

FLEET SETTLEMENT AREA

APPENDIX 1

HART URBAN CHARACTERISATION AND DENSITY STUDY

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All maps within this document can be downloaded from the Council's website as individual PDFs

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Fleet is the largest settlement within the District and includes a significant proportion of the District’s employment opportunities. The town benefits from its location next to the M3 motorway (Junction 4a), as well as the provision of a mainline railway station (in north east Fleet). Fleet Town Centre is the primary shopping centre within the District.

Most of the town was developed from the 1900s onwards, and Fleet Town Centre still retains a high number of locally listed buildings dating to this period. North Fleet is a large residential area, also mainly developed in the early 20th century, which is now a conservation area. Another conservation area which is based on the Basingstoke Canal cuts across the town from east to west, creating a separation between Fleet and Church Crookham. Otherwise there has been a great deal of more recent housing development, particularly in Elvetham Heath, which has only been completed recently and has its own school, community hall, church and supermarket. Church Crookham retains some areas of late 19th or early 20th century houses, somewhat scattered, but most of the buildings date to the 1960s or later.

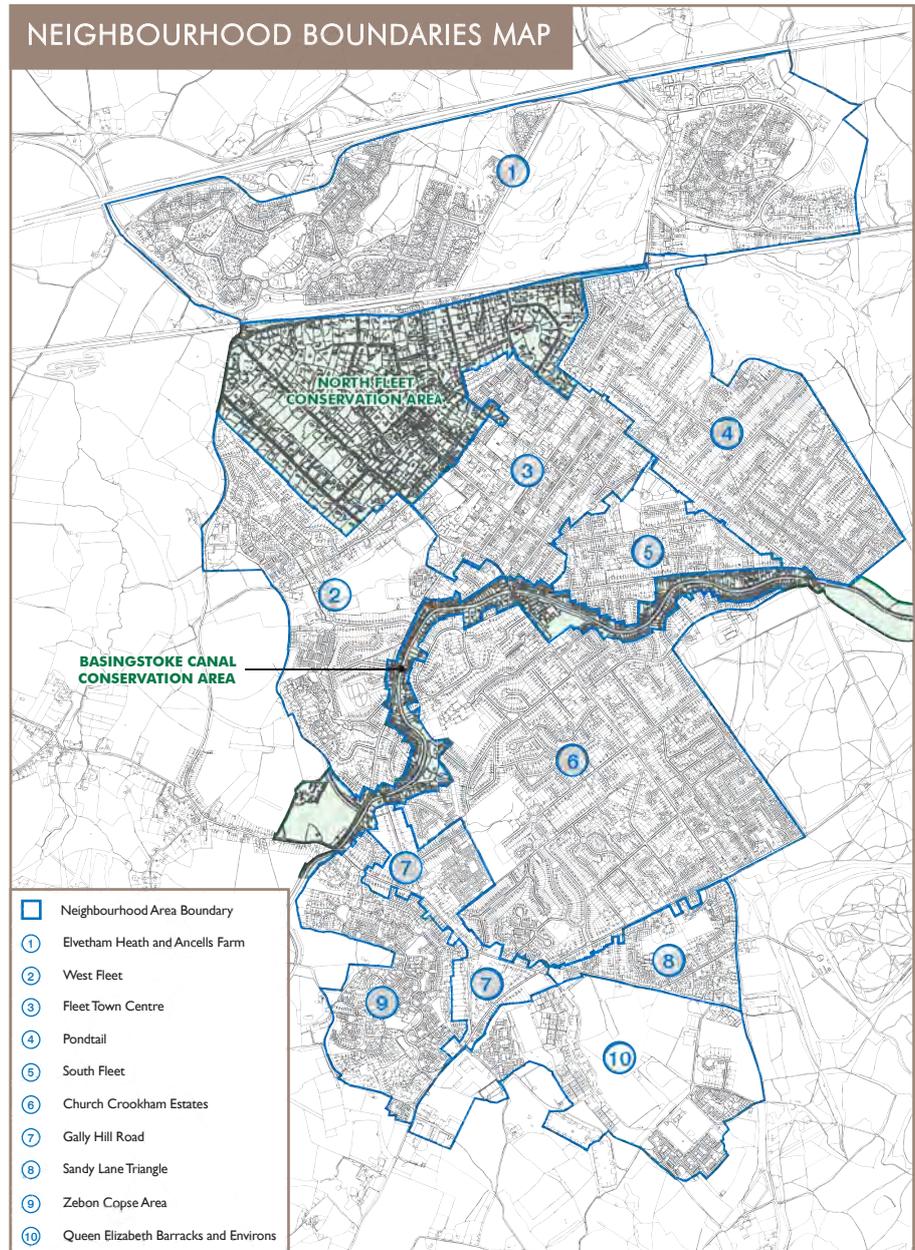
There are ten Neighbourhood Areas:

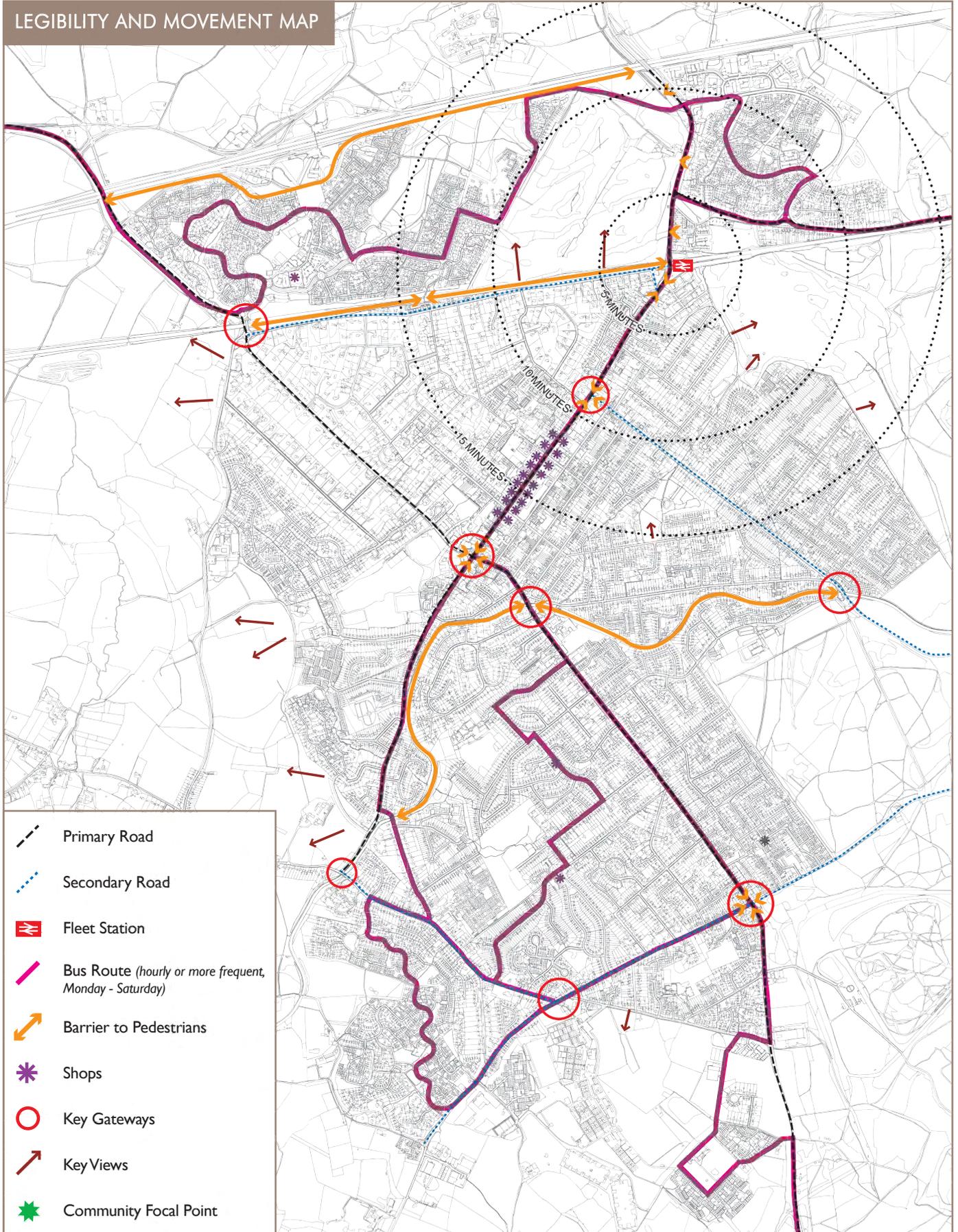
Fleet

- Elvetham Heath & Ancells Road
- Fleet Town Centre
- Pondtail
- South Fleet
- West Fleet

Church Crookham

- Church Crookham Estates
- Gally Hill Road
- Queen Elizabeth Barracks
- Sandy Lane Triangle
- Zebon Copse





1.2 ELVETHAM HEATH AND ANCELLS ROAD NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

LOCATION

Elvetham Heath is a new 130 hectare residential development which lies to the north of Fleet, between the M3 and the railway line (London to Southampton line). Elvetham Heath provides a range of ancillary facilities including a primary school, public house, supermarket, community hall, and a church, all grouped around a central square called The Key. Green open spaces and a nature reserve add to the attractions of the area, as well as the close proximity of the North Hants Golf Course.

Ancells Road is also in residential uses with a small area of offices (the Ancells Business Park) between it and the M3.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1984 Elvetham Heath, previously known as Railroad Heath and used for commercial forestry, was identified as an area for new housing. Outline planning permission was given in 1997 and full details approved in 1999. The first residents moved into their houses in 2000 and the final buildings were completed in 2008.

Most of the houses in the Ancells Road area date from the 1970s onwards. The offices in the adjoining Business Park are more modern, probably dating to the 1980s.



Typical housing developments in Elvetham Heath

