

IN THE PRESENT

The Study Area is affected by several physical and policy constraints. The **Primary Shopping Core** abuts Druitt Gardens to the east. The Gardens themselves are designated as **Public Open Space (POS)** while the area immediately south of Bank Close car park is **proposed POS** (see Local Plan). Several Grade II **Listed** and **Locally Listed buildings** are contained within the Study Area and much of the Gardens are contained within a site of a **Scheduled Ancient Monument**. The Study Area lies within the Town Centre **Conservation Area**.

The trees contained within and around the Gardens are protected through the area's designation as a Conservation Area. However, two individual Holm Oaks are subject to **Tree Preservation Orders**. The Creedy is a definitive **Right of Way**.

The Library Gardens are not designated as POS and are partially contained within the Primary Shopping Core. The gardens are 'contained' on their northern boundary by a **Grade II Listed wall**.

The gardens to the rear of 13 Wick Lane are to be incorporated within Wick Lane car park while the car park frontage has been identified as providing a redevelopment opportunity (see Local Plan).

Policy ES 5 of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan applies to three separate and distinct areas, commonly known as The Lanes, the Cornfactor site and the Post Office Arcade / Sorting Office site (see Fig 12).

The majority of the Study Area is in public ownership, i.e. owned either by Christchurch Borough Council (CBC) or Dorset County Council (DCC). It is proposed that DCC transfers its ownership of Druitt Gardens to CBC so that the latter is in a better position to safeguard the future of the Gardens and to ensure the appropriate redevelopment of the Lanes and Cornfactor sites.



Pic 18 View of the Old Town Hall and Saxon Square from the Library Access

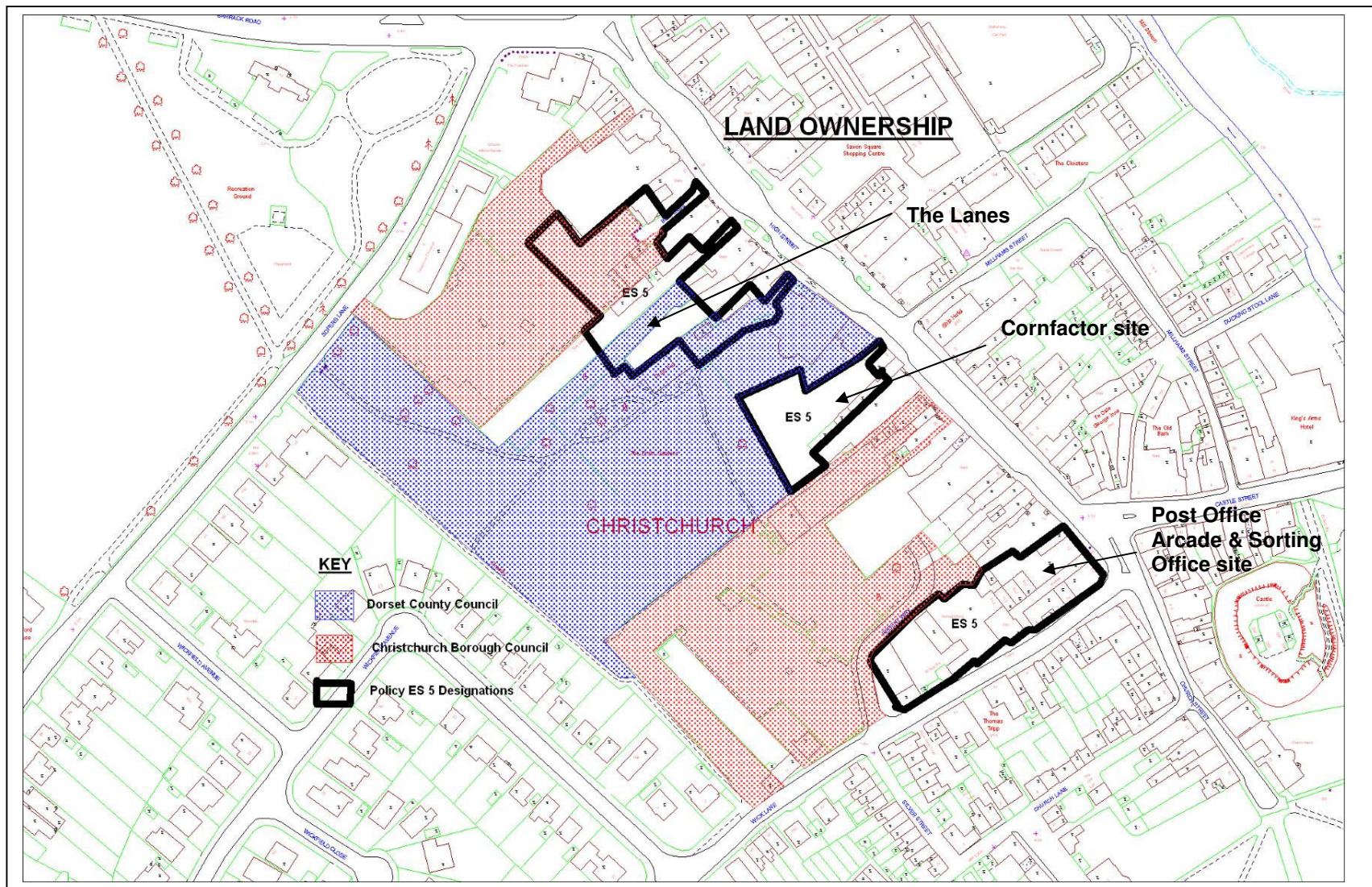


Fig. 12 Existing public ownership of land within Study Area
(Source – Christchurch Borough & Dorset County Council)

