

## **SOUTH STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

### **Location and Topography**

South Street with Chapel Road to the north is the central north-south axis of Worthing town centre. On the western edge of the area, Liverpool Terrace stands relatively high with a significant steep change of level across Liverpool Gardens dropping from west to east. Otherwise, the land generally slopes gently down to the seafront where there is an esplanade and shingle beach with sea defences. At the seafront, directly in line with South Street the pier extends out over the beach to approximately mean low water. West of the pier, The Lido also extends out over the beach but not significantly beyond mean high water.

### **Origins and Development of the Area**

The line of Worthing's early High Street lies to the east of the present day centre. Rapid expansion took place in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Worthing gained a reputation as a fashionable genteel seaside resort. In this period, buildings on Warwick Street, the east side of South Street, and to a limited extent the east end of Montague Street were developed. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as development took place on the west side of the town, South Street became fully developed, also Chapel Road to the north. With these two roads displacing High Street as the main north-south central axis, the town centre moved to the west.

In Great and Little Terraces (23-27 Marine Parade) circa 1785, this area includes probably the earliest residential seafront buildings of Worthing's Regency expansion. The area also includes three significant east facing bow fronted terraces in Montague Place and Bedford Row circa 1803, and the later Liverpool Terrace circa 1830. Worthing's first bank (Henty's) was established on Warwick Street in 1808. Resort facilities of Worthing were enhanced in the 1860s with the construction of the pier in 1862 and a seafront esplanade in 1867. Consequently, the pier became the focus of entertainment facilities in the town. By 1900, the town centre area was largely developed. Significant changes were, however, then made. For example, new shops and commercial buildings replaced older properties in Montague Street, Warwick Street and South Street. There was also an increase in the provision of entertainment facilities. The Kursaal multi-purpose entertainment complex (now The Dome) was constructed on the seafront in 1911 and included a cinema, roller skating rink, and stage. In 1914, the Picturedrome cinema opened, which, in the mid-1930s, was altered and extended to form the present Connaught Theatre. In the mid-1920s, the seafront acquired two very important landmark entertainment buildings in The Lido (1925) and the Pier North Pavilion (1926). A further phase of town centre redevelopment also affected South Street.

The period since the Second World War has produced considerable changes as Worthing town centre adapted to its emergence as sub-regional shopping centre and a major focus for business and commercial activity. The multi-purpose Guildbourne Centre completed in 1974 replaced a significant remnant of the town's early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Highway schemes resulted in demolition or planning blight, large multi-storey car parks were constructed and several town centre streets were pedestrianised. The Montague Centre opened in 1990 providing offices and a shopping arcade. Despite the demolition of many buildings which contributed to the built heritage of Worthing town centre, there is much that remains in this area that is of architectural or historic interest.

The seafront, with its significant and prominent entertainment buildings of The Dome, The Lido and the Pier Pavilions is especially attractive.

## **Architectural Townscape and Landscape Qualities**

### **South Street**

South Street is a particularly important townscape element of the Conservation Area. A clearly defined urban space at the northern end was significantly improved by the pedestrian enhancement scheme in 1998 in which most of this area was paved providing an attractive pedestrian square, which can on occasion be used for public performing art such as charity promotions, carol singing, and Morris dancing. From its wide northern end, South Street progressively narrows towards the seafront which enhances the strong sense of enclosure. The kink in the line of the street is significant for creating changing views of the street scene along South Street. Given its central location, South Street has been subject to gradual redevelopment over many years and, therefore, the buildings show a variety of styles beginning from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the buildings contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area and many have considerable local historic or architectural interest. Particularly notable are the façade of the Bristol and West building society (formerly The Ship) which represents the stern castle of a square rigged ship, and the elaborately decorated elevations of W H Smith. At the south end of the street, Arcade Buildings (1925) includes a covered glazed arcade with faience elevations and a black and white marble floor. South Street is a busy retail street which has benefited considerably from the pedestrian enhancement scheme, which reduced the carriageway width and prohibits most motor vehicle traffic except buses. The scheme also used tree planting in a series of small groups to better define a series of open spaces.

### **Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:**

- Interesting and attractive buildings individually and in townscape terms.
- Buildings three to four storeys high.
- Buildings built at the back of the pavement.
- A variety of original architectural detailing which is evident on many period properties, including string courses, parapets, window dressings, pilasters, cornices, and window frames.
- The GR(V) double aperture oval pillar box which is believed to be one of only a very few which survive in use.
- Tree planting which defines a series of spaces in the street scene.
- The well defined paved urban square at the northern end of South Street.

