the middle of the town. In 1892 Castle Park was opened and augmented by the creation of the Lower Park in the following year.
- 2.31 A number of buildings on the north side of the High Street were demolished to make way for the impressive War Memorial designed by H C Fehr and unveiled in 1923. The Memorial also includes the Castle and Hollytrees, acquired for the town by Viscount Cowdray.
- 2.32 Colchester was subject to a number of bombing raids in the Second World War, with the area around St Botolph's Green, Magdalen Street and Mersea Road suffering particularly heavy damage. In common with many other historic towns, historic buildings that had not been damaged were still the subject of redevelopment schemes and the quality of much of the rebuilding in the 1950s and 1960s was poor. The loss of St Nicholas' Church, demolished in 1955 was perhaps the most dramatic single loss which the town suffered, but many more modest buildings of historic interest were lost, for example in Queen Street, where a Georgian terrace was pulled down to make way for flat roofed 'modern' shops, totally out of character with their surroundings.
- 2.33 In 1966 a new multi-storey car park was opened in Nunn's Road. New office blocks were constructed in St Peter's Street to provide municipal offices and the huge Telephone Exchange 'tower', which dominates views from the High Street, North Hill and the Dutch Quarter, was built despite local opposition. In common with other historic towns, the quality of many of the new buildings constructed in the 1950s and 60s was generally poor and paid little regard to the historic character of the town.
- 2.34 There was, however, one particular scheme of which Colchester can be proud. In the 1950s, the restoration of over forty of the old houses in the Dutch Quarter gained a Civic Trust Award and later, the Borough Council built several infill developments of flats and houses, constructed in vernacular style sympathetic to the character of the historic area.
- 2.35 A report of 1968, prepared by the County and Borough Councils, recognized that steps had to be taken to preserve Colchester's heritage and proposed that parts of the town centre should be designated as a Conservation Area. The report also contained proposals for the redevelopment of the Lion Walk, Culver Street, St Peter's Street, St John's and Vineyard Street areas and for the construction of an inner relief road with peripheral multi-storey car parks. The south and west sections of the Inner relief Road were completed by 1981, cutting through existing road patterns and neighbourhood areas and requiring extensive demolition of houses, shops, businesses and other properties, including a church, cinema and four public houses. Multi-storey car parks were built in Queen Street (closed 1992), St John's Street, Middleborough and Balkerne Hill.

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- 2.36 Between 1968 and 1980, total commercial floor space increased by 45% in the central area. The Lion Walk shopping precinct was opened in 1976 and non-food retail space increased by 35.6% in the same period.
- 2.37 By 1984 parts of the plan had been amended because of financial constraints and a recognition that large-scale comprehensive redevelopment was not the solution in a town with an intricate and small-scale mediaeval plan. The later developments of the Culver Street shopping precinct and St John's Walk have been more successfully integrated with the historic character of Colchester. Since 1980, the importance of conserving Colchester's heritage has been recognized by the designation of the whole of the walled town and the historic suburbs as a Conservation Area.



## 3.0 Character Appraisal: High Street (East) and The Castle

### High Street (East)

- 3.1 The High Street runs along the main ridge of the town, with the land falling away to north and south. The main retail part of the High Street effectively finishes at Museum Street and St Nicholas Street, where the street narrows as it curves to the south around the line of the mediaeval Castle bailey. Beyond this point the scale of the High Street properties reduces from three and four-storey Victorian commercial to a more domestic 18th century scale and there is secondary retailing.



*High Street looking east*

- 3.2 Museum Street, formerly called Bailey Entrance, was the ancient entrance to the Castle; the gates were erected in 1892. The street is relatively narrow and curves to the northeast, with 16th and 17th century buildings on either side.
- 3.3 Between Museum Street and Cowdray Crescent on the north side, the buildings at either end are listed: nos.105/106 are 17th century, timber-framed and plastered; nos.95/96 and The Castle Inn are 18th century, rendered and painted, whilst nos.93/94 have a 19th century brick front. Unfortunately the frontage is dominated by the bulky flat-roofed three-storey development of nos.98-104 built in 1953-4. The stuccoed front of a 19th century building is incorporated but, with its bulk and set back upper floors, the development detracts from the street scene. The rear of this building also mars the setting of the Castle.



*Nos.98-104*



*No.105 to The Castle Inn*

- 3.4 On the south side, the red brick gabled former bank of 1896 (no.60) makes an imposing corner at the entrance to St Nicholas Street. From here the scale reduces, with a group of three-storey 18th century fronted buildings (nos.63 & 64) and the former All Saints' Rectory of 1856, in red brick, gabled and with blue diaper work.



No.63 to All Saints' Church

- 3.5 Beyond the former Rectory and the Castle Inn there is a dramatic change in the character of the street. In the 19th century there was a block of property on the street frontage, extending back towards the Castle, whilst the garden on the east side of Holly Trees was also occupied by buildings.
- 3.6 The north side now opens out to Cowdray Crescent, with the War Memorial (by H C Fehr 1923) and the main entrance to the Castle Park, with its curving ironwork screen and decorated gates. On the south side is All Saints' Church (now the natural history museum), set back behind walls and railings. With its trees and green spaces and views of the Castle and Park, this area now has a spacious, open aspect, quite different from how it would have looked in the 19th century.



Holly Trees



War Memorial

- 3.7 Formerly called Friars Street, the part of High Street from All Saints' Church to the site of the old East Gate is lined with handsome town houses of 16th to 18th century date, with the character of a prosperous market town.



- 3.8 Holly Trees, now part of the Castle Park and a museum, is a fine red brick house of c1717, set back from the street behind ironwork railings and gates. On the same side, Gate House and East Lodge (nos.83/84) is a picturesque 17th century house, with a four-gabled, rusticated plaster front. Winsley House is early 18th century, but still timber-framed and plastered. Greyfriars (1755), Hillcrest and All Saints House (both late 18th century) are all in red brick.