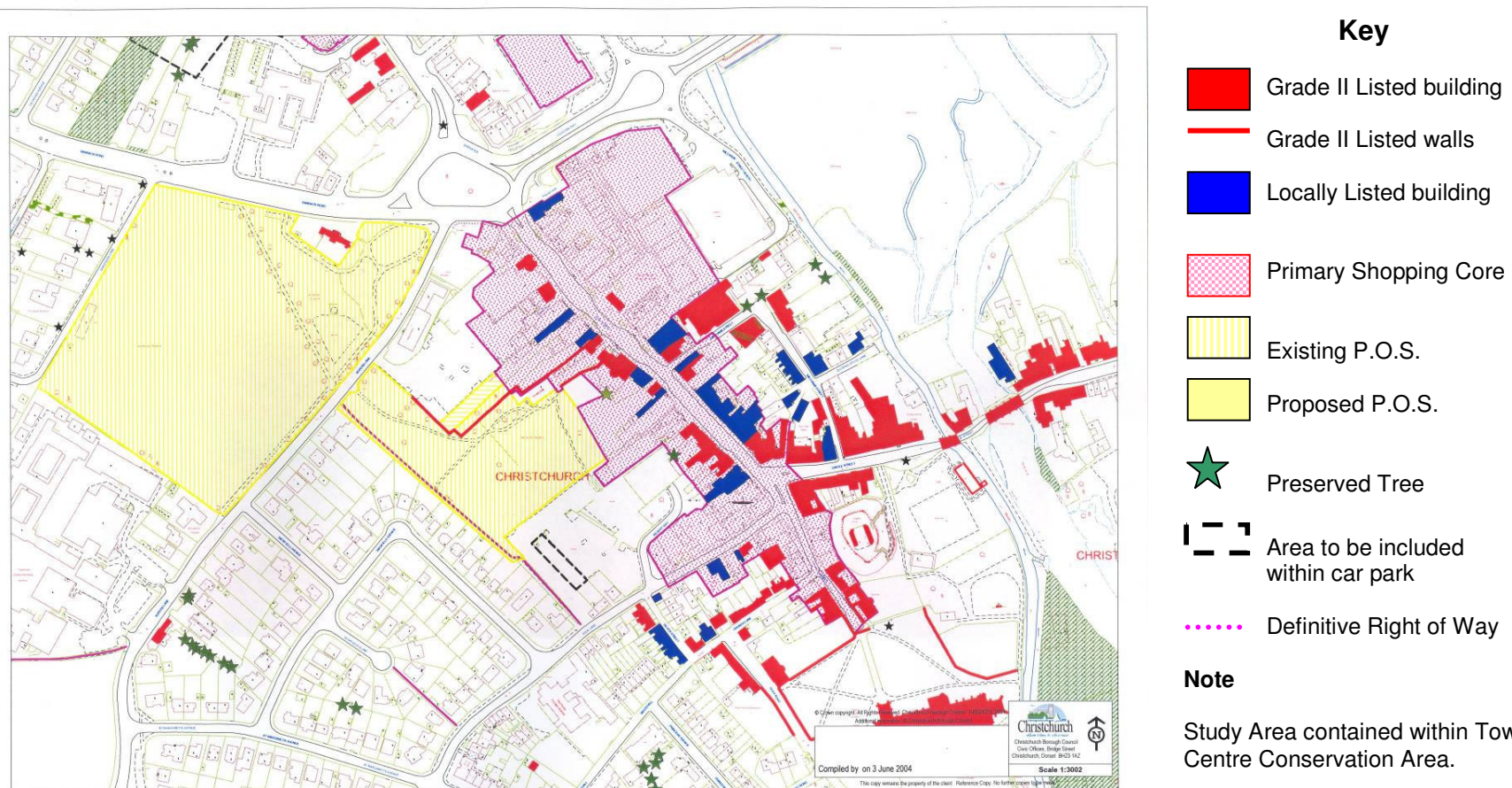


Fig. 14 Key policy and other constraints - Listed and Locally Listed Buildings, Listed Walls, newly Preserved Trees, Definitive Rights of Way and Planning Policy designations.