### Enhancement Opportunities:

- The Guildbourne Centre: Encourage ongoing refurbishment of the centre, following recent improvements to the ground floor entrance area.
- Pedestrian Enhancement: Liaise with West Sussex County Council, being the Highway Authority, to design and implement a street lighting scheme for South Street of equivalent quality to the lighting installed in the urban space at the northern end, and in front of the Pier Pavilion.

### **Warwick Street and Ann Street**

Warwick Street is a pedestrianised street forming a corridor type urban space with a strong sense of enclosure which connects two major urban spaces. Ground floor retail uses with offices above are typical within the largely historic built form. Located towards the north-east of the Conservation Area, Warwick Street is a significant element of the town centre's retail area. The street presents a succession of individual shops and restaurants which links Brighton Road to the north end of South Street and thereby constitutes a key pedestrian route to and from the centre of town. The built environment combines with the predominantly retail use to produce a street of distinct character. Free of traffic, the highway provides a secure place in which people can window shop, linger or sit and enjoy the environment and views. The cafes and public houses provide chairs and tables in the street are a popular and interesting feature in the street scene. The restaurants and public houses are important for encouraging activity in the evening in this town centre location. Characterised by individual shops, the street provides an attractive and more relaxing environment than the main pedestrianised street, Montague Street. Shopfronts in themselves are important elements in the street scene and some are of special interest, particularly on the north side where there are a variety of designs and unusual recessed lobbies. Warwick Lane links through to Ann Street to the north with an intimate and intriguing group of small specialist shops. The south side of Ann Street includes two listed buildings and several other buildings of considerable local historic or architectural interest. The historic north side of Ann Street was lost to development of the Guildbourne Centre and Ann Street unfortunately acquired the character and nature of a service road. At the eastern end of Warwick Street on the north side, the curved frontage of Colonnade House returns into High Street providing an important link. On the south side, Whibleys' excellent shopfront returns into The Steyne and provides an important termination to this Georgian terrace.

### Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- The original form of fenestration on Colonnade House.
- Individual properties built on narrow plots.
- A common building line at the back of the pavement.
- Elevations which feature bays, dormers, cornices and render or yellow brick.
- Mansard or pitched roofs in slate.

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- Timber sliding sash windows which provide a vertical emphasis to the street scene.
- Co-ordinated black metal street furniture.
- Twittens, courtyards and alleys.
- Small element paving especially clay brick.
- Traditional shopfronts and signs which respect the overall design, style and period of the individual property they attach to and which contribute to the character and appearance of the street scene.

#### Enhancement Opportunities:

- 30-32 Warwick Street: Complete the refurbishment of and bring to appropriate use these listed buildings and enhance the pedestrian square which they front onto with an appropriate floorscape and street furniture.
- Seek to rationalise the provision of equipment, posts and signs, in order to minimise clutter in the street scene, to reduce physical obstruction and visual confusion.
- Encourage, in principle, more shops and shopfronts on the south side of Ann Street to raise interest and vitality.
- In any redevelopment of the Guildbourne Centre, have special regard to enhancing the character and appearance of Ann Street. In the absence of redevelopment, encourage shops in the Guildbourne Centre to have shopfronts and entrances on the north side of Ann Street to raise interest and vitality.
- Permit redevelopment of the bus depot site in accordance with the Worthing Local Plan Review Policy S3 and accompanying text, to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.

#### **The Seafront (Library Place to The Lido)**

This section of the seafront is the focus of seaside tourism in Worthing gathered about the pier; an excellent well maintained listed structure. Cafes, ice cream parlours and amusement arcade, gift shops, the listed Dome complex, and an hotel are, therefore, characteristic uses in the area. This area also features one of the most elegant evocative seaside buildings on the south coast of England, The Lido. Opposite this listed building there are some large post-1960 buildings finished in concrete and brick and an inadequately landscaped open space, which detract considerably from the setting of the Conservation Area.

Use of the beach is concentrated along this section of the seafront. Marine Parade is heavily trafficked and the wide promenade bustles with pedestrians. Over the years, the promenade level has been raised but the temptation to build a separating wall between promenade and beach has been resisted. One of the memorable features of Worthing's promenade is that it is at the same level as the beach shingle and this

continuity should be maintained. The buildings on the opposite side of the road to the pier produce a varied townscape with a range of building heights, differing building lines and a wide divergence of building style and age. Most are also individually of considerable local historic or architectural interest. Visual confusion in the street scene is exacerbated by the inconsistent colours used for external decoration on some buildings. There is harmony of basic materials and windows and doors both from different periods and styles.