*Handsome town houses*



*East Hill House*

- 3.9 On the south side, nos.68-73 range in date from the 17th to the mid-19th century. The Minories (no.74), an early 16th century timber-framed house, was remodelled in 1776. At the rear is a Gothick summerhouse, formerly in the garden of the neighbouring East Hill House (no.76), which is a large early 18th red brick century house, with a top storey added in 1742. When George Wegg built East Hill House, nine houses were demolished to extend his grounds. Just inside the site of the East Gate is St James' Church, 12th century in origin but with a 15th century tower, which shows a large admixture of reused Roman brick.
- 3.10 The building frontages are not continuous but are linked by the boundary walls, railings and trees of Holly Trees, All Saints' House, East Hill House and St James' Church, which make an important contribution to the character of the street. One unfortunate aspect is the wide gap created on the south side for the entrance to the bus station.



*Health offices*

- 3.11 The large block of the post-war Central Clinic and Health Offices occupies the site of gardens to the north of East Lodge, Gate House and Winsley House. It is too big and bulky and obtrudes in views from the street and particularly from Castle Park. The large areas of former gardens of Grey Friars and All Saints' House are unattractive and used for car parking, though the high boundary walls limit the visual impact on the surrounding area.

## Castle Park

- 3.12 Castle Park occupies the temple precinct of the Roman *colonia* and extends from the High Street northwards to the Roman town wall and beyond. The 11th century Castle Keep is the largest in the country and was constructed on the podium of the Temple of Claudius – itself a remarkable survival. The keep was originally faced with septuaria stone and tile and in places with ashlar, but now the rubble core with many Roman bricks is now exposed. Although much reduced in height in the 1680s, the Castle remains an imposing building and a feature of the skyline in views from the north.



Colchester Castle



Castle gardens

- 3.13 The Castle was partially restored in the late 18th century by Charles Gray, owner of Holly Trees House, though its present appearance dates from the 1930s when the roof was added. Gray laid out the Castle grounds as a small park with a raised walk, formed from part of the earthwork defences, a canal, a summerhouse which is dated 1731 and has the form of a Greek temple, and a rotunda of 1767. Gray planted many trees including two cedars of Lebanon, two cedars of Bermuda and a cork tree. The remainder of the land now covered by the park was divided into fields which were still being used for drying cloth on tenter frames as late as the 1770s.



Summerhouse



Castle Park

- 3.14 The public park, which was opened in 1892, is divided by the Roman town wall into the Upper Park and the Lower Park. With its sweeping lawns and formal gardens and walks, the park provides a splendid amenity close to the town centre. A number of features are listed, including the entrance gates and railings, summerhouse, bandstand, remains of the Rotunda and a preserved section of Roman pavement. The high brick wall that bounds the park on the east, marking the historic boundary with the Grey Friars precinct, is also listed and is bordered by a fine avenue of trees. Other interesting features are the cast iron bandstand of 1892 and the 20th century park keeper's lodge.



- 3.15 The Lower Park, which extends as far as the river and lies outside the Conservation Area, has a boating lake, lawns and a serpentine walk. Of note is the thatched bowling green pavilion built c1922, and the listed Rye Gates at the west entrance to the park, which were the gift of Capt H S Naylor Leyland in 1892.



Lower Park

- 3.16 In 1919-20 Lord and Lady Cowdray acquired the Castle and Hollytrees for the town. Hollytrees became a museum and the house and grounds were incorporated into the public park. The whole of Castle Park together with the cricket ground and other open areas north of the river, is now included in the national Register of Parks and Gardens.



Duncan's Gate and town wall

- 3.17 A footpath runs along the outside of the Roman town wall of which there is a substantial, well-preserved section that continues below Roman Road and round the northeast corner of the walled town. A strip of green space marks the line of former defensive ditches. Remains of 'Duncan's Gate' the northeast gate of the Roman town erected in about AD 120 can be seen on the north side.

## Roman Road and Castle Road

- 3.18 These streets occupy the northeast corner of the walled town, in what was the precinct of the Grey Friars (Speed's map of 1610 (fig.3) calls it Black Friars). Deane's plan of 1748 (fig.4) shows the whole area behind Grey Friars House laid out as gardens and walks. About 1823, eight and a half acres of the site were laid out as a botanic garden by the Colchester and Essex Botanical and Horticultural Society.
- 3.19 The Botanic Gardens were short-lived and were bought in 1852 by the National Freehold Land Society, a body affiliated to the Liberal Party. Roman and Castle Roads were laid out and small plots created. Seventy-two lots were bought by builders, other craftsmen, merchants and a few gentlemen, forty-one of them from Colchester, the rest from the London area.



*Roman Road east side*



*Roman Road west side*

- 3.20 By 1900 most of the plots had been developed though a few at the northwest end of Castle Road were not developed until after the First World War. Because the plots were bought by a number of builders, the houses vary in size and type, with a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties and with an eclectic mix of styles and materials. Many of the houses are described as 'villas' and several are dated, for example: in Roman Road, nos.32-36 (Stanley Villas 1890), no.72 (Ferndale 1894), no.78 (Ormonde Villa 1894) and no.94 (Landscape View 1893); in Castle Road, no.16 (Clifford Villa 1887), nos.21-22 (Melrose Villas 1879), no.28 (Ickleford Place 1882), and nos.29-32 (Castle View Villas 1893).



*Castle Road*



*Castle Road west side*

- 3.21 Flowering trees line the roads, which have managed to retain much of their original character and provide a pleasant residential environment close to the town centre. Almost all the properties retain their front gardens with boundary walls or railings. A few have been spoiled by the introduction of plastic windows and unsuitable doors, but the damage is not irredeemable. A number of new trees have been planted in Roman Road. The main problem, as in other places is the need to accommodate cars, which line one side of each road. It would, however, be most unfortunate if front gardens were to be used for parking.



- 3.22 Within the very northeast corner of the town wall lies the Quaker Burial Ground, a tranquil and well-maintained space with a number of fine trees, seen through iron gates set in the brick boundary wall on Roman Road. At its northern end, Roman Road continues inside the town wall to meet up with Castle Road. The trees and grassy bank create a pleasant scene and there are good views over the wall to the north.