Service Infrastructure

Scottish and Southern Energy have three electricity sub-stations within the Study Area connected to low and high voltage mains supply. Two are supplied from Wick Lane and one from the High Street. Foul and surface water sewers are located within Wick Lane, the High Street, Wickfield Avenue and Sopers Lane while a rising main runs the length of The Creedy through the site of the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Mains Water supply is available from Wick Lane, the High Street and Sopers Lane. NTL are responsible for several telecom distribution cabinets located along the principal highways surrounding the site.



Pic. 19 The Gardens are lit by several basic standard lighting columns which add little to the area's character and ambience.

The County Council is presently responsible for providing and maintaining seats and litter bins within Druitt Gardens while the Borough Council is responsible for dog bins.



Pic. 20 Basic standard seating in need of replacement



Pic. 21 Basic standard litter bins in need of replacement

Preserved Trees within and around the Study Area

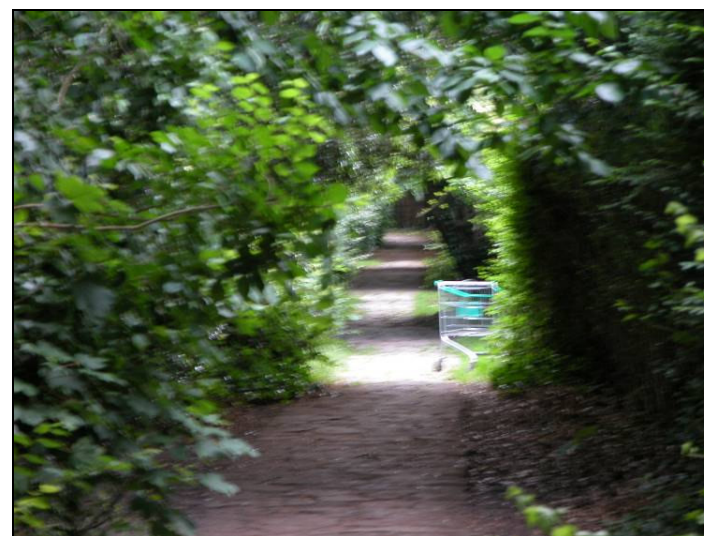
There are two preserved trees within the Study Area. The first is a Holm Oak located within the rear garden of Christchurch Library (TPO 2001 No 4, High St No 2) while the second, another Holm Oak situated within the rear cartilage of 57 High Street (National Westminster Bank) (TPO 1984 No 9, High St No 1). Preservation of these trees means that no person shall –

- (a) cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy; or
- (b) cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or willful destruction of any tree specified ... except with the consent of the Local Planning Authority ... and where such consent is given subject to conditions, in accordance with those conditions.

Condition of Trees within Druitt Gardens

Dorset County Council commissioned a tree inspection of the Gardens (reported February 2004) the outcome of which identified the need to carry out a range of works to many individual and groups of trees. These works include the removal of dangerous hanging limbs and defective branches; the removal of dead wood and crossing branches; the reduction of extended branches and crown-cleaning. The report also identifies the need to carry out further inspections of many individual and groups of trees.

As well as the above, some 38 trees have been identified as having such structural and or disease damage that they are subject to a high risk of partial / total failure, and as a consequence, should be felled. These include some 11 individual Oaks, 2 groups comprising a total of 25 Elms, 1 individual Maple and 1 individual Chestnut. The individual Oaks, the Maple and the Chestnut are located along The Creedy, adjacent to the Sopers Lane entrance and or along its southern boundary with Wickfield Avenue properties. The two blocks of Elms are located in more central positions, one block of 14 trees to the rear of 21 – 23 High Street and the other block of 11 trees to the rear and south of Druitt Hall. All the trees to be felled are of a substantial height, ranging from 9 – 18 m. Most are around 13 – 14 m in height.



Pic. 22 The Creedy: a definitive Right of Way where several trees have been identified as being dead, dying or dangerous.