Just off the seafront is Bedford Row, an elegant four storey bow fronted terrace from the early Regency period most of which is listed. In front of Bedford Row to the east is a scruffy open space divided into fragmented areas of car parking. These were originally the front gardens to Bedford Row and this use, or public gardens similar to Liverpool Terrace, would mean a considerable enhancement to the setting of the listed terrace. At the rear of Bedford Row to the west is Marine Place wherein is located the listed Bedford Cottage and several buildings of significant local historic or architectural interest.

The area in front of the pier north pavilion was considerably enhanced by demolition of inappropriate canopies and implementation of a scheme to repave the area incorporating appropriate hard landscaping features including steps, lighting columns on plinths, bollards and railings.

#### Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- The original architectural detailing on the period properties such as slate roofs, cant bays or bows with timber sliding sash windows, plaster mouldings, balconies, and railings.
- Decorative lamp posts on the seafront.
- The architecturally interesting and appropriately detailed public conveniences on the seafront to the east of the pier.
- Seafront capstans and winches.

#### Enhancement opportunities:

- Pier North Pavilion frontage: Building upon the considerable improvements already implemented, replace the area of black top surfacing with small unit paving or other resurfacing in appropriate materials.
- Consider the scope for improvements to the external illumination of the Pier and its Pavilions.
- Relocate the Tourist Information Centre and adjacent kiosk so that the existing structures can be demolished or replace the existing structures with a building more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the seafront and the setting of the adjacent listed building.
- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement schemes of external decoration which complement their own buildings, adjacent buildings, the street scene and the seafront.

- Enhance the car park area on the east side of Bedford Row to the rear of 23/25 Marine Parade with a landscaping scheme. Such an enhancement scheme should also enhance the setting of The Dome and Bedford Row as listed buildings. Consideration should be given as to whether such a scheme can be achieved by agreement in any proposals to redevelop the bus depot site.
- Complete the refurbishment of The Dome into a state of good repair and decoration and back into full use(s) appropriate to its status as a listed building of more than special interest and taking full advantage of its seafront location.
- Bedford Cottage, Marine Place: Encourage the appropriate re-use and refurbishment of this listed building.
- Marine Place: Design and implement a landscaping scheme for the car parking area at the rear of Debenhams to enhance the street scene and the setting of Bedford Cottage, or permit appropriate infill development which equally should enhance the street scene and the setting and situation of Bedford Cottage and the attached buildings.
- Marine Place: Encourage appropriate redevelopment or enhancement schemes which improve the appearance of service accesses to the rear of properties on South Street.
- Refurbish or replace the promenade shelter west of The Lido to create a shelter of more appropriate design.
- Preserve all seafront capstans and winches.
- Permit development or redevelopment of land at the corner of Marine Parade and Augusta Place with improvements to the car park deck, in accordance with Local Plan Review Policy MS4, so as to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area, especially the Esplanade and the listed Lido. Consider the possibilities for providing a well landscaped public open space.

### **Bath Place and Montague Street**

In townscape terms, these streets are corridor spaces unified by buildings of two or three storeys and common building lines which convey a sense of enclosure. The buildings exhibit a variety of styles, ages and materials. Physically and functionally, Bath Place is an off-shoot from the busier Montague Street. Nevertheless, the surface materials and associated street furniture which accompanied pedestrian enhancement in 1992 help to link the two streets together. The large Woolworth's store has entrances on both streets, which also helps to encourage a flow of shoppers from one street to another. Some of the buildings are listed and most of those that are not have considerable local historic or architectural interest. Retail use and pedestrian activity predominate during shopping hours. It is disappointing that many of the shopfronts and much of the advertising associated with retail activity fails to respect the character or appearance of the buildings. Some improvements, however, have been achieved in recent years through negotiation over planning and advertisement applications. Enhancement of the street scene has also been achieved by removing the variety of

advertising structures which existed formerly and replacing them with advertising drums of a more appropriate and consistent design. Immediately to the west of Montague Place and Liverpool Terrace, Montague Street retains its special architectural and historic interest in the stucco buildings with attractive decoration on the north side and a remarkable terrace of Flemish gable ends in brick work and the Marks & Spencers frontage on the south side. At the junction with Portland Road, redevelopment of appropriate scale and massing has enhanced this corner.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- Buildings of individual design, two to three storeys high.
- A common building line at the back of the pavement.
- Slate roofs.
- Stucco or brick treatments on elevations.
- Original architectural detailing on Victorian properties such as cant bays, string courses, parapets, slate roofs, bracketed eaves, and timber sliding sash windows.
- A vertical emphasis to front elevations.
- Small unit paving materials, especially clay brick.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic shopfronts and signs with shopfronts and signs that respect the individual buildings and the character and appearance of the street scene.
- Continue to provide decorative planting in tubs, beds, and boats but being careful to avoid undesirable physical obstruction and visual clutter.