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Elvetham Heath development provided approximately 1,850 residential units varying from 1-2 bedroom flats to spacious detached family houses. Different house builders built different parts of the estate, following a Masterplan which provided criteria relating to detailed design and materials. Generally, these loosely follow the example provided by local vernacular buildings, Victorian and Edwardian buildings, and Arts and Crafts buildings. The retention of existing mature trees and the creation of several areas of green open space, including a 20 hectare nature reserve, give the estate a pleasantly green character despite the relatively the high density of the buildings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ELVETHAM HEATH AND ANCELLS ROAD CHARACTER AREAS

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTER AREAS ARE:

Area A: Low density residential area

- Substantial detached houses set well back from the road
- Brown or red brick with clay tiles
- 2 storeys high
- Narrow plots but with generous front and back gardens

Sensitivity to change: High



Area B: Medium to high density residential area

- Varied houses of different designs and materials, interspersed with some apartment blocks
- Two to three storeys
- Use of brown or red brick, slate or clay tiled roofs
- Retention of mature trees, the use of wide grass verges, and the careful attention to the public realm, all add to the attractions of this area

Sensitivity to change: High



Area C: Community facilities around The Key

- Important centre with a variety of facilities – school, church, community hall, and public house
- Buildings have some presence particularly the church
- Proximity of the green open spaces and the adjoining areas of woodland add to the area's attractions

