



Southend on Sea Borough Council June 2004



Cities Revealed © copyright by The GeoInformation Group, 2003 and Crown Copyright © All right reserved

Essex Magistrates Court
Victoria Avenue
Southend on Sea

Advisory Brief VIC/CC/PB/01/June 04

ADVISORY BRIEF -

Essex Magistrates Court Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea

CONTENTS

Location Plan

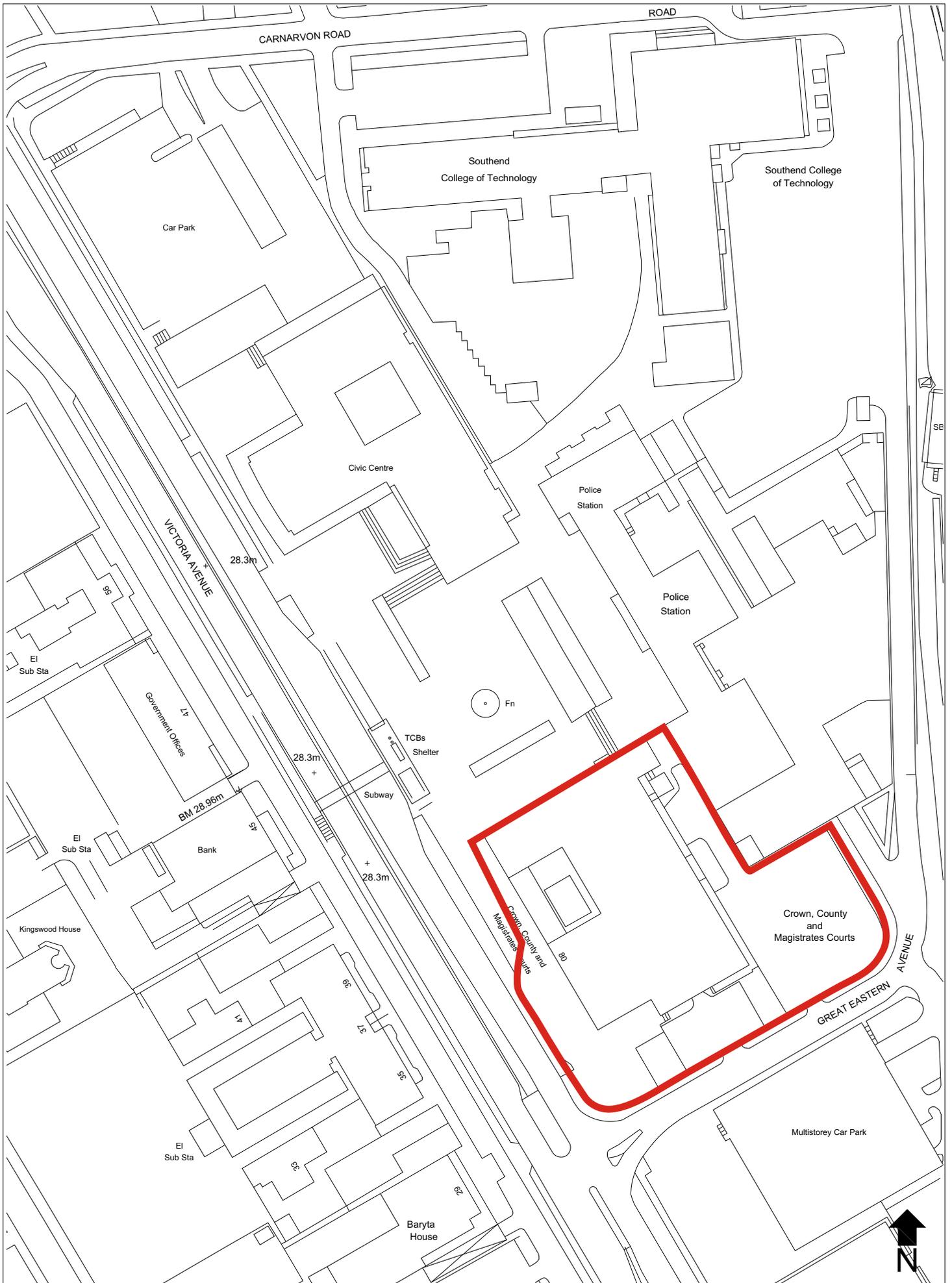
The Planning Context

Site Description

Planning Policy and Development Guidelines

- Land Use
- Building Design
- Traffic and Parking
- Servicing and Access
- Access and Safety
- Environmental Considerations