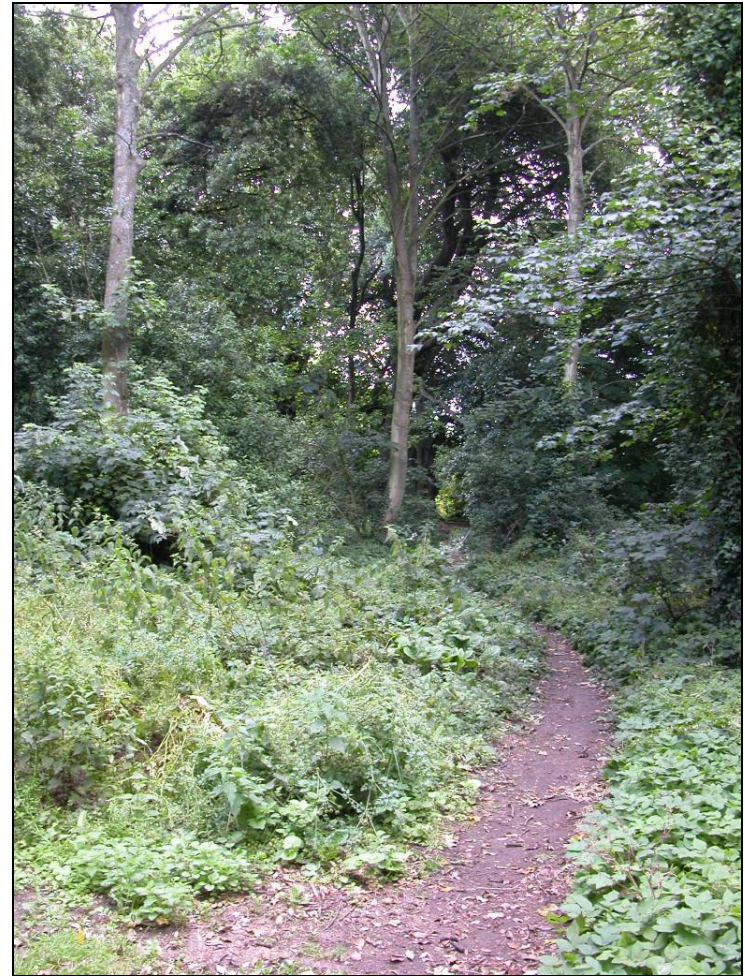
Pic. 23 The Library Gardens: to be joined with Druitt Gardens to create a new enlarged Public Open Space and/or partly used to site a Heritage Centre ?



Pic. 24



Pic. 25



Pic. 26

Druitt Gardens has not been effectively managed over the past 50 years. Stands of over-mature Holm Oaks, some dead, dying and dangerous, together with thick unkempt ground cover and poorly maintained footpaths characterize the woodland. Paths and desire-lines are blocked by fallen branches. Visibility along paths and around the Gardens is generally poor reinforcing the 'hostile' nature of the place.



Pic. 27



That part of the Gardens adjacent to Wick Lane car park display more formal and open characteristics. Views of The Priory can be seen from this area.

Pic. 28

Contemporary Development Proposals and Permissions

The Cornfactor site

The Cornfactor site is contained within the ES 5 policy area together with The Lanes and the Post Office Arcade / Sorting Office site. It is the smallest of the three sites.

An application (CBC Ref. 8/95/0269/F) for a mixed use (Retail, Food and Drink and Residential) scheme to the rear of 43 High Street was submitted to the Council in July 1995. The application was accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment submitted to the Council in September 1995.

The description of the development included on the decision notice reads ... *"The reconstruction of the former Cornfactor to form office (Class A2) with 2 x 2 bed flats over, 2/3 storey extensions to Corn Factors to form 2 retail units (Class A1) with 3 x 2 bed flats over, erection of restaurant (Class A3) with 2 x 2 bed flats over; and 3 retail units (Class A3) in 2 blocks with 4 x 2 bed flats over (which classes are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987"*.

The permitted scheme includes 2 retail units (totaling 1110 sq ft), 1 Financial Services unit (A2) (totaling 550 sq ft), 5 Food and Drink units (A3) (totaling 3,400 sq ft) and 11 residential flats. The application was finally approved by the Council in January 1997 subject to various conditions and a Planning Agreement. Various drafts of an Agreement were considered (i.e. in 1998 and 1999) before it was finally signed in April 2002. The Agreement makes provision for financial contributions (£40k) towards the cost of providing off-site parking spaces (4 no.), a new service bay, the extension of CCTV and service access over Wick Lane car park. It also covers maintaining and cleaning the public thoroughfare through the development; pedestrian access; emergency access; deliveries and servicing.

Following completion of the Agreement the decision to grant planning permission was finally released in July 2002. The permission is subject to several conditions relating to the approval of materials, hard / soft landscaping, screening, shop fronts, advertisements and servicing arrangements. Other conditions relate to the protection of trees and the commencement of landscape works.

To allow the development to proceed several on-site trees (mostly Sycamores) will need to be felled but with 2 specific Ash trees being retained.

The application proposes 2 storey buildings along the boundary with Druitt Gardens. Boundary treatment between the development and Druitt Gardens has yet to be agreed. Essentially, the boundary could either be kept open allowing access from the Gardens through the development or closed and secured prohibiting access. A gated access is proposed on the western boundary adjacent to the Regent Centre. The proposed landscape / floorscape throughout the development is essentially 'hard' through the extensive use of decorative paving. Softer elements are introduced through individual tree planting. Buildings are a mix of two and three storey with brick elevations under slate pitched roofs. The use of timber shop fronts and hanging signs, Oak columns, exposed rafter-ends etc. add interest and detail.



Fig. 16 Proposed elevations fronting onto Druitt Gardens
(Ref. 8/95/0269/F)

Following the permission granted in 2002 a new application was submitted in March 2004. This was for an outline consent and proposed ... “... a mixed development comprising 6 houses, 12 flats, 4 retail units (Class A1), 2 food and drink units (Class A3) and 2 office units (Class B1) with associated access parking and refurbishment of former Corn Factor building”.