Sensitivity to change: High

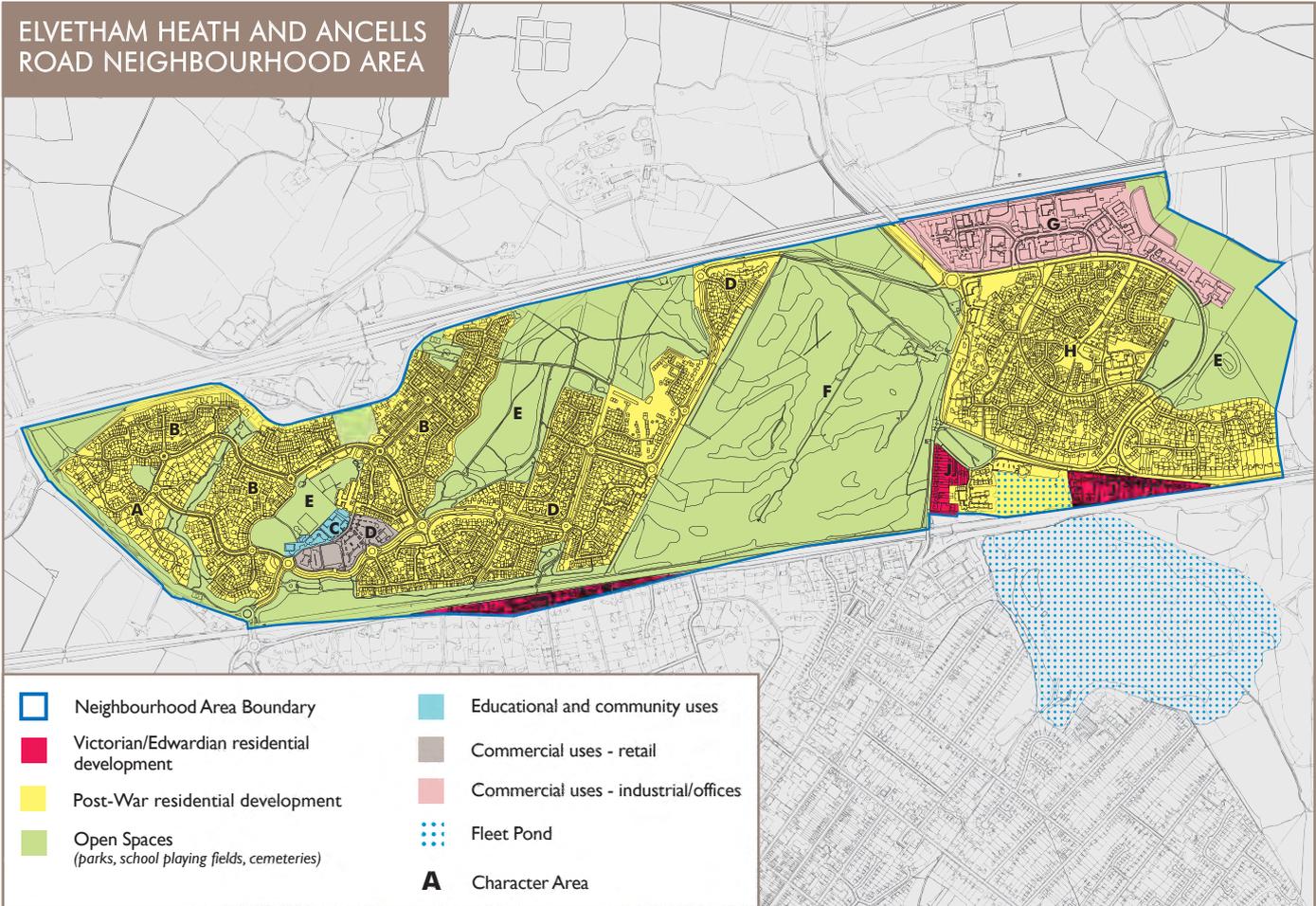


Area D: Morrisons Supermarket

- Standard large supermarket providing valuable local facility
- Large blocks of buildings around the large car park, with many mature trees

Sensitivity to change: High





Area E: Open green space

- Varied open green spaces including woodland and a nature reserve



Sensitivity to change: High

Area F: North Hants Golf Course

- Well landscaped modern golf course with large areas of woodland



Sensitivity to change: High

Area G: 1980s/1990s office and warehouse development

- Small industrial estate with a variety of mainly single storey office blocks
- Large car parks are shielded by the many trees and hedgerows
- Spacious layout



Sensitivity to change: Medium

Area H: Late 20th century residential development off Ancells Road

- Planned development with largely cohesive streetscape
- Curving road layout with a number of cul-de-sacs
- Mainly detached 2 storey houses of a similar age
- Brick-built houses of 2 storeys with pitched roofs
- Front gardens and mature trees add to somewhat 'hidden' character of this part of Fleet