*Quaker Burial Ground*



*Roman Road and town wall*





## 4.0 Character Appraisal: East Hill and East Street

- 4.1 East Hill is a direct continuation of High Street down the hill from the site of the old East Gate to the crossing of the River Colne. It developed in the Middle Ages as an extra-mural settlement, with buildings lining the main approach road to the walled town. East Street developed almost as a separate settlement around the junction of the roads to Harwich and Ipswich and the mills sited on the banks of the river.
- 4.2 Both streets are lined with houses and shops and there must always have been several inns and lodging houses catering for travellers before entering the town. On the south side of the bridge is the site of the old East Bay mill, whilst on the north side are the 19th century East Mills. That century also saw the opening of two breweries of which the buildings of one - the Colchester Brewing Company - still survive, and the construction of the railway, which severs East Street at its eastern end. In the 19th and 20th centuries, residential and industrial development expanded in the areas to the north and south behind the street frontages.
- 4.3 Rosebery Avenue and Guildford Road are modern insertions. Brook Street, which joins East Hill at the foot of the hill, is an older street and has terraces of 19th century artisan cottages at its northern end. Ipswich Road was created in the 19th century to divert traffic from the old, narrow road, now called the Old Coach Road.

### East Hill

- 4.4 A plaque on the wall of 89 East Hill records that the East Gate 'fell down' in 1651 and the remains removed in 1675. East Hill is a fine, broad street and still quite steep, though the Pavement Commissioners eased the gradient in the early 19th century. Old maps show the street widening out as it approached the river, still reflected in the alignment of East Bay and the western end of East Street. A new East Bridge built in 1802 and reconstructed in 1928, when it was widened from 29 feet to 46 feet.
- 4.5 The buildings on either side step down the hill with an appealing mix of age, size and materials, characteristic of English towns. East Hill provides a fine entry to the town. The tower of St James' Church provides a landmark on the south side, but the Town Hall tower acts as the key focal point in views from the east.



View towards East Bridge



Approaching the town up East Hill

- 4.7 East Hill is lined with buildings dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries, with a few modern infill properties that are generally well designed and in keeping with the street. Most of the older buildings are listed, reflecting their architectural and historic quality. The upper end of the street has buildings of a greater scale than the lower, with several handsome 18th and early 19th century examples framing the view up the hill towards the Town Hall tower.
- 4.8 The lower end of the street, particularly on the south side retains more of its earlier character, with timber-framed and plastered houses, though mostly with a Georgian veneer from the inserted sash windows.

- 4.9 The buildings of the former Colchester Brewing Company, with its six-storey tower, are of an altogether different scale, but are fine examples of the quality of architecture that could be achieved in Victorian industrial buildings.



Colchester Brewery



East Mills

- 4.10 The road flattens out as it approaches the bridge and the built up frontages are replaced by the grass and trees of the open space along the riverbank on the north side and the green in front of East Bay on the south, which form a pleasant setting for the impressive East Mills.



New development in Land Lane



Guildford Road

- 4.11 There are a number of new developments both on the street frontage and at the rear of existing properties, mostly in a vernacular style that sits comfortably with the rest of the street. The one large break in the street, either side of the entrance to Guildford Road, is now being repaired with the new apartments lining the street frontages.

### South Side

- 4.12 Nos.1 & 2, though not listed, are a pleasant 19th century pair, recently restored, with a rendered parapet front and half-hipped mansard roof. No.3 is early 19th century double-fronted house in white gault brick, with later, tall bay windows. The old Ship Inn on the corner with Priory Street dates from the 18th century, though the front is later.



Nos.1-5



Nos.6-10



- 4.13 In Colchester the timber-frame tradition continued well into the 18th century. Nos.6 and 7 have a plastered front with parapet and a half-hipped mansard roof. No.8 is a tall three-storey building, also with a plastered parapet front, but has an oversailing first floor with a bay window below. In contrast, nos.9 and 10 are formed from one good early Georgian town house with a fine red brick front.
- 4.14 Nos.12-14, dating from the late 19th century, has twin gables to the street and moulded brick arched windows. Despite later alterations, the building retains sufficient original features to be considered of local interest.



Nos.12-22

- 4.15 No.15 has an 18th century painted brick front with an elegant two-storey bay window. No.16/17 is jettied with exposed timber framing and retains five original two-light mullioned windows and a very fine door of twelve moulded panels with lozenge-shaped enrichment in each panel. Nos.18 & 19 are in red brick and date from the mid 19th century. Nos.20 & 21 have mansard roofs and may have an earlier core. No.22 is a small timber-framed and plastered 17th century house with 18th century sash windows.



Nos.25-28



Nos.29-39

- 4.16 Nos.25-27 are also of 17th century origin but were re-fronted in the 18th century. No.28 is a double-fronted house with small-pane sash windows, panelled door and moulded pediment head. Nos.29 & 32/33 are probably formed from the cross wings of a 16th/17th century house, with the centre part (nos.30/31) rebuilt later. No.34 has an 18th or 19th century rebuilt plastered and painted front and a shallow-pitched roof. Nos.35, 36/37 and 38/39 are timber-framed and plastered, also with jettied fronts. No.39 is a gabled cross-wing with an 18th century oriel window. There are 17th century rear extensions (nos.40-42) that face Rosebery Avenue.



Nos.47-52

- 4.17 Further down the street, no.47 is also timber-framed, 18th century or earlier. Nos.48-51 retain original mullioned windows under the eaves, though the jetties have been underbuilt. No.52 dates from the 17th/18th century and is also timber-framed and plastered.

### North Side

- 4.18 Just inside the town wall is a block of three substantial 19th century town houses in gault brick (nos.90-92). They are not listed but certainly contribute to the character of the street. No.89 (18th century), in painted brick, incorporates part of the town wall on its west side. No.88 is a taller, three-storey house, rendered and painted, whilst no.87, early 19th century, is of much smaller scale, in white gault brick with a terracotta roundel depicting 'The Good Shepherd'. No.86 is an elaborate stucco house of c1818, built for the Rev John Saville. It has a large Doric porch with paired columns. Now called Belgrave Place, it has recently been restored and converted to apartments with new-build mews accommodation at the rear, off Land Lane.



Nos.92-86



Nos.85-82

- 4.19 The corner property on the east side of land Lane (no.85) is part of a new development, in sympathetic style, which extends north along Land Lane. No.83 is a substantial three-storey house, probably built in the 18th century, but altered in the 19th. No.82/82a is a substantial early Georgian house with a seven-window front and a good doorcase with Corinthian columns and a frieze of swags.
- 4.20 The Surgery (no.78), built in 1993, demonstrates an essentially historicist approach to design, with the main block parallel to the street and cross wings (one of them jettied) at each end, to produce a pleasant contribution to the street scene. The mid 19th century red brick St James' Rectory (no.76) is set well back from the street. It is not listed but, together with its front garden wall and gate piers, is of local interest, as is no.77, which has a rendered painted front.





