

Agenda Item No: 13

Report To: CABINET

Date: 8th September 2016

Report Title: Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch Conservation Areas – Revision of Boundaries and Adoption of Appraisals

Report Author: Matthew Nouch, Policy Planner

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Bennett, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development



Summary:

Local planning authorities are obliged to designate as Conservation Areas any parts of their own area that are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are 43 Conservation Areas (CAs) in the Borough, and appraisals that support them were mostly completed in the 1980s and 1990s. In the context of updated guidance on appraisals by Historic England, and the need to remain consistent with both the changing nature of our Conservation areas and with the NPPF in its requirement for an up-to-date evidence base, a programme of updating the appraisals has begun.

The first three CAs selected were Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch. As part of this process, management suggestions for future policies and improvements are suggested based on a clear understanding of the qualities that give the area its distinctiveness. Adoption of these would provide solid evidence to support development management decisions, and enable better defence of the Council's case at appeal. At the same time, revisions to the boundaries of these three CAs are recommended.

Key Decision: YES

Affected Wards: Victoria, Weald East, Park Farm South, Weald South

Recommendations: **The Cabinet be asked to:-**

- i. Adopt the Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (CAMP), relating to Ashford Town Centre, and designate a revised boundary for the Ashford Town Centre conservation area as shown on Map 1 in that document.
- ii. Adopt the Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (CAMP), relating to Kingsnorth, and designate a revised boundary

- for the Kingsnorth conservation area as shown on Map 1 in that document.
- iii. Adopt the Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (CAMP), relating to Woodchurch, and designate a revised boundary for the Woodchurch conservation area as shown on Map 1 in that document.

Policy Overview: These Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are in accordance with the vision set out in Ashford Borough Council's Core Strategy, which gives priority to the "conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough".

Policies in the emerging Local Plan 2030 (notably, Policy ENV14) reflect current advice and guidance contained in the NPPF and PPG (see below). As the Local Plan progresses and gains weight, these policies will be material considerations when determining planning applications.

The NPPF (paragraph 158) requires that "Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence". It also advises that Conservation Area designation should be a preferred planning device for the protection of character of villages (paragraph 86), but that the concept should be based on sound evidence so it is not devalued (paragraph 127). Finally, the document (paragraph 129) requires local planning authorities to "identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal".

Financial Implications: The initial cost for a consultant to produce these documents was around £18,000 (excl. VAT) plus expenses, but this dealt with the particularly large and complex Town Centre conservation area. Going forward, further CAMPs are intended to be delivered partly in-house, over a longer time period, meaning the cost should be less.

This cost needs to be balanced with the advantages of producing up to date evidence. The completion of the whole suite of CAMPs would provide solid evidence to support development management decisions, and enable better defence of the Council's case at appeal. It is expected that there will be no financial cost to the Council for the formal adoption of these documents or their ongoing use in planning.

Risk Assessment NO

Equalities Impact Assessment YES – No significant issues raised

Other Material Implications:

None

Background Papers:

Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (Appendix 1a)

Kingsnorth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (Appendix 1b)

Woodchurch Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 (Appendix 1c)

Responses to Consultation (Appendix 2)

Maps for comparison of Conservation Area boundaries before and after review (Appendix 3)

Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 4)

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Report Title: Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch Conservation Areas – Revision of Boundaries and Adoption of Appraisals

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the adoption of three Conservation Area appraisals and Management Plans (CAMPs), which relate to the Conservation Areas at Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch. It seeks approval for the recommendations of the CAMPs, and specifically the realignment of the boundaries of each of these Conservation Areas. Should Cabinet agree to these recommendations the re-aligned conservation area boundaries (as concluded through the CAMPs) take effect and will be a consideration in determining relevant planning applications.
2. The report will therefore:
 - a. Explain the need for and use of CAMPs in guiding development;
 - b. Outline the logic behind Conservation Area designations, including the professional guidance and requirements for their appraisal and management;
 - c. Set out the process through which Ashford Borough Council is engaging in the programme of appraisals, and how it fits with the recently-produced draft Heritage Strategy;
 - d. Summarise the documents, including their recommendations;
 - e. Detail the comments and suggested amendments from stakeholders and members of the public stemming from public consultation (in appendix 2);
 - f. Invite the Cabinet to agree the content of the documents, including the realignment of the Conservation Area boundaries in each location.

3. Complete copies of each of the CAMPs are appended, along with consultation responses, and maps comparing conservation area boundaries prior to and subsequent to their review.