Sensitivity to change: Medium

Area J: Edwardian cottages and houses

- Paired or terraced 2 storey Edwardian cottages
- Minley Road terrace are particularly well preserved
- Proximity to section of Fleet Pond
- Some groups of mature trees

Sensitivity to change: High



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR ELVETHAM HEATH AND ANCELLS ROAD NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Areas A and B

- Residential areas of late 20th or early 21st century development
- Little or no opportunity for infilling or replacement unless on a like-for-like basis.

Areas C and D

- New buildings in planned group with landscaped space and well treed car parking area, in community or commercial uses
- Few opportunities for redevelopment.

Area E

- Open green space of great value to local community which should be retained intact.

Area F

- Golf Course – private open green space which makes limited contribution to the surrounding area although the tree belts which surround it are important

Area G

- Industrial estate in landscaped estate
- New buildings should follow the existing general form and character of the existing buildings
- Existing open space should be preserved.

Area H

- New development should be of a similar scale, general form and use as the existing buildings
- Existing plots layouts and densities should be preserved

Area J

- The existing historic buildings and intimate, domestic character of this area close to Fleet Pond should be preserved
- New buildings should be of a similar height and general scale as the existing houses

1.3 FLEET TOWN CENTRE

LOCATION

Fleet Town Centre is an attractive shopping centre, principally located along Fleet Road, which also provides a variety of other functions including the Public Library, the Civic Centre, and a number of commercial premises, mostly in use as offices. The Town Centre also includes numerous public houses, restaurants and cafes. To the north west of the Town Centre lies the North Fleet Conservation Area, separated by areas of housing and a public park. Further residential areas lie to the south east of Fleet Road, the three closest streets (Albert Street, Clarence Road and Connaught Street) running parallel to the main road.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Fleet Road (originally Mill Road) existed from at least the early 19th century and even then served as an important route through the sandy forest area. Sporadic residential development of relatively large houses had already begun before Fleet Railway Station was built in 1847, after which more were incrementally added. This was joined by smaller shops which together formed an area called, rather briefly, the Market Place. After Mr H W Brake purchased most of the land in Fleet in 1878, he set out a grid pattern of streets, of which Fleet Road formed the centre. In 1897 Lord Calthorpe of Elvetham donated the ground and half the cost of building a small hospital in what is now North Fleet. Once Fleet Urban District Council was formed in 1904, Fleet Road began to be developed in a more comprehensive way, and many of the locally listed buildings in Fleet Road relate to the great upsurge in building which took place in the next ten years, before the onset of WWI. Many of the smaller houses and cottages to the south of Fleet Road were also built at this time. The sale of land in North Fleet by the Elvetham Estate in the early 1920s led to the construction of a large number of substantial detached houses which now lie within the North Fleet Conservation Area. A number of buildings, mainly commercial, were added in the 1960s, and in the 1980s a large Shopping Mall (the Hart Centre) was built between Fleet Road and Albert Road.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The defining feature of this area is provided by the grid pattern of streets of which Fleet Road forms the most northerly. The rolling topography, wide streets, and consistent building lines along Fleet Road, Albert Street, Clarence Road and Connaught Road, are of special note. These streets are crossed at right angles by three more parallel streets- Victoria Road, Branksomewood Road and Church Road. The area retains a largely domestic scale particularly along Fleet Road where the historic commercial properties are usually only two storeys high.

Fleet Road contains a high concentration of early 20th century buildings, many of which are locally listed and were built as shops with residential accommodation above. To the south, the grid pattern of streets are remarkable for a similar concentration of Edwardian cottages and houses. Around the periphery of the Neighbourhood Area is mainly residential development of varied dates, some of it relatively recent. The survival of many mature trees adds to the general ambiance of the Neighbourhood Area, particularly in the north towards the North Fleet Conservation Area.