Surgery



Nos.77-74

- 4.21 The brewery buildings (nos.74 & 75) form a good group, which includes not only the listed buildings on the street frontage, but also the arched entrance to the brewery yard and the brewery 'tower' behind. A large tree by the entrance forms a prominent feature in the street. The main entrance building is by H Stopes and was built in 1888, in a round-arched ornamental style. It has a carriage entrance with eagle in niche and the dates 1828 and 1888, and the inscription 'Colchester Brewing Co Ltd 1888'. The 'tower' has been converted into apartments. The modern development behind is now called 'Eaglegate'.
- 4.22 No.73 has a fine early 19th century stucco front with central entrance with fluted columns, and a side carriage entrance. Nos.71 & 72 are timber-framed at the rear but have a three-storey frontage in gault brick with connected label mouldings. The Goat and Boot PH (formerly the Coat and Boots Inn) has a 19th century pilastered pub front.



No.73-71 and the Goat and Boot PH



Nos.58-53

- 4.23 At the foot of the street there is a group of three timber-framed buildings (nos.56-58) dating from the 17th century or earlier, but with later fronts. These are followed by three Gothic style 19th century buildings (nos.55, 55a, 55b) in gault brick with patterned roof tiling and decorated arched window heads. They are on the site of a girls' orphanage and industrial school, shown on the 1876 map. No.55 has an attractive wall and gate piers. They are too late in date to be listed, but are certainly of local interest.
- 4.24 The only building that detracts from the street scene is the Euromaster garage and its forecourt, on the north side opposite East Bay.

## East Bay

- 4.25 East Bay, with its green and trees in front, has something of a village character. The curving block of houses (nos.1-13) mostly dates from the early and mid 19th century, but nos.1 and 2 incorporate the remnants of a 15th century cross wing with screens passage. No.16 (Bay Cottage) is a detached timber-framed and plastered cottage dating from the 18th century. Further towards the river is East Bay House (nos.17/18), a large late Georgian red brick house of c1780, with a doorcase with Ionic columns.



East Bay



East Bay House

## East Bridge

- 4.26 A plaque on the East Bridge records that it was built in 1802 and widened in 1928. The bridge has stone piers and good quality cast iron railings. On the south side the three piers are topped by decorative wrought iron lamp stands with copper lanterns. On the north side only the stand at the west end survives.



East Bridge

- 4.27 The river is considerably wider on the north side of the bridge than on the south. In the 19th century this was the tidal pool and the main mill channel ran under the mill buildings. The channel south from here to The Hythe was widened in the mid 19th century, enabling sailing barges to get to the mills, after which the East Mills were rebuilt and considerably extended by the local family firm of E Marriage & Sons.
- 4.28 The main building is four-storey, in yellow brick, eleven windows wide, the windows with segmental heads, under a slate roof with hipped gables and bracketed eaves and a timber hoist loft. The tower behind, also in yellow brick, is slightly later. The earliest building on the site is the Mill House, dating from c1800, which adjoins the southeast corner of the main block. The stone gate piers with octagonal moulded tops remain and have a fleur-de-lys decoration. The buildings are an impressive example of Victorian industrial architecture.





East Mills



New development at East Mills

- 4.29 The Mills were converted into a hotel in 1979, but have recently been turned into residential apartments, with a considerable amount of new residential development to the north and east in the former mill yard, in styles reflecting the architecture of the mill buildings. A comparison with the 1876 map shows just how much has changed in this area. The view north from the bridge is pleasant, with the green open space on one side and the restored and new buildings and terraced walkway on the other.
- 4.30 In contrast, the view south is not so attractive and there is little or no public access to the riverbanks. On the west bank stand the dilapidated remains of the old East Bay Mill, built of Baltic pine and weatherboarding in the 18th century.

## East Street

- 4.31 East Street is considerably narrower than East Hill and there is a pronounced curve in the street frontage. The old road to Ipswich, now called the Old Coach Road, was narrower still and, particularly at its junction with East Street by the Rose and Crown, must have created a real bottleneck for wheeled traffic, for in the 19th century the old road was diverted and the modern section of Ipswich Road that curves away from East Street on the north side was created. Later still the junction of the Old Coach Road opposite the Rose and Crown was widened and a poor quality office building (no.49) constructed on the corner.

## South Side

- 4.32 Nos.3 and 4 are two pleasant houses dating from about 1900, no.3 standing on the site of an inn called the White Horse. There follows a terrace of late Victorian cottage (nos.5-10) with rendered and painted fronts; most have plastic windows and concrete tiles, but no.5 retains its timber sash windows and shopfront. Grays Cottages (nos.3-9) are a surviving example of 19th century artisan cottages built in rear courts or alleyways that were once common in the centre of Colchester. Though most have replacement windows and doors, they retain sufficient character to be considered of local interest.



Nos.3-10



Gray's Cottages

- 4.33 The rest of the street frontage up to the entrance to Moorside is mainly composed of timber-framed buildings dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Perhaps because they were some distance away from the more prosperous town centre, less money was spent on modernisation in the 18th and 19th centuries so that, apart from the introduction of sash windows, several retain much of their earlier character. There is one break in the frontage, between nos.14 and 17, which is used for car parking and which detracts from the street scene.



Nos.11-14

- 4.34 Nos.11 & 12 (16th century) retain their jetties and were restored by the Colchester Civic Society. Nos.17 & 18 (18th century) are timber-framed, jettied houses; the bow windows are modern. No.20 is also 18th century but has a plain rendered front. Nos.21-23 have a good early Georgian plastered front with a central Venetian window above a good timber doorcase with moulded pediment head.



Nos.17-20



Nos.21-23

- 4.35 Nos.24 & 25 date from the 15th century and incorporate a jettied cross wing on the west. Nos.26 & 27, 29 & 30 and 32 & 33 date from the 16th century but have later alterations. Nos.32 & 33 are particularly good, with an oversailing front, gabled dormers, plastered panels and a 17th century wood modillion eaves cornice, and a plastered oval wreath enclosing the initials WRA and the date 1692. Nos.34 & 35 are of 18th century date.