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Points of Contact



Location Plan

Scale 1:1250

Essex Magistrates Court

Victoria Avenue Office Area

80 Victoria Avenue,
Southend on Sea

The aim of this Advisory Brief is to outline the design criteria for development and the planning objectives for the renewal of the Crown, County and Magistrates Court within the Victoria Avenue Office Area. This area is Southend's principal commercial district located within the Central Business District and forms the gateway to the Town Centre. The site is in an extremely prominent location on Victoria Avenue, which is one of the main access arteries into the town.

The whole Victoria Avenue Office Area is identified as providing a significant opportunity for regeneration as a high quality office quarter.

The existing Court house is considered to be an integral element of the Civic Centre developed during 1960- 70 and reflects a municipal language of the then Borough Architects Department and the essence of civic pride and gesture. As such the setting and architecture is considered to be of historical and visual merit.

In furthering this project the Council will formulate a development team comprising all the relevant disciplines to provide the appropriate guidance. It would be advisable to arrange for pre-application discussion with the development team early in the process.

"Please note that any opinion given in this brief is that of an officer of the Borough Council and does not necessarily reflect the view that might be taken by the Council itself. Consequently any opinion expressed will not bind the Council."

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Planning Policy context for this brief is provided by the adopted Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan. This was adopted in 1994 and contains policies and proposals which set out the main considerations on which planning applications for development will be decided and appropriate development opportunities promoted. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan was adopted in April 2001, and provides a relatively up to date strategic planning context.

In addition to this adopted planning policy framework for the town, Government Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) has included Southend, along with the rest of South Essex, within the Thames Gateway national regeneration priority as Thames Gateway South Essex. (TGSE). Southend has been identified as the 'Cultural Hub' within the Thames Gateway. The Government's vision for the Thames Gateway is to create a strong and diverse sub-region with a comprehensive transport system, a skilled workforce and a quality environment for new businesses and homes. Thames Gateway was also included in the ODPM July Statement on Sustainable Communities as a growth area.

Policies to deliver the Government's agenda for TGSE will incorporate the requirement to achieve a jobs led regeneration within Southend. It is acknowledged that economic regeneration will depend in part on quality environments.

Policies to deliver the aims of TGSE will also incorporate the wider national agenda of Sustainable Development and Urban Renaissance, including action that secures significant improvement to the vitality and environment of Southend areas so that it is a more attractive place in which to live, work, shop and spend time.

The regeneration of the Thames Gateway is the national priority for the Government and as a result both Planning Policy Guidance for the South East and the Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan contain policies which reinforce this priority.

Southend on Sea Borough Council is committed to providing economic regeneration and sustainable development, high quality and imaginative design and to embracing within its revised planning framework for the town the principles of Urban Renaissance.

In the mean time it is driving forward this national and sub-regional agenda locally. This has involved reassessing the potential of the Victoria Avenue Office Area and reinforcing the Urban Renaissance principles through a commitment to development which:

- achieves design excellence;
- assists in creating economic strength;
- takes environmental responsibility
- prioritises social well-being

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site subject to this brief is shown on the location Plan and is situated at the northern end of the Victoria Avenue Office Area on the east side of Victoria Avenue. It is a 0.572 hectare site comprising land currently occupied by the existing Court House and associated car parking. Access is via Great Eastern Avenue. The existing frontage has good public space and pedestrian access.

This is a prime location fronting onto Victoria Avenue, the main approach road to the town centre, and is close to the mainline and Southend Victoria Railway Station with direct access to London Liverpool Street. The Town Centre is minutes away to the south with a further main line railway station serving several centres within the town and London Fenchurch Street. The central Bus station is also located within the town centre.