The application was considered by the Council in May 2004 and refused because it failed to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; failed to include an archaeological assessment; and furthermore, resulted in a poor town centre development, contrary to Policy ES 5 of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan.

The Lanes ES 5 Policy Area has not been subject to a comprehensive development proposal resulting in any planning applications. However, it has been the subject of a draft Planning Brief which went out to public consultation in 1995 (see page 54).

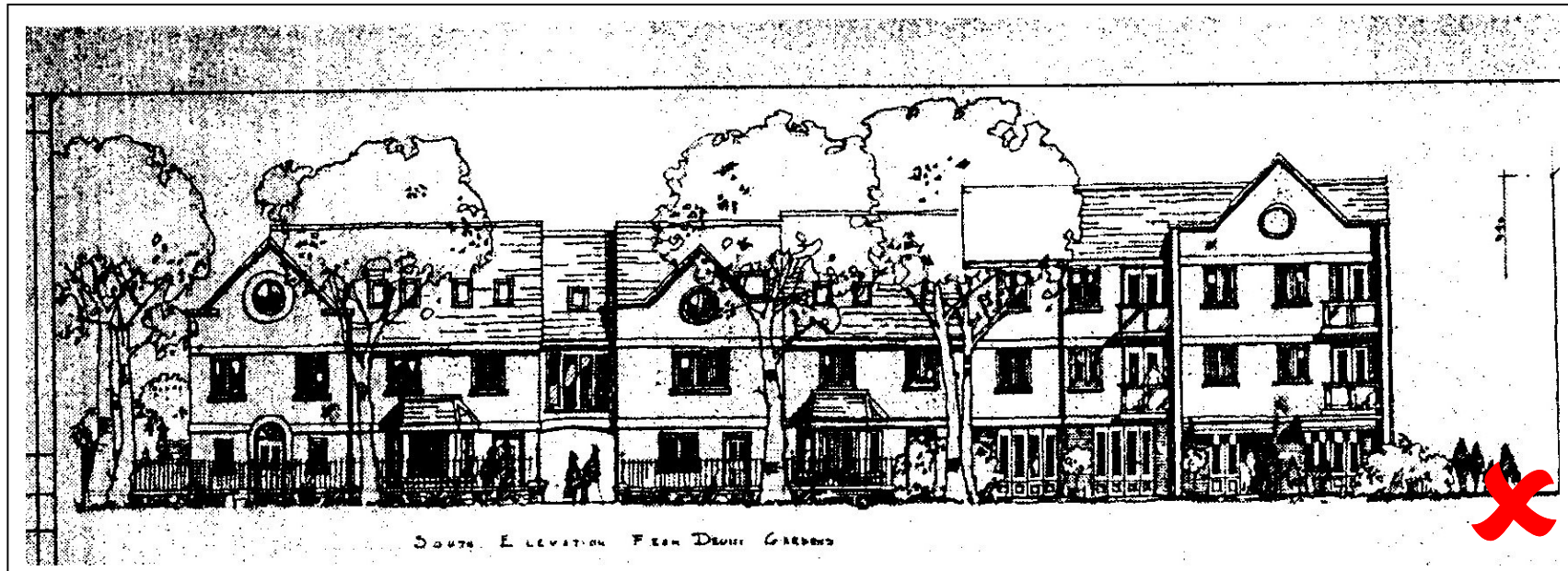


Fig. 18 Proposed elevation onto Drui Gardens – refused June 2004.

Plans, Policies, Strategies and Assessments

Borough of Christchurch Local Plan (2001 – 2011)

Para. 6.73 of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan states “... In view of the constraints of the historic town centre it would appear that space for new development is limited to the land on the west side of the High Street (more particularly in the lanes and courtyard which lie between and to the rear of the frontage premises). The location is moreover, ideal for the vitality of the High Street as a shopping centre as acting as a counter balance to Saxon Square. It would increase pedestrian movement between the two shopping centres and improve trade in the High Street shops. It is envisaged that the redevelopment scheme will consist mainly of shopping uses at ground floor level. However, to enhance the vitality and viability of

the development other use classes could be incorporated, e.g. offices, restaurants, leisure entertainment uses and in particular residential accommodation at first floor level”.

Para. 6.74 goes on “... the existing shopping facilities at the corner of the High Street and Wick Lane centred on the covered arcade leading to the Post Office are considered to be well below the appropriate standards for a Conservation Area in environmental layout and design terms. Accordingly this site was included within the area of a Planning Brief published for consultation and could be subject to a re-development scheme more in accordance with the Conservation Area whilst providing improved shopping facilities”. In consequence, the following policy will apply:

ES 5 LAND WEST OF THE HIGH STREET, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IS ALLOCATED FOR DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT, FOR MAINLY SHOPPING (CLASS A1) PURPOSES BUT TO INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL (CLASS C3), FINANCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL SERVICE USES (CLASS A2), FOOD AND DRINK USE (CLASS A3), NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS FALLING WITHIN CLASS D1 AND LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT USES, FALLING WITHIN CLASS D2.