Nos.24-28



Nos.29-41

- 4.36 No.36 is 16th century, with a gable to the front and a 19th century shop bay window. No.37 is earlier, with jettied front gable of c1500 and an 18th century ground floor bay window. No.38 (16th century) is also jettied and gabled, but with 19th century windows. Nos.39 & 40 incorporate a 15th century cross wing. No.41 (17th century) has exposed timbers, a jetty on carved brackets and many light, leaded windows of original pattern.
- 4.37 At the far end of the street, just before the level crossing, are two 18th century rendered and painted cottages (nos.46 & 47), which are isolated from the remainder of the historic frontage by modern buildings and the entrance to Moorside.

### North Side

- 4.38 From the bridge there is a fine view of one of Colchester's most famous houses. The Old Siege House (Nos.73-75) dates from the early 16th century. It was extensively restored and the timberwork exposed by E Marriage & Son Ltd, owners of East Mills. Stripping the plaster revealed many bullet holes resulting from skirmishes during the siege of the town in 1648.



Nos.75-60



Restored buildings (nos.60-69)

- 4.39 The adjoining houses (nos.70-72) are late 18th century, with roughcast fronts and are awaiting restoration. The remainder of the frontage (nos.60-69) was recently restored by the architect Roy Grimwade, with financial help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It incorporates buildings from the mid 14th to the 17th century together with some new infill. New housing has been constructed at the rear in Colliers Court, approached through a tall timber-framed archway with the sign 'Charlie Brown's c1330 AD'.
- 4.40 Jetties that were previously underbuilt have been restored. The work is of a high quality and the pastel colours make for a pleasing frontage. The east flank wall of no.60 is relieved by a large painted sign which proclaims that this was formerly Charles Brown & Sons, agents for Somerlite vaporising and lamp oils and includes details of the restoration carried out in 2004.

- 4.41 The late Victorian terraces of houses in Ipswich Road are pleasant but the break in the street frontage created by the junction with East Street and the lack of a built-up frontage on the east side of Ipswich Road has resulted in a visually poor space that is dominated by traffic.



*Ipswich Road*



*Traffic*

- 4.42 Parts of no.59 on the east corner of Ipswich Road date from the mid 16th century. This was formerly the Jolly Sailor PH and is now an Indian Restaurant. The adjoining property (nos.57 & 58) are modern and set back from the street frontage. The adjacent yard and the Rose and Crown car park create an unfortunate break in the frontage, though alleviated to some extent by the tree screen in front of the car park.



*Rose and Crown*



*Coach House*

- 4.43 The earliest part of the Rose and Crown Hotel dates from the 15th century and has cross wings at both ends. A 17th century wing extends northwards. The timber-framing was exposed and many windows restored to their original pattern when the property was extensively restored by Grace Faithful Roper. The new buildings at the rear are in sympathetic style, but the widened junction of the Old Coach Road and the poor design of the Coach House office building opposite provide a poor setting for one of Colchester's landmark buildings.




## 5.0 Significance



## 5.0 Significance

### Above ground features

- 
- 5.1 Perhaps the most remarkable survival is the podium of the Temple of Claudius, upon which the Normans built their new castle. *"This would have been the first substantial stone and mortar building ever erected in Britain and is thus an extremely rare survival from the town's early history."* (Patrick Denny). This area also contains one of the best-preserved sections of the Roman town wall, together with the remains of the northeast postern gate ('Duncan's Gate') and vaulted drain under. In date and construction, the Roman town wall is unique in Britain; it is a scheduled ancient monument.
- 5.2 High Street is on the line of the Roman *Via Principalis*, but clearly shows the diversion made when the bank and ditch of the castle bailey were constructed c1100. East Hill and East Street represent the principal approach road from the east since the town's foundation.
- 5.3 The late 11th century castle keep was one of the first to be built of masonry and is amongst the most important remains of mediaeval military architecture. It has the distinction of being the biggest of all the Norman keeps in the country. The Castle and Upper Park are a scheduled ancient monument, whilst the whole of the Upper and Lower Parks, together with the land north of the river, is listed in the National Register of Parks and Gardens.
- 5.4 The two mediaeval churches, All Saints' and St James the Great, both occupy important positions in the street scene. Of St James's, Pevsner says *"The chancel and chancel chapels of this church, high up above the rise of East Hill into High Street, are perhaps the best Perpendicular work in Colchester."*
- 5.5 One of the special qualities of both East Hill and East Street is the number of early half-timbered houses that survive, many with oversailing upper floors. The most notable are: in East Hill nos.16-17, 35-39, 48-51 and 60-61, and in East Street nos.11-12, 17-18, 29-33, the Siege House and The Rose and Crown. The Gate House in High Street shows the traditional form of construction and decoration as late as 1680.
- 5.6 High Street has a fine collection of Georgian red brick town houses. Pevsner describes Hollytrees as the best house in Colchester and other good examples are The Minories, Grey Friars and East Hill House.
- 5.7 The buildings of the Colchester Brewing Company and Marriage's East Mills are prominent examples of Victorian industrial architecture, whilst Roman Road and Castle Road have a unique character that comes from the development of plots in several ownerships rather than the laying out of unified terraces. Finally, through the transformation of the Castle grounds at the end of the 19th century, the people of Colchester have inherited one of the finest public parks in the centre of a town anywhere in Britain.



**Below ground features**

- 5.8 The castle keep and former bailey occupy the Roman temple precinct. In 1920 excavations were undertaken of a large Roman *insula* in Castle Park, which revealed a Roman street, a seven-roomed house and a large double building of courtyard type. Also in Castle Park, close to the Castle, a massive-walled Romano-British building was excavated in 1928, which some claim was a Mithraeum.
- 5.9 Evidence of buildings associated with the house of the mediaeval Grey Friars might well still underlay the gardens and later buildings on the High Street frontage. The properties lining High Street, East Hill and East Street are likely to be on the site of mediaeval or earlier buildings, and rear yards and gardens might well retain evidence of earlier occupation from refuse and cess pits.

**Open spaces:  
Contribution to the area**

- 5.10 The open spaces have been assessed for their intrinsic quality and for their contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area. Several of them make a positive contribution and these are shown on Map 1. However, there are a number that detract from the area, including some that are used for car parking. These are shown on Map 2.