**Liverpool Terrace, Liverpool Gardens and Montague Place**

This urban space, which extends from the north end of Liverpool Gardens south through Montague Place to Marine Parade, is of major townscape significance. The rotunda at the hub of the pedestrian shopping area is a major focus of activity. The large paved area around the rotunda is much used by pedestrians and occasional exhibitions. The seating here encourages people to dwell and relax whilst the flower sellers provide life and colour. The area to the north of the rotunda is comparatively peaceful by reason of the tranquillity of Liverpool Gardens, enclosed by the Regency style terraces on the east and west sides. To the south of the rotunda, the open nature of Montague Place with its shops and open air cafes links Montague Street through to the seafront. Montague Place is used for occasional markets and children's fairs.

Most of Liverpool Terrace and the Regency terraced buildings at the south end of Montague Place are listed. Most of the other buildings defining these spaces have considerable local historic or architectural interest. Two notable exceptions are Beaulieu Court at the seafront end of the west side of Montague Place and the large



blank red brick wall which is at the side of Woolworth's on the east side of Montague Place. Surface materials are generally of a high quality and there are a number of key town centre landmarks. For example, opposite Liverpool Terrace, a first floor sculpture terrace on the west side of the Montague Centre features four bronze heads by Dame Elizabeth Frink. The roads do not carry through traffic but they are heavily parked which is intrusive. In particular, the banjo road penetrating deep into Montague Place from the seafront detracts considerably from what could otherwise be an attractive landscaped open space.

At the rear of Liverpool Terrace runs the historic twitten of Field Row. Outbuildings to Liverpool Terrace contribute to the attractive close intimate character of this twitten as do buildings on the west side of Field Row which run through to have their frontages on Portland Road. These buildings are of considerable local historic and architectural interest.

#### Architectural historic landscape and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- The front elevations of Liverpool Terrace and the Montague Centre offices opposite.
- Railings at the front of Liverpool Terrace.
- The sculpture terrace and the Frink heads.
- Montague Place west side which exhibits the following features:-
  - three to four storey properties;
  - narrow plots;
  - common building line at the back of the pavement;
  - architectural features which impart a vertical emphasis to the elevations e.g. windows;
- Important town centre spaces at Liverpool Gardens, the paving around the rotunda and the wide expanse of Montague Place.
- Small unit paving, especially natural stone and clay brick.
- Pillar boxes at the north end of Liverpool Terrace.
- Trees and planting in Liverpool Gardens.

#### Enhancement Opportunities:

- Liverpool Gardens: Further improve the quality of soft landscaping.
- Montague Place: Encourage proposals for enhancement in accordance with the Worthing Local Plan Review, to improve the character and appearance of this important public open space.



- **Montague Place:** Investigate the possibility's of removing car parking and vehicular movement (except servicing) from Montague Place and in its place improve landscaping and the area available for pedestrian circulation, sitting out, and special events.