Fleet Road



Clarence Road

There are four Neighbourhood Areas in Fleet: Fleet Town Centre, Pondtail, South Fleet and West Fleet.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FLEET TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER AREAS

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTER AREAS ARE:

Area A: Residential area between the North Fleet Conservation Area and Fleet Road

- Development of very mixed dates between 1900 and 1990s
- Mixture of historic grid pattern of streets with (in the south west) closed late 20th century cul-de-sacs
- Varied densities according to date of development
- A number of larger blocks of flats have begun to adversely affect the more domestic scale of the earlier buildings
- Building heights – mainly two storey with the occasional three storey modern block
- Campbell Close, a development of 1960s bungalows, is vacant and awaiting redevelopment
- Notable mature trees link this Character Area with the trees in the adjoining North Fleet Conservation Area



Typical housing densities: Between 7 and 15 units/hectare

Sensitivity to change: Medium

Area B: The Views Meadow

- Only public open green space in Fleet Town Centre
- Open grassed area bordered in places by mature trees
- Skate-boarding facility popular with younger residents

Sensitivity to change: High

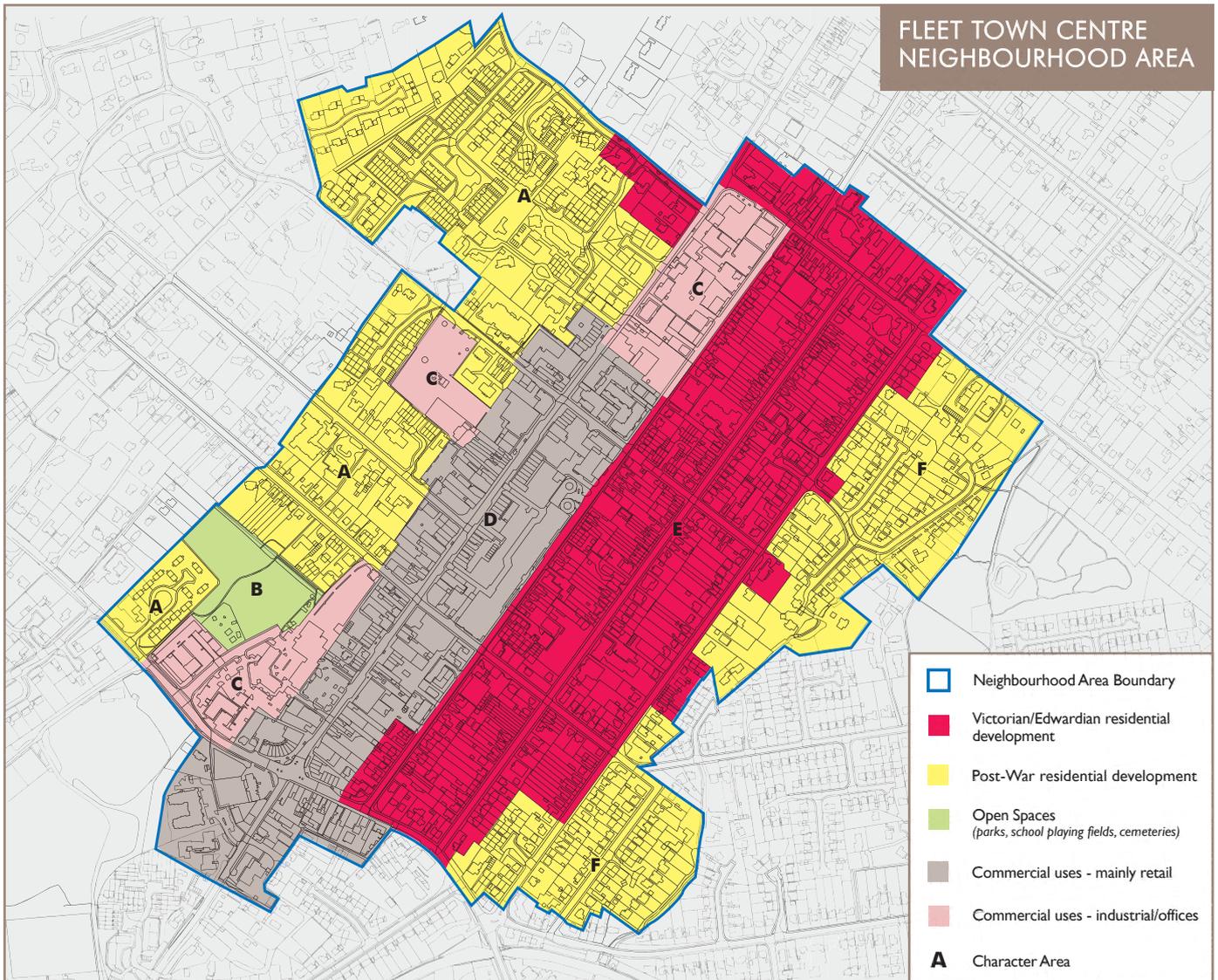


Area C: Areas of commercial development off Fleet Road

- Mainly B1 offices with large public and private car parking areas
- Some public car parks
- Mainly 1980s buildings three-four storeys high
- None of the buildings are of any special merit apart from the Travis Perkins offices
- Varied materials, designs and details with little sense of cohesiveness

Sensitivity to change: Low





Area D: Fleet Road

- Principal retail area of Fleet retaining its Edwardian character
- Mix of early 20th century purpose-built shops, with some 1960s infill and a 1980s shopping mall (The Hart Centre)
- Many locally listed buildings, mainly located in the south west part of the road
- Two-three storeys with a common building line, often on the back of the pavement
- The historic buildings are notable for their use of red brick, tile hanging, steeply pitched roofs and gables facing the street
- By contrast, the inappropriate scale and poor quality detailing of the Hart Centre and some of the 1960s buildings
- A number of specific 'negative' buildings where sensitive redevelopment would be welcome



Sensitivity to change: High

Area E: Residential development in Albert Road, Clarence Road and Connaught Road

- Area of High Townscape Value
- Some commercial uses along Kings Road
- Part of the grid pattern of streets set out in the early 20th century