**Spaces that make a positive contribution:**

- Castle Park
- Hollytrees garden
- Cowdray Crescent & War Memorial
- All Saints' churchyard
- St James' churchyard
- East Hill House gardens
- Green space inside Roman town wall – Roman Road
- Quaker Burial Ground – Roman Road
- Open space north and east of Roman town wall
- Green at East Bay
- Open space west side of River Colne opposite East Mills

**Spaces that detract from the area:**

- Car parks at Grey Friars and All Saints' House
- Forecourt of Euromaster garage, East Hill
- Yard to side and rear of 16/17 East Street

**Buildings:  
Contribution to the area**

- 5.11 The individual buildings and other structures have been assessed on their intrinsic architectural and historic interest and on their contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. They include both listed and unlisted buildings.
- 5.12 The buildings in the first schedule are those that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area (red for listed buildings, blue for buildings of local architectural or historic interest). These are shown on Map 1. The listed buildings are Grade II unless otherwise shown.
- 5.13 The buildings in the second schedule (green) are those that detract from the character of the area and are shown on Map 2.
- 5.14 The remainder of the buildings and spaces, uncoloured on the maps, are judged to have a neutral effect on the character of the area.

## Buildings that make a positive contribution to the area:

### High Street (East) & The Castle

#### High Street (North Side)

- All Saints' House
- Wall to All Saints' House
- K6 Telephone Kiosk adj. to Grey Friars
- Grey Friars (Grade II\*)
- Hillcrest
- Winsley House
- Gate House (no.83) (Grade I)
- East Lodge (no.84) (Grade I)
- Holly Trees (Grade I)
- Ironwork screen and gate to Holly Trees
- The Castle Inn
- Nos.93 & 94
- Nos.95 & 96
- No.100
- Nos.105 & 106

#### High Street (South Side)

- No.60
- No.62
- No.63
- No.63a & 64
- No.66
- All Saints' Church
- Wall and railings to All Saints' churchyard
- No.67
- No.67a
- No.68
- Nos.69 & 70
- Nos.70a & 70b
- Nos.71 & 72
- Nos.73a & 73b
- The Minories (no.74) (Grade II\*)
- Summerhouse at The Minories (Grade II\*)
- Garden walls adj. to summerhouse
- East Hill House (no.76) (Grade I)
- Wall to east of East Hill House with drinking fountain

#### Museum Street

- Nos.1-3

#### Cowdray Crescent

- War memorial

#### Castle Park: Upper Park

- The Castle Keep (Ancient Monument, Grade I)
- Entrance gates and railings, Cowdray Crescent
- Entrance gates, Museum Street
- Roman wall (temple enclosure) c60m NNW of Castle
- Ruins of Rotunda c20m east of Castle
- Roman pavement c120m N of Castle
- Summerhouse c35m NW of Castle
- Roman town wall (Ancient Monument, Grade I)
- Duncan's Gate (Ancient Monument, Grade I)
- Eastern boundary wall of Park
- Bandstand
- The Lodge

#### Castle Park: Lower Park

- Rye Gates
- Thatched pavilion

#### Roman Road (East Side)

- Nos.2 - 8
- Nos.9 & 10
- Nos.11 & 12
- Nos.13 & 14
- Nos.15 - 23
- Nos.25 & 27
- Nos.29 - 47
- Nos.49 & 51
- Nos.53 & 54
- Boundary wall and gates to Quaker Burial Ground

#### Roman Road (West Side)

- No.16
- Nos.18 & 20
- Nos.22 & 24
- Nos.26 - 30
- Nos.32 - 36
- Nos.38 - 46
- Nos.48 & 50
- Nos.52 - 60
- Nos.62 - 66
- Nos.68 & 70
- No.72
- Nos.74 & 76
- No.78
- Nos.80 & 82
- No.84
- Nos.86 - 92
- No.94

#### Castle Road (East Side)

- Nos.1 & 2
- No.3
- Nos.4 & 5
- Nos.6 - 10
- Nos.11 - 13
- Nos.14 & 15
- No.16
- Nos.18 & 19
- Nos.20 - 22
- No.23
- No.25
- Nos.26 & 27
- No.28
- Nos.29 - 32

#### Castle Road (West Side)

- No.48
- Nos.49 - 56
- No.57
- Nos.58 - 61
- No.62
- Nos.63 - 65
- Nos.67 & 68
- Nos.70 - 72
- No.73



## Buildings that detract from the area:

### East Hill

#### East Hill (South Side)

- Church of St James
- Churchyard wall of St James
- Nos.1 & 2
- No.3
- The Ship Inn
- Nos.6 & 7
- No.8
- Nos.9 & 10 (Grade II\*)
- No.15
- Nos.16 & 17
- No.17a
- Nos.18 & 19
- Nos.20 & 21
- No.22
- Nos.25 – 27
- No.28
- Nos.29 – 33
- No.34
- No.35
- Nos.36 & 37
- Nos.38 & 39
- Nos.40 – 42
- No.47
- Nos.48 – 51
- No.52

#### East Hill (North Side)

- Nos.55, 55a & 55b
- Wall and gate piers to No.55
- Nos.56 – 58
- The Goat & Boot PH
- Nos.71 & 72
- No.73
- Former Brewery
- No.74
- No.75
- Entrance arch to brewery
- Brewery tower
- St James' Rectory (No.76)
- Wall and gate piers to Rectory
- No.77
- Nos.82, 82a & 82c
- No.83
- No.86
- Nos.87 & 88
- No.89
- Nos.90 – 92

### East Street

#### East Street (South Side)

- East Bridge – piers, lamps and railings
- No.3
- No.4
- Nos.5 - 10
- Nos.11 – 13
- No.14
- Nos.17 & 18
- No.19
- No.20
- Nos.21 – 23
- Nos.24 & 25
- Nos.26 & 27
- No.28
- Nos.29 & 30
- Nos.32 & 33
- Nos.34 & 35
- No.36
- No.37
- No.38
- Nos.39 & 40
- No.41
- Nos.46 & 47

#### East Street (North Side)

- Rose & Crown Hotel
- No.59
- Nos.60 & 61
- Nos.62 – 66
- Nos.67 – 69
- Nos.70 – 72
- The Siege House (Nos.73 – 75) (Grade II\*)
- The Siege House – rear wing (Grade II\*)
- East Mills
- Mill House at East Mills

#### East Bay

- The Old Mill
- Nos.1 & 2
- Nos.3 – 13
- Nos.14 & 15
- Bay Cottage (No.16)
- East Bay House (Nos.17 & 18)