Within the town's civic area, the site is immediately opposite, to the south, the Council's Civic Centre and Police Station and to the north the Central Library.

The Council sees this site as the front door to what will be an outstanding commercial district and gateway to the town centre. The whole area will resonate with workers, visitors and residents enjoying well located, connected and appropriate facilities.

General Policy and Design Guidelines

Policy C11 – New Buildings, extensions and alterations requires proposals for all new buildings, extensions or alterations to respect the amenity of existing property, safeguard the character of Conservation Areas and important public vistas and, where appropriate, contribute to and enhance public open spaces.

The Council wishes to see development of the site respecting the existing mass, setting and spatial connectivity of the 'Civic Square' and public space. The building should have a strong architectural language and be of an appropriate human scale. The quality of design and materiality should enhance the other building within the Townscape. This opportunity presents a unique architectural challenge to further the Town's emerging reputation for high quality architecture and urban design, and to set a benchmark of quality for future redevelopment of the Area.

The site is in a key location - acting as the 'front door' to the wider redevelopment of the Victoria Avenue Area and gateway to the Town Centre. Careful consideration should be given to the integration of a creative lighting solution highlighting key building elements and spaces in and around the built form.

The requirements for any development in this area, therefore, will need to demonstrate the following:

- The highest quality of design and materials,
- Its response to the urban context existing scale, grain and morphology
- The setting and importance of the Civic context and associated public space
- Sustainability and reduction in energy consumption.
- Potential of diversity at street level with commercial mixed use integration
- Impact and enhancement of public realm
- Contribution towards public art

This approach is endorsed in **PPG1 General Policy and Principles** which regards design as a material consideration in the appraisal of development proposals.

Traffic and Parking

Policy T11 – Parking Standards, EPOA and Interim Vehicle Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Guidance) set out the Council's vehicle parking requirements for the provision of off street parking and the current adopted standards.

T8 – Traffic and Highway safety

There is no specific highway injury accident record, which the development proposals should address. The existing access arrangements on Great Eastern Avenue are considered to be suitable for the level of vehicular use. The extent of existing parking spaces should be retained and appropriate provision made for off-street servicing.

A Travel Plan will be considered an essential element of any Planning Application.

Access and Safety

Policy U5 - Access and Safety in the Built Environment and Appendix 7 - Guidelines for Access and Safety in the Built Environment requires the design and layout of the built environment to provide for safe and easy access for all members of the community.

It is important to have regard to the particular needs of people with disabilities and ensure that the needs of mothers, babies and families are catered for when considering access to and use of public places.

In accordance with Policy U5 and the guidelines in Appendix 7 any development should provide facilities for disabled persons and comply with the relevant building regulations.

In drawing up detailed proposals the Council considers that the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for the area should be sought on aspects of safety and security.

The Borough is making increasing use of CCTV for Community Safety in public places. It would be beneficial to the management of risk for general public safety and traffic and highway safety; for the provision of CCTV, to a plan to be agreed, with the capacity to monitor the public space around the development site and the traffic patterns and congestion on Victoria Avenue and its junctions.

SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL POINTS OF CONTACT

Design and Regeneration	Steve Kearney	01702 215402
Development Control	Charlotte Galforg	01702 215326
Traffic and Transportation	Tony Handfield	01702 215320
Building Control	Steve Long Special Projects Officer	01702 215749
Environmental Health	David Connor	01702 215802
In addition:		
Essex Police	Crime Prevention Officer and Architectural Liaison Officer	01702 423140

Relevant Documents

- Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan (March 1994)
- Southend on Sea Local Transport Plan 2001/1 to 2005/6 (July 2000)
- Borough Local Plan Review: Issues Report (March 2001)
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) (March 2001)
- Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan (April 2001)
- Southend-on-Sea Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012 (December 2001)
- Buro Happold/DTZ Pida - Consultation Framework Document "Town Centre Study and Master Plan Framework" (2003)
- Southend Together Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan "Southend - Setting the Standard": Adopted March 2003
- Thames Gateway South Essex Vision Document (2002)