Background

4. The Civic Amenities Act 1967 originally gave local councils the power to designate as Conservation Areas, "**areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance**". The duty to designate as Conservation Areas those areas that are determined to be of such interest is now contained in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
5. Designation of an area as a Conservation Area also gives control over the demolition and external appearance of buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest. Also, any work planned to a tree in a Conservation Area must be notified to the local planning authority six weeks in advance so that it may determine whether or how the work to the tree should take place.
6. There are currently 43 Conservation Areas (CA) in the borough. However, the appraisals that support them were mostly completed in the 1980/90s and therefore do not follow the current CA appraisal guidance set out by Historic England¹. In order to remain consistent with the NPPF which requires evidence to be up to date, it is considered essential that a programme of updating the Appraisals is begun.
7. The principal purpose of CA Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within and adjoining a Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved or enhanced. They also highlight key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyse how these interact to enhance their individual impact. They also provide management suggestions for future

¹ Historic England, "Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management. Historic England Advice Note 1"

- policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that give the area its local distinctiveness.
8. Conservation Area Appraisals help the Council, those proposing development, and the local community to be able to engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long-term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset. Adopted appraisals are material considerations in the determination of development proposals.
 9. Tony Fullwood Associates was instructed to undertake the first three Appraisals and Management Plans (CAMPs), following the most up-to-date Historic England guidance, and engaging the local community and stakeholders in their production. These are attached to this report. They are being presented to the Cabinet for adoption as key guidance documents for planning decisions related to these areas.
 10. A programme of Conservation Area Appraisals for the remainder of the borough's Conservation Areas is planned to run over the next year.

Assessment

11. Designation of a Conservation Area empowers the local planning authority to place particular emphasis on the types and amounts of development affecting the (built) environment and setting of that area, giving it greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping, trees, and the display of advertisements. Conservation area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties, but these are considered to be for the public good in preserving a sense of identity in the place. Owners of residential properties generally consider these controls to be beneficial because they also sustain and/or enhance the value of property within it.

Ashford Heritage Strategy

12. Preparation of an Ashford Heritage Strategy has been supported by Members to support the heritage policies of the Local Plan. A draft of this document has passed through the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group, and has been supported by Historic England, and following further work and consultation it is intended that it will become a sound evidence base for future

planning decision making, and enhance the role of heritage in the borough in delivering a sustainable future.

13. The draft strategy explains that none of the current Conservation Area Appraisals are publicly available, and that furthermore they are outdated, having been produced predominantly in the 1990s. It recommends that, “Rectifying this situation is an area of work that will need to be addressed early in the life of the Local Plan 2030 in order to strengthen the policy protection for the Borough’s Conservation Areas and to enable the production of a robust evidence base for determination of applications affecting such significant parts of the Borough’s heritage.”
14. This recommendation is being taken forward, as officer resources allow, in order to meet the aims of the draft Heritage Strategy.

Who Produced the CAMPs?

15. The Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans were produced by Tony Fullwood, a consultant, with the guidance of Ashford Borough Council. Full copies of the documents are included as *appendices* to this report. The Consultant was funded by the Council, with close scrutiny and regular assessment of the content provided by Ashford Borough Council’s Planning Policy Team working with a range of other stakeholders from other bodies.

The Purpose of the CAMPs

16. Change is inevitable, however, not necessarily harmful and often beneficial, CAMPs set out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas through conservation area designation, appraisal and management. An appraisal of the area establishes the evidence on which the designation of special character is based. It explains what might be required of owners, businesses and inhabitants of the area, and acts as an informative document for educational purposes generating an increased understanding of the place. It assists development management decisions in providing an analysis of what is positive and negative, and pinpoints opportunities for beneficial change and enhancement or need for additional protection.

Legal Requirements and Project Process

17. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Under section 71 of this Act, the local planning authority has a duty to periodically review its historic areas and to publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. From this legislation has come further guidance on the need to carry out an appraisal of the character and appearance of conservation areas which justify their designation and to develop management plans to deal with issues relating to the preservation and enhancement which affect each area. It is required that such proposals must be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate, and that the local planning authority has regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.
18. To meet these requirements, the consultant was required to produce an appraisal of each of the three CAs, which described the history and character of the area as well as discussing enhancement opportunities for the areas in a management plan. The Consultant worked in accordance with guidance from Historic England (HE) and undertook ‘walkabouts’ in each of the CAs with local residents, Ward Members and Parish Councils/ Community forums, to enable him to understand the local interests and concerns relating to heritage assets within the areas.
19. Following these events, the consultant produced draft appraisals and management plans, which included draft revised boundaries for all 3 areas, along with details of the special interest and key features of the CAs. These draft documents were published for public consultation on the Council’s online consultation portal between 18th November and 21st December 2015. Local residents in all 3 areas were invited to participate through the relevant Parish Council/Community Forum, along with other stakeholders such as local historians.
20. During this consultation period, three separate public events were held at Kingsnorth C of E Primary School Hall between 6-9pm on Thursday 26th November, Woodchurch Memorial Hall between 4:30-7pm on Friday 27th