Para. 6.75 states “... It will be noted that the area identified on the Proposals Map under Policy ES 5 includes the Royal Mail Sorting Office. If a satisfactory alternative site for this facility can be found these premises should be included in the redevelopment, but failing this the redevelopment of the remainder of the site could proceed”.

Para. 4.22 states “... In the post-war period ... a number of buildings were erected in the High Street with a bland stereotyped design and choice of materials entirely inappropriate to the townscape of the town centre and the Conservation Area ... In the particular cases of Numbers 3 – 9 High Street ... the opportunity should be taken to extend in an easterly direction, which with a realignment of the carriageway would allow creation of a partial closing off effect at the northern end of the High Street. This would have considerable beneficial effects in restoring the original intimacy and character of this section of the High Street ... Any redevelopment would have to accord with the traffic management measures for the High Street ... the principle of which is put forward in Policy T 8”. In consequence, Policy BE 7 and T 8 apply:

BE 7 AS PART OF AN OVERALL PACKAGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO ALLVIAE VEHICULAR / PEDESTRIAN CONFLICT IN THE TOWN CENTRE, THE REDEVELOPMENT OF NOS 3 – 9 HIGH STREET WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICIES BE 2, BE 3 AND BE 4. THE OPPORTUNITY SHALL BE TAKEN TO CREATE A ‘VISUAL STOP’ AT THE NORTHERN END OF THE HIGH STREET WHICH MAY INVOLVE SOME REALIGNMENT OF THE CARRIAGEWAY.

T 8 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES WILL BE PROPOSED FOR PUREWELL, BRIDGE STREET, THE TOWN CENTRE INCLUDING THE HIGH STREET AND PRIORY QUARTER WITH THE AIM OF REDUCING PEDESTRIAN / VEHICULAR CONFLICT AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT. THE AREAS AND ROADS AFFECTED BY THE POLICY ARE SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

Para. 8.23 states that “... Druitt Gardens is worthy of special mention. Policy ES 5 designates an area for shopping and other facilities on land west of the High Street. In Policy ES 5 it is made clear that there should be no encroachment of any development onto the Gardens. A formal designation of Druitt Gardens as a proposed

public open space is appropriate to underline the Local Planning Authority’s commitment to maintaining this ‘green lung’ within the Town Centre. The area designated includes the additional area of land adjoining the north-western boundary which was agreed as an amendment to the Christchurch Town Centre Local Plan”. Hence the following Policy applies:

L 4 DRUITT GARDENS AND ADJOINING LAND AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

Furthermore:

L 1 A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR NEW BUILDING OR CHANGE OF USE THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE LOSS OF ANY OR PART OF ANY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, DELINEATED AS L 1 ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- 1) IT OCCURS AS A RESULT OF ANY PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN THIS LOCAL PLAN – IN WHICH CASE IT SHALL BE REPLACED BY AN AREA EQUAL IN ACREAGE, CONVENIENCE, ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITY, OR
- 2) IT WOULD ENHANCE OR ASSIST IN THE USE OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FOR PUBLIC RECREATIONAL USE.

DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE PLAN AREA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- 1) IT IS COMPATIBLE WITH ANY RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE OPEN SPACE AND
- 2) IT WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VISUAL AMENITY, WILDLIFE OR HISTORIC VALUE OF THE OPEN SPACE.

The study area is contained within the Town Centre Conservation Area within which it is the duty of the Local Planning Authority to ensure that new development harmonizes with the special character of the area. Para. 4.20 advises that the Central Conservation Area “... is focused on the historic town centre area ... The area contains many statutory listed and local interest buildings ... including ... five Grade 1 Listed buildings ... The factors which contribute to the area’s character include the form of the town with its network of narrow streets, the quality of the buildings, individually and in groups, the interesting variety of architecture and the ancient bridges. Just as important is the natural beauty of the area with its open spaces, gardens, quay, riverside areas and water meadow setting. All these features contribute to the Conservation Area’s extremely attractive visual quality and unique historic character”. Para. 4.21 goes on to

promote the environmental improvement of the High Street “... *To maintain the attractiveness of the High Street as a popular shopping and tourist facility the Council will pursue a programme of improvements. These ... will be designed to enhance the visual quality of the street, maintaining the historic qualities of buildings and could include the co-ordination of colour schemes*”. In consequence, the following policy applies:

BE 1 **WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA, FOR EITHER NEW DEVELOPMENT, ALTERATION / EXTENSION OR CHANGE OF USE, SPECIAL ATTENTION SHALL BE PAID TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.**

Para. 4.9 states “... *Government advice... states that the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area...*”. Policy BE 2 sets out criteria for helping to assess proposals for demolition, i.e.:

BE 2 **A PROPOSAL FOR A DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL INVOLVE THE TOTAL OR SUBSTANTIAL DEMOLITION OF AN UNLISTED BUILDING THAT MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:**