#### Brook Street (West Side)

- Nos.1 - 12

#### Ipswich Road

- Nos.2 - 24

#### High Street (North Side)

- Central Clinic

#### East Hill

- Euromaster Garage

#### East Street

- Coach House offices





## 6.0 Issues and Recommendations

- 6.1 The area contains a significant number of listed buildings: it is essential that they are preserved and maintained in a good condition. However, very few buildings dating from after 1840 are listed and the contribution of Victorian and Edwardian (and sometimes later) buildings to the character of the Conservation Area needs to be recognised. The houses in Roman Road and Castle Road are good examples that need to be protected.
- 6.2 Since these buildings are in the Conservation Area and subject to a number of local plan policies, they have some limited protection, for example against unauthorised demolition, but it would be a good idea to make a 'Local List' of these buildings, with a brief description and photographic record. This would prove useful in considering any future proposals, particularly for alterations that might affect their character.
- 6.3 A common problem with unlisted buildings is the pressure to replace timber windows in aluminium or UPVC, which can so easily spoil their appearance. It can often affect the value of a building, and there are alternative solutions that can provide modern levels of insulation, but still retain the character of a building at a reasonable cost. The Local Authority could consider introducing an 'Article 4 Direction', which would enable these alterations to be brought under control.
- 6.4 With a high degree of car ownership and lack of space to park, there will often be pressure to turn front gardens into car parking areas. In streets like Roman Road and Castle Road, the front gardens, with their walls, railings and hedges, are an essential part of their character, and it is important to resist their removal.
- 6.5 Only a few years ago, several of the properties in East Hill and East Street were empty or neglected. Recently there has been a considerable amount of investment, not only in new infill development, but also in restoring and converting historic buildings and creating value by developing at the rear. The overall appearance, particularly of East Hill, is much improved.
- 6.6 One area that needs significant improvement is the derelict site of the old East Bay Mill. Any proposals ought to include restoration of the lampstands and lanterns on East Bridge.
- 6.7 The main problem in the area is the amount of through traffic using East Street, Brook Street and the lower end of East Hill. The houses in Brook Street and East Street suffer from being close to the road, though there are welcome signs of investment in restoration in East Street. The junction of East Street with Ipswich Road is very busy and particularly difficult for pedestrians. It impairs the setting of the historic buildings and effectively isolates the Rose and Crown from the rest of the street. Ideally traffic should be reduced, but in any event, ways and means of improving the junction to make it safer and more attractive should be investigated.

## APPENDIX A

### Statutory Protection and Planning Policy

**Conservation Area:** the Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1968. It was amended in 1978 and 1980.

**Ancient Monuments:** the Colchester Town Wall; Colchester Castle and Park; the Benedictine Abbey of St John; St Botolph's Augustinian Priory; Southeast corner of Roman Town in East Hill House gardens.

**Listed Buildings:** those buildings that are included in the Statutory List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are shown in red in the schedule of buildings in Section 5.0 and on the accompanying maps.

**Parks and Gardens:** the Castle Park is included in the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

**Planning Policy:** the most recent local planning policies for the area are set out in the adopted Colchester Borough Local Plan. The following policies are of particular relevance for the Conservation Area:

- **Policy UAE1** protects the buildings, open spaces, trees and views that go to make up the character of the Conservation Area
- **Policy UAE2** sets out criteria against which planning applications will be judged in order to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- **Policy UAE3** sets out the (very limited) circumstances in which consent might be given for the demolition of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area
- **Policy UAE4** states the presumption against the demolition of listed buildings
- **Policy UAE5** sets out criteria against which applications for listed building consent will be judged in order to preserve the special interest of the building
- **Policy UAE8** sets out the presumption against development that would adversely affect ancient monuments and their settings and includes requirements for archaeological assessments and mitigation strategies
- **Policy UAE11** protects sites on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens

### References

Victoria *History of the County of Essex* Vol. 9 (1994)  
*List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest – Colchester*  
N Pevsner & E Radcliffe *The Buildings of England: Essex* (1979)  
Patrick Denny *Colchester, History and Guide* (2004)





# Colchester

## Town Centre Conservation Area







Conservation Area boundary



### Study Area 4:

## High Street (East) and The Castle, East Hill and East Street

#### Map 1: Positive Contributions

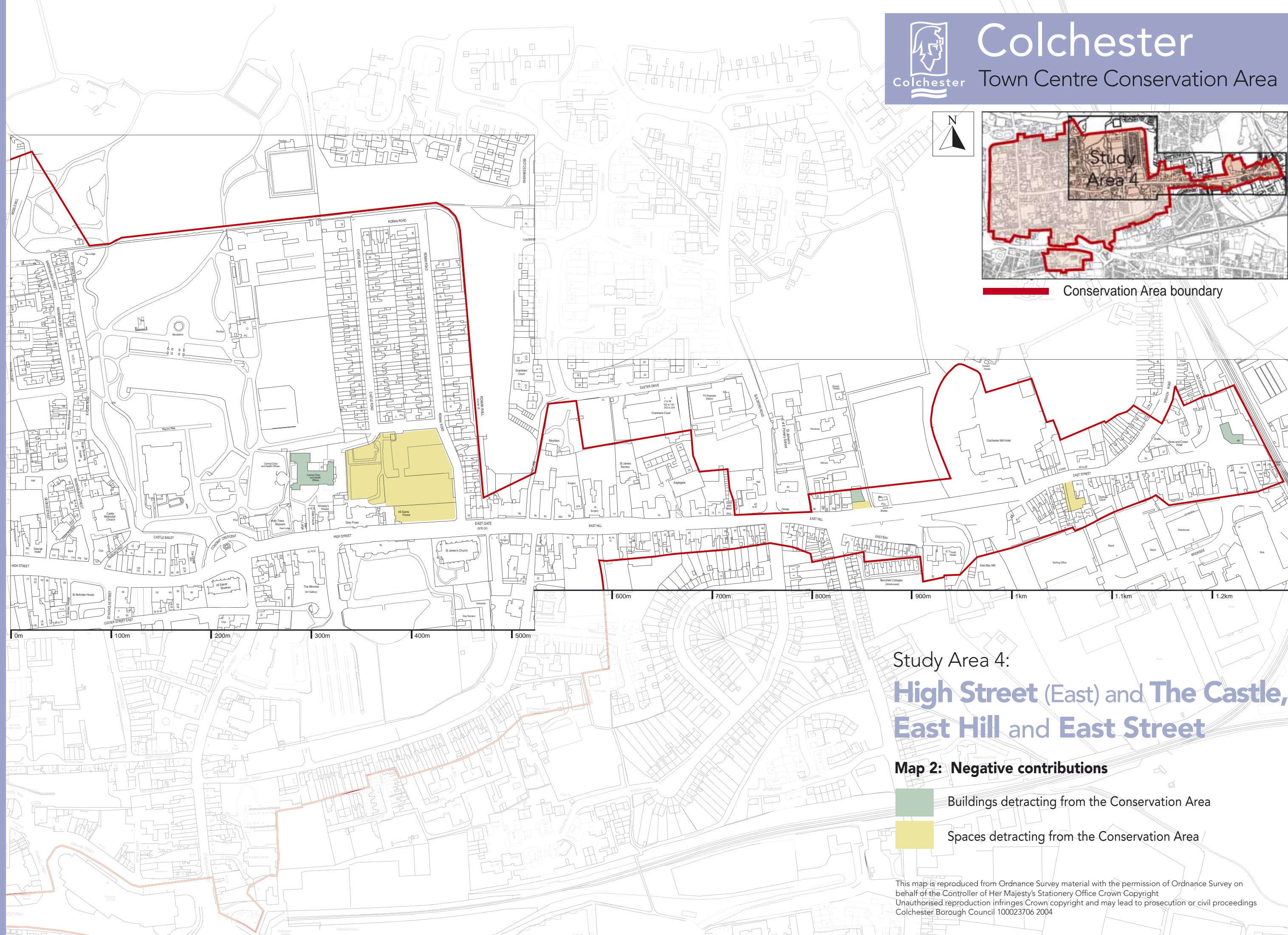
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Listed buildings
-  Other buildings of historic or architectural interest
-  Spaces making a significant contribution to Conservation Area