November and St Mary's Church Hall (Ashford Town Centre) between 10am-1pm on Saturday 28th November.

21. Each event focused on the respective draft Conservation Area Appraisal and provided an opportunity for members of the public to come and express their views on it. The events were advertised in advance in the local press and on the websites of the Borough and relevant Parish Councils. Posters, setting out the details of the relevant event, were also placed within each conservation area, prior to the event.
22. The Consultant and a council officer were in attendance during each event to speak to those attending and answer questions. Consultation forms were made available for the public to make comments on the day, and details of how to provide comments online were also provided. All of the comments made during this time, can be viewed within Appendix 2 of this report. The Cabinet is asked to have regard to all of the relevant comments in making its decisions on the adoption of each CAMP.

General Structure of the CAMPs and Boundary Revisions

23. Each document is produced according to the guidance given in Historic England's publication, "Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management" (2011). This has now been superseded by the updated guidance, "Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management" (2016), and while subsequent appraisals will be based upon the later guidance, the former is still relevant and NPPF-compliant.
24. Each appraisal gives an outline of the planning context to which the Conservation Area designation relates, and details the types of special controls legally required within such designations. The historical development, setting and topography of these locations are described, while a critical analysis of the CA engages with the character of each area. Negative features – those aspects that detract from the overall appearance and character of the area – are identified; while management proposals for the continued preservation and, if relevant, enhancement of the area are outlined.
25. Historic England guidance advises that the boundaries of Conservation Areas should not be set in stone for all time, and given that the built environment

and general landscape are in constant change, the evidence to support the inclusion of certain land parcels or buildings in the CA may no longer be there. Conversely, the existing boundary may have been drawn too tightly, omitting areas now considered of special interest such as historic rear plots with archaeological potential, later phases of development (such as more recent housing), or parks, cemeteries and historic green spaces. In such cases the existing boundary may need to be extended. This is an intrinsic requirement of the appraisal, thus ensuring the designation accords with paragraph 127 of the NPPF. Each of these reviews proposes that a new Conservation Area boundary is designated based on the balance of current evidence, as shown on Map 1 in each CAMP, and the management and enhancement proposals in each CAMP relate to these revised conservation areas.

26. Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area covers over 20 hectares of the town centre of Ashford. It includes St Mary the Virgin Church and adjoining square, High Street, North Street, Bank Street, adjoining residential streets, Memorial and Vicarage Gardens, and extends down East Hill towards the River Stour. Given the large area covered by this CA, ten character areas which comprise distinctive zones within the CA are identified. It is proposed to tighten the boundary to the east, excluding Ashford School's Brake Hall, and the Flour Mills Car Park; and to the north-west to exclude Park Mall.
27. Management priorities for the enhancement of the Ashford Town Centre CA were identified as: enhancing shopfronts; encouraging redevelopment of larger modern buildings; greening the ring road; enhancing street furniture and the public realm; managing street trees on Bank Street and Lower High Street; and reducing telegraph poles and overhead wiring in residential areas.
28. Kingsnorth Conservation Area currently comprises over 9 hectares within Kingsnorth village, and includes several listed buildings including the parish church, original village school and a number of private dwellings. It is proposed that the CA boundary should no longer extend northwards to cover the main Kingsnorth Primary School Building, but that it should be extended further south beyond Church Hill to incorporate an area of open field south of Mumford House, as well as Old Mumford Farm.