- Many of the houses and cottages date to this period
- Unique and discernible urban grain with narrow plots with detached, semi-detached or terraced houses located close together
- Small front gardens with a common building line
- Use of brown brick, pitched slated roofs, timber sash windows and timber front doors
- Long views along each of the undulating main streets
- A few larger blocks of flats have been built by amalgamating sites, which are negative features
- Views to the back of the Hart Centre from Albert Road are negative
- Kings Road contains some purpose-built two storey Edwardian shops and the similarly dated former brewery on the corner with Fleet Road



Typical housing density: 20 units/hectare

Sensitivity to change: High

Area F: Very mixed mid to late 20th century residential development

- Two storey houses with no cohesion or common building line
- Several cul-de-sacs
- Variety of plots sizes

Sensitivity to change: Medium



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR FLEET TOWN CENTRE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Areas A and F

- Replacement buildings must be of a similar scale and height
- Amalgamation of plots may be acceptable, subject to development reflecting the prevailing character of the area

Area B

- Public parkland must be retained

Area C

- Significant renewal opportunities exist in these areas
- The redevelopment of identified negative sites would be welcome
- Sites facing Fleet Road, Reading Road North and Harlington Way, have the potential to maximise their sustainability through the development of multiple storeys
- However, sites facing Albert Road should reflect the domestic scale of buildings on the opposite side of the road
- Development on the boundary of the parkland should seek to improve the integration of the park into the town centre

Area D

- New development facing Fleet Road will need to be of the highest possible quality where the retention, enhancement and potential reinterpretation of the unique Edwardian character should be a priority, including the enhancement of the locally listed and 'positive' buildings (as identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map)
- Generally, development should either be two or three storeys
- There are various opportunities for public realm and traffic management improvements

Area E

- A high quality townscape that could merit conservation area status
- Generally existing buildings should be retained
- Extensions must be in keeping with existing buildings and should not come forward of the common building line
- Amalgamation of plots to allow redevelopment should be resisted
- Existing building heights must be preserved