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 Conservation Area boundary



Study Area 4:  
**High Street (East) and The Castle,  
East Hill and East Street**

**Map 2: Negative contributions**

-  Buildings detracting from the Conservation Area
-  Spaces detracting from the Conservation Area

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High Street (East) and The Castle,  
East Hill and East Street  
**Map 3: Colchester 1876 Ordnance Survey**



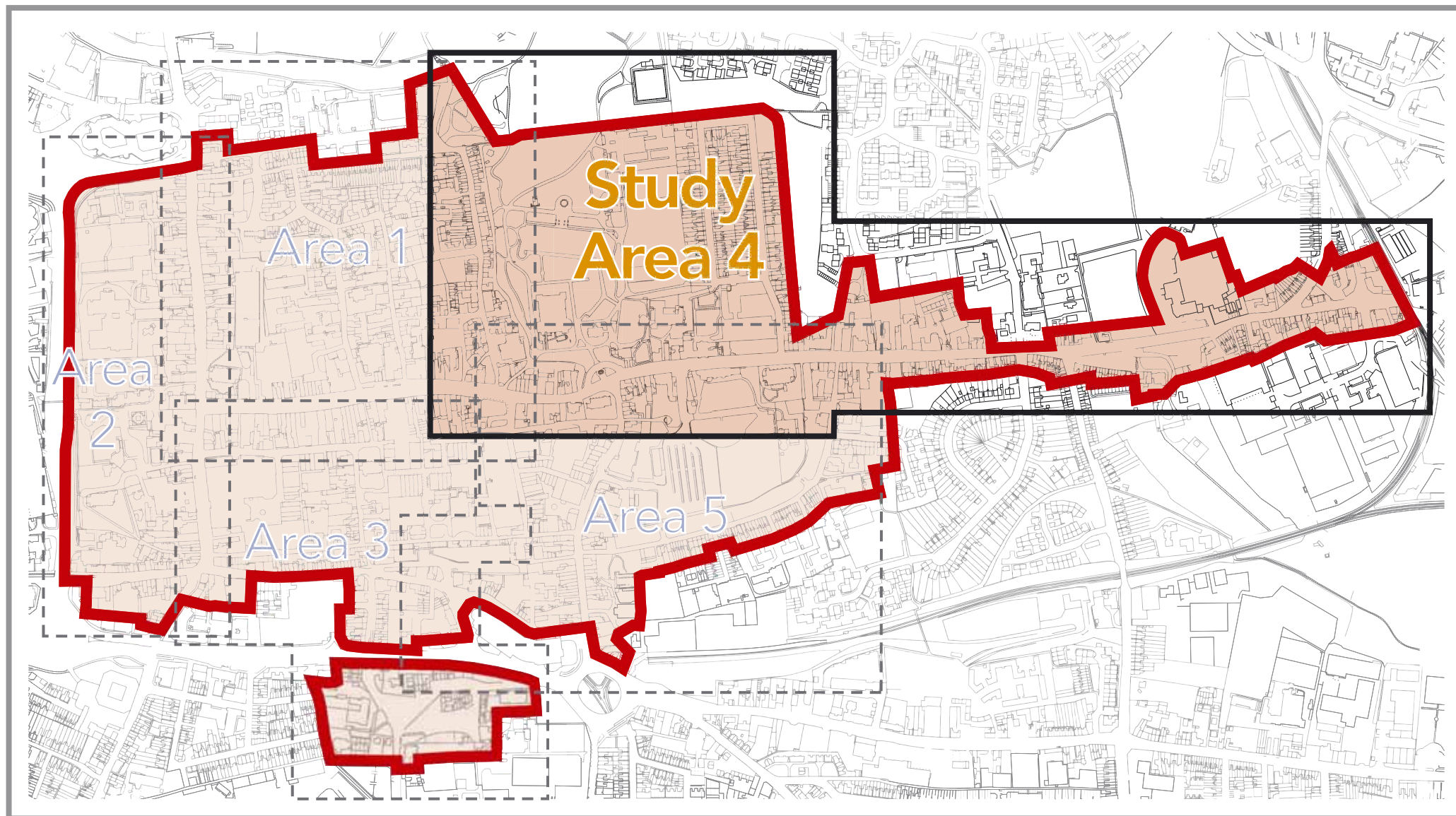
Map continued overleaf











Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal Study Area 4