29. Management priorities for the enhancement of the Kingsnorth CA were identified as: reducing telegraph poles and overhead wires; hedge planting along the boundary of the rectory to enhance the sense of enclosure and verdant nature of the streetscene; encouraging a higher quality boundary fence to the school playground; regular clearance of Greensand Way footpath.
30. Woodchurch Conservation Area measures 30 hectares and covers the whole village centre, including the Village Green, All Saints Church and the Windmill, as well as a host of listed buildings. It was split into six character areas that comprise distinct zones within the larger area. The appraisal suggested certain areas of boundary tightening, in particular to exclude the residential development at Cherry Orchard, as well as 80a-82 Front Road and the open field to its east. In parallel, there are modest proposed extensions, most notably to the west of Court Lodge Oast.
31. Management priorities for the enhancement of the Woodchurch CA were identified as: reducing telegraph poles and overhead wires; extending and managing the village green; maintaining the rural appearance of kerbs and edging around the village green; replacing the boundary to the west of the churchyard; and retaining boundary planting and hedge screening on parking bays.
32. The CAMPs proposed that the boundaries of all three Conservation Areas are changed both to reflect and to ensure the continued integrity of their historic character.

Equalities Impact Assessment

33. The requirements of the Equalities Act (2010) must be taken into consideration in the review of Conservation Area Appraisals. The main impacts in relation to this are a critical assessment of the methods used to involve and engage people in the appraisal process as being open and accessible to all (as per consideration of protected characteristics).
34. It is also taken into consideration that Conservation Area boundary extension could impose additional planning requirements for those seeking to make

alterations to their properties, which may have an impact on those on lower incomes, although this is not a statutorily-protected group.

35. The enclosed Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) demonstrates that adoption of the CAMPs has the potential to impact positively particular protected groups (as per 'age' and 'disability' categories) through promoting accessible historic environments.
36. There are no disproportionate impacts on those with protected characteristics proposed within the report, and with the consideration noted above on consultation, there are no equalities implications arising from this item.

Other Options Considered

37. The following options have been considered:
 - a. Do not adopt the updated CAMPs – Officers do not recommend this option. The national policy position is clear in that the NPPF (paragraph 158) requires that “Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence”. It also advises that Conservation Area designation should be a preferred planning device for the protection of the character of villages (paragraph 86), and that the concept should be based on sound evidence so it is not devalued (paragraph 127). Finally, the document (paragraph 129) requires local planning authorities to “identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal”.
 - b. Produce generic guidance for Ashford’s Conservation Areas. While all Conservation Areas in the borough are designated to a greater or lesser degree a result of their historic interest, there is a wide variety of criteria used to base this designation upon. Accepting that the borough is diverse, as are its Conservation Areas and, without the evidence that establishes the parameters through which this diversity is defined, there is a risk that this may be inadequate to protect the material and immaterial qualities of these specific areas. There would be a potential to ‘cluster’ functionally and aesthetically-similar CAs in future assessments.

- c. Do not revise the boundaries of the Conservation Areas as proposed. There is a clear imperative within the NPPF for up-to-date evidence to support Conservation Area designations, and the current evidence, as set out in the CAMPs, clearly indicates that revisions to the areas designated as CAs are now required.

Consultation

38. Following consultant-led workshops and walkabouts in each Conservation Area, draft CAMPs went out to public consultation between 18th November and 21st December 2015 as detailed above. The main issues and responses to each document are detailed below, while the complete public responses are to be found in appendix 3 to this report.

Ashford Town Centre Consultation Responses

39. The Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan recommended the exclusion of the late twentieth-century Park Mall development, as well as Ashford School's Brake Hall, and the Flour Mills Car Park. Walkabout events and exhibitions were held for this area, and the six responses received here and during the subsequent public consultation expressed unanimous support for the review. One response bemoaned the perceived historic apathy in the Council's approach to Ashford Town Centre, but the remainder, including that from the Central Ashford Community Forum, supported the continued development of the CAMP and suggested it be promoted more widely.

Kingsnorth Consultation Responses

40. The Kingsnorth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan advocated contracting the Conservation Area to the north, thus omitting the more modern primary school, but expanding the area to the south-west and thereby maintaining the setting of the listed buildings on Church Hill and recognising important hedgerows, landscape views into and out of the area, and the rationalisation of boundaries.

41. Responses to the Consultation (as detailed in the appendices) were universally positive, and supportive of the document's recommendations to rectify those features detracting from the Conservation Area. The exercise also provided an opportunity for local people to ask for the correction of minor errors and omissions.
42. Kingsnorth Parish Council was supportive of the document and the changes to the boundaries, and particularly commented on the importance of particular views into and out of the Conservation Area, at Church Hill looking up to Bond Lane and down to Mill Hill. The importance of these views has been emphasised in the final document.
43. As a result of local Ward Member input, it was judged appropriate to reintroduce a small area immediately to the north of the Church to retain a number of mature specimen oak trees within the Conservation Area boundary. However, the extensive area further to the north previously included within the Conservation Area boundary could only be said to comprise the setting of the Conservation Area as opposed to the settlement's historic core as per national guidance. This area retains protection as the Kingsnorth Buffer Zone.
44. There was a keen desire to preserve the surrounding rural landscape of Kingsnorth. There was a suggestion to designate this as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and to introduce some measures for the protection of local wildlife. However, such designations and proposed interventions are outside the scope of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP). It is noted, however, that the landscape does retain some level of protection as the Kingsnorth Buffer Zone.