- 1) **THERE IS CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT ALL REASONABLE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO CONTINUE THE PRESENT USE OR TO FIND A SUITABLE USE FOR THE BUILDING AND THESE EFFORTS HAVE FAILED, AND**
- 2) **THE PRESERVATION IN SOME FORM OF CHARITABLE OR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IS NOT POSSIBLE OR SUITABLE, OR**
- 3) **THERE WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL PLANNING BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY FROM REDEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD DECISIVELY OUTWEIGH THE LOSS RESULTING FROM THE DEMOLITION.**

A CONDITION MAY BE IMPOSED TO PROVIDE THAT DEMOLITION SHALL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL A CONTRACT FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS OF REDEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN MADE.

Policy BE 3 deals with ordinary buildings that make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area:

BE 3 **WHERE AN UNLISTED BUILDING IN A CONSERVATION AREA MAKES LITTLE OR NO CONTRIBUTION TO ITS CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE, PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL THAT WILL INVOLVE ITS TOTAL OR SUBSTANTIAL DEMOLITION IF THERE ARE ACCEPTABLE AND DETAILED PLANS FOR ANY REDEVELOPMENT.**

A CONDITION MAY BE IMPOSED TO PROVIDE THAT DEMOLITION SHALL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL A CONTRACT FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS OF REDEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN MADE

With respect to new development within a Conservation Area, para. 4.11 states “... *new development will only be permitted if it can be designed to accord with the special architectural and visual qualities of the Conservation Area ...*”. In consequence, Policy BE 4 applies:

BE 4 **WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS AND FOR CHANGE OF USE OF LAND OR BUILDINGS WILL BE EXPECTED TO MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

- 1) **THE SITING, DESIGN, SCALE, FORM AND MATERIALS RESPECT AND COMPLEMENT THOSE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND SPACES.**
- 2) **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BOUNDARIES OR OTHER FEATURES CONTRIBUTING TO THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA ARE RETAINED.**
- 3) **OPEN SPACES IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER OR HISTORIC VALUE OF THE AREA ARE PROTECTED.**
- 4) **IMPORTANT VIEWS WITHIN AND OUT OF THE AREA ARE MAINTAINED.**
- 5) **THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, TRAFFIC, PARKING, SERVICES OR NOISE GENERATED BY THE PROPOSAL DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.**

Druitt Gardens contain the remnants of the Saxon Town Wall, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In consequence, Policies BE 20 and BE 21 apply:

BE 20 **THERE IS A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF THE PHYSICAL PRESERVATION OF SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND THEIR SETTINGS. THE MONUMENTS AND SITES ARE MARKED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. IN ORDER TO PROTECT SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES FROM INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT MONUMENTS OR SITES, INVOLVE SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION TO THEM OR WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THEIR SETTINGS.**

BE21 **WHERE THERE ARE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OR POTENTIAL, THE DEVELOPER WILL BE REQUESTED TO ARRANGE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION PRIOR TO ANY PLANNING DECISION BEING TAKEN. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:**

- 1) IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE REMAINS CAN BE PRESERVED IN SITU.
- 2) WHERE IN CONSIDERING THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE REMAINS THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DECIDE THIS IS NOT JUSTIFIED, PROVISION IS MADE BY THE DEVELOPER FOR THE EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE REMAINS PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT. PROVISION MUST BE MADE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS.

Several premises fronting the High Street are Listed or locally Listed. In consequence, the following policies apply:

- BE 13 DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING THE TOTAL OR SUBSTANTIAL DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:
- 1) THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONTINUE THE PRESENT USE OR TO FIND A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE USE FOR THE BUILDING BUT THESE EFFORTS HAVE FAILED.
 - 2) THAT REDEVELOPMENT WOULD PRODUCE SUBSTANTIAL PLANNING BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD DECISIVELY OUTWEIGH THE LOSS RESULTING FROM DEMOLITION.
 - 3) THE PRESERVATION IN SOME FORM OF CHARITABLE OR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP HAS BEEN INVESTIGATED BUT FOUND TO BE NOT POSSIBLE OR SUITABLE.
- BE 14 THE COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OR HISTORIC INTEREST.
- BE 15 THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS SHALL NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE THE PRESERVATION OF THE SETTING SHALL BE ACHIEVED.
- BE16 PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT MUST ENSURE THAT EXISTING VIEWS OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS OR ATTRACTIVE VISTAS ARE MAINTAINED AND NOT OBSTRUCTED. THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING NEW VISTAS SHALL ALSO BE EXPLORED.
- BE 19 PROPOSALS TO ALTER OR EXTEND BUILDINGS IDENTIFIED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL AS BEING OF LOCAL INTEREST WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THEY ARE SYMPATHETIC IN SCALE, PROPORTION AND MATERIALS TO THE EXISTING BUILDING AND RESPECT ITS SETTING.