### **The Montague Centre**

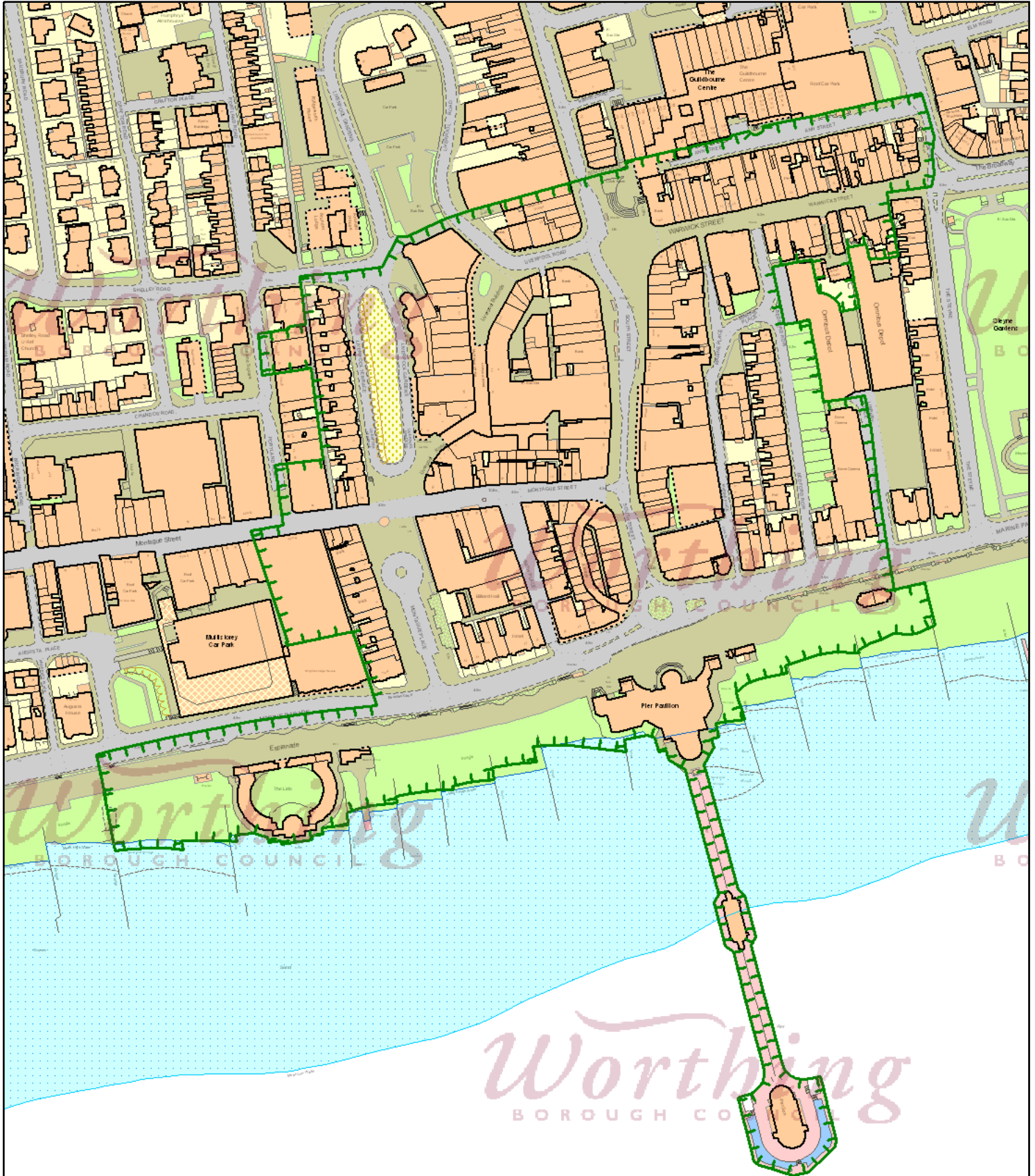
The construction of the office and retail development at the Montague Centre in the late 1980s created and enclosed a new angled shopping street in the heart of the town centre. This new street enclosed by a bronze section glazed canopy is the focus of the area and it connects two key town centre spaces; the area around the rotunda to the south and the new bell ended space to the north. This canopy creates important entrance gateway features at both ends of the centre. The west elevation of the centre reflects that of Liverpool Terrace opposite. New shopfronts on the west side of the new street reflect those in the 1930s building on the east side to provide an ordered harmonious street scene. The high quality of the materials and workmanship is notable. The area is subject to a heavy pedestrian flow and retail uses line the street. Street entertainers, an open air café, mobile stalls and children's rides add life, interest and colour to the bell ended northern space. Dominated by a group of mature Sycamores which serves to soften the built environment, this is an attractive and busy covered shopping street.

#### Architectural and historic townscape elements which should be preserved:

- Ground floor shopfronts which respect common principles, i.e. large glazed panes with fanlight, low stallrisers, plain stucco fascias and pilasters on the east, recessed lobbies, panelled stallrisers, sub-divided areas of glass, and plain fascias and pilasters on the west.
- First floor brick work; yellow on the west, red-brown brick on the east.
- The curved colonnade on the east elevation of the Montague Centre.
- The glazed canopy to the street.
- Surface finish of Yorkstone slabs and red clay paviers.

#### Enhancement Opportunities:

- The appearance of the external decoration of the Montague Centre to be maintained in accordance with the published Supplementary Planning Guidance: "Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements in the Montague Centre".
- Suitable improvement or redevelopment of the east side of the Montague Centre arcade, so as to further enhance this enclosed shopping street and Bank Passage. The Council has resolved to grant planning permission for such a redevelopment at the north east corner of the Montague Centre, subject to the completion of a legal agreement.



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