Woodchurch Consultation Responses

45. The Woodchurch Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan advocated pinching the Conservation Area at various points to ensure a more integrated and cohesive area is defined. This involved the removal of modern development at Cherry Orchard; the northern side of Bourne's Place; and a small area to the east of 82-102 Front Road. This also involved the addition of an area to the east of Court Lodge Farm.

46. Responses to the Consultation (as detailed in the appendices) were varied, with some supportive and others not. In addition to this exercise, views were aired in two Parish Council meetings in late 2015. Many respondents said they did not understand the need for the Conservation Area's review or the boundary realignments, but the logic for both is outlined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in Historic England guidance. The other main issue raised was the feeling that this designation would protect the village from unwanted development.
47. The removal of Bourne's Place was challenged on the basis that any modification of this area could be detrimental to the setting of The Green. However, important trees at the entrance to Bourne's Place are to be retained within the Conservation Area and are more important to the setting of the Conservation Area than the 1980s development excluded. It is important for the integrity of a Conservation Area designation only to focus on a historic core, but this area's setting will remain controlled.
48. The removal of Land between 82-120 Front Road is recommended given Historic England guidance that Conservation Area boundaries should follow logical field or property boundaries. This area was an anomaly given that the boundary did not follow a natural boundary or any physical features. Respondents felt that the removal of this area would give developers carte blanche to construct poorly designed and low quality dwellings on the site. This is not the case, given the plot's proximity to the designated Conservation Area, such that it would fall within its setting, and that the area is subject to the recommendations of the Woodchurch Village Design Statement, and is bound by Ashford's strong design policies.
49. Other respondents used the consultation as an opportunity to suggest improvements to individual buildings within the village, or question the money spent on the production of the CAMP.
50. It is to be stressed that, whether or not a parcel of land is within or outside of a Conservation Area designation, the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) still apply. Added to this, there is a clear imperative within the NPPF for up-to-date evidence to support Conservation Area (and other) designations, as this CAMP provides. Without this evidence,

including the identification and management of particular character areas within the Conservation Area, planning controls can become obsolete.

Implications Assessment

51. As set out in the “Background” section above, the statutory designation of Conservation Areas affects land both within it and nearby.
52. If Cabinet decides to approve the changes to the Conservation Area boundaries as set out above and as per the maps at Appendix 3, this will have immediate effect once the Cabinet’s decision becomes effective, and the statutory notifications and press notices will then be given.
53. If Cabinet decides to adopt the CAMPs, these will guide the design and nature of development within and, to some extent, adjacent to each Conservation Area.
54. It is to be noted that these documents relate to the Conservation Area designation only, and development management decisions will still be subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). In addition, listed buildings benefit from extra protection and requirements as per the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Handling

55. In each of the three locations, ‘walkabout’ events were held with local residents, Ward Members, Parish Councils, Community Forums and other interested groups. From this, each of the draft appraisals and management plans resulted in suggestions for revised boundaries for each of the three CAs. As noted above, these drafts went out to public consultation between 18th November and 21st December 2015. The documents were made available online, and community workshops with stakeholders were held.
56. Views expressed formally in the consultation, and officer responses to these are appended, and in many cases the documents were amended accordingly.
57. These documents, their findings, and the outcomes of the consultation events were presented and agreed at Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group on 30th June 2016.

Conclusion

58. In light of the above, it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to adopt these Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAMPs) as key guidance documents for informing planning decisions related to these areas. It is also recommended that the revised boundaries of each of these Conservation Areas be designated as per the recommendations contained therein.

Portfolio Holder's Views

59. **Cllr Bennett – Portfolio Holder for Planning** commented as follows;

“THIS excellent and detailed document outlines our first three Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, that will be extended to all 43 such areas across the Borough. These have been agreed by the Planning Policy Task Group after public consultation and will form a firm basis to support development decisions in the future, and I support their formal adoption.”