Para. 7.74 states that “... *There is an opportunity to provide additional car parking within the Wick Lane car park by incorporating part of the land to the rear of N°13 Wick Lane. This will enable a better layout of the car park. Accordingly this land is identified for future car parking purposes and to help replace any spaces lost as a result of the residential development proposed in Policy H 6*”.

- P 1 LAND TO THE REAR OF NO 13 WICK LANE IS IDENTIFIED FOR CAR PARKING PURPOSES IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF CAR PARKING AT THE WICK LANE CAR PARK.

Para. 5.15 states “... *Land at Wick Lane, between the footpath to Druiitt Gardens and Regent Way, is also proposed for residential development. N° 13 Wick Lane could be retained. This allocation formed part of the published Planning Brief for Land West of the High Street, the land use principles of which were agreed by the Council following public consultation. With sensitive design appropriate to the historic area, residential development will enhance the character of this part of the Conservation Area and improve the street scene along this entrance to the town centre*”.

- H 6 THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE CONSIDERED SUITABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AS DELINEATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:

- 1) LAND TO THE REAR OF 108 – 116 STOUR ROAD, ADJACENT TO N° 3 RIVERSLEA ROAD.
- 2) LAND AT WICK LANE,

Para. 7.48 states that “... *The Local Planning Authority has been pursuing a policy of providing High Street rear servicing ... in an effort to reduce the congestion to which delivery vehicles often contribute ... Such potential exists, for instance, with respect to a service road to the rear of N^{os} 1 – 13 High Street and this will overcome the conflict which occurs with HGVs delivering to the shops through Bank Close car park. Opportunities will occur for informal shared servicing arrangements to the rear of N^{os} 15 – 25 High Street, exclusive of Druiitt Hall, in conjunction with the shopping scheme to the west of the High Street as identified in Policy ES 5. ... As this service road lies within the Conservation Area it is important its design and materials should be in sympathy with the character of the area*”.

- T 11 THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE REAR SERVICING ACROSS THE PRIVATE CAR PARK, TO THE REAR OF NUMBERS 1 TO 13 HIGH STREET.

Christchurch Borough-wide Character Assessment

The Council has prepared and adopted a Borough Wide Character Assessment. The Town Centre is one of six character areas within the town's built-up area. Although it is clearly defined as a geographic neighbourhood the area logically sub-divides into smaller 'sub neighbourhoods'. A central spine of shopping frontages extends from the Priory out to the northern end of Bargates. This is split in two by the A35 (Fountains Way), the southern half forming the main High Street. The historic core is located to the south of the A35 and separated from the adjacent suburban development by The Creedy. The area is designated as the Christchurch Central Conservation Area.

The broader structure of the Town Centre is divided by main roads passing east - west through the built up area. The historic core has an intimate scale and grain of side streets and pedestrian routes that link the High Street with terraced streets off the main thoroughfare. The Town Centre is a distinctive part of the Borough in terms of the diversity of land uses and activity. The commercial High Street, historic open spaces, boat storage, parks, and school grounds all help to create a more vibrant townscape than the surrounding suburbia. The densities and scales of buildings within the centre contrast with surrounding areas.

Within the historic core the traditional pattern of small scale streets is complemented by alleyways and short cuts. However, a fundamental issue frustrating the appreciation of the core is the exclusion of pedestrian access to key sections of the water frontage and boating facilities around the perimeter of the core area.

Landscape Setting, Spaces and Structure

The Town Centre is one of the few areas that provide public civic spaces and open parklands. These are concentrated around the historic core and serve both local residents and visitors. There is a degree of inter-connection between areas, but often the links are not easily found or highlighted. The small scale intimacy of the historic street pattern is part of the character of the town. The narrow streets

often create glimpsed or framed views of key buildings and landmarks.

The public open spaces also provide a loose framework of tree cover around the historic core. This extends around the Priory Quarter, along the Mill Stream and along the eastern boundary of the built up area. Other dominant tree cover is found within Barrack Road Recreation Ground, Druitt Gardens and the Quomps. Much of this tree cover provides a backdrop to historic buildings and settings and, furthermore, creates a sense of enclosure to the town.

Landmarks and Legibility

Christchurch contains a fine selection of historic buildings and ancient monuments. These are of interest to visitors as features, but also reinforce the sense of place when seen as part of the wider townscape. The Priory and Millhams Street Church stand out as key buildings visible from outside the historic core. Glimpsed views of these from the A35 highlight the proximity of the through route to the historic core. Other views to these landmarks from around and within the Town Centre help in understanding the broad layout of the town. This helps create a legible and permeable townscape that is friendly to pedestrians, visitors and residents. At a lower level, other distinctive features within streets and open spaces provide way-markers and features of interest. The main historic core is well provided with a range of features, i.e. historic paving, timber framing, thatch, street furniture, and groups of more traditional shop fronts and other buildings. The wider suburban backdrop to the town is less legible and thereby less inviting to the visitor.