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ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016



1.0 Introduction

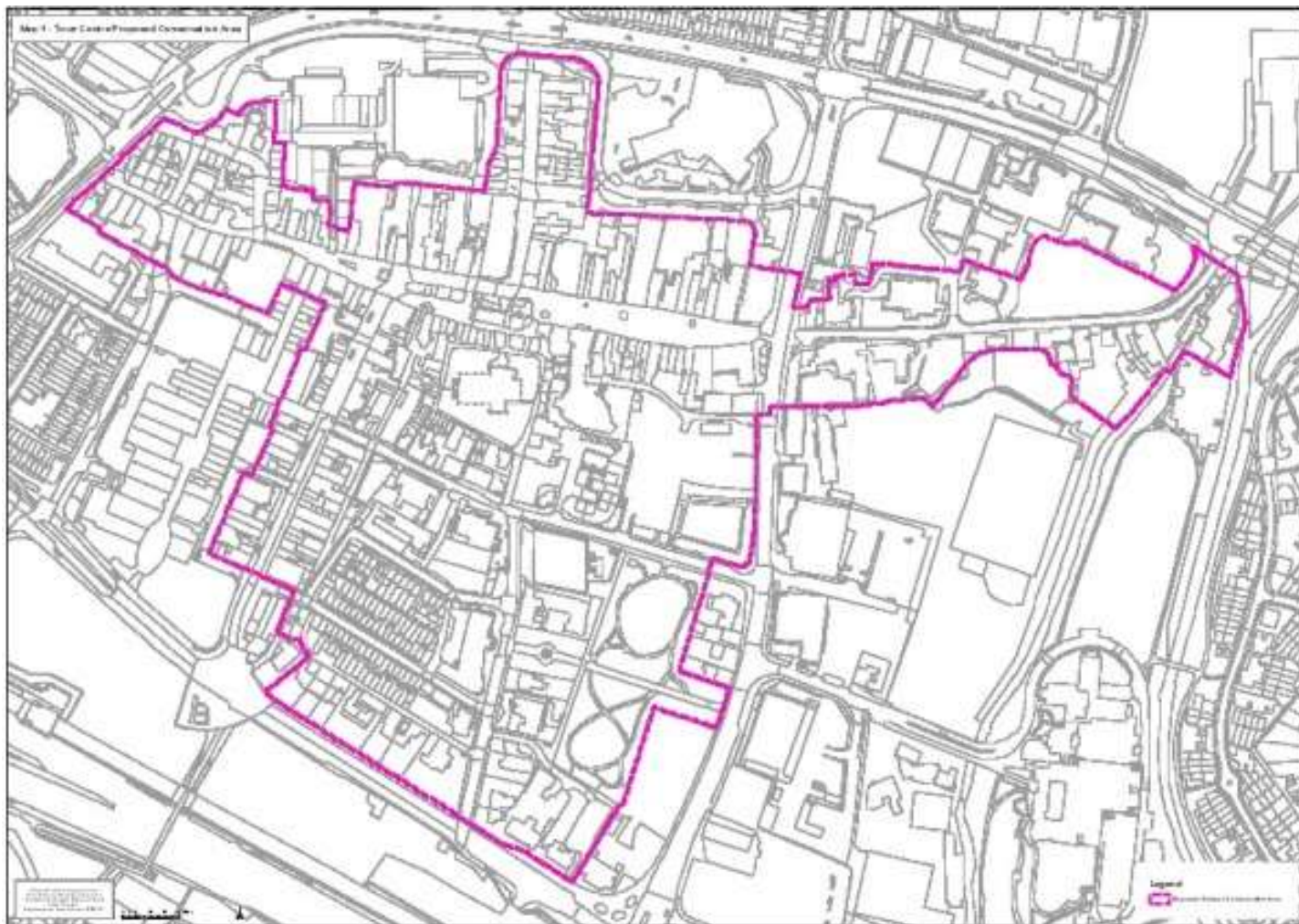
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is the first to be produced for the area and has been produced in collaboration with Borough Council Members and officers and representatives of the Central Ashford Community Forum. Local authorities are required by law to regularly review their conservation areas and produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These explain what is important about the area and what improvements are needed.

This Appraisal and Management Plan is based on best practice contained within the Historic England guidance on Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011, with Revision Note June 2012).

1.1 Conservation Area Boundary

The evaluation of the Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area has involved an assessment of historic maps and documents and comprehensive site surveys including a walkabout involving a Ward Councillor; representatives of the Central Ashford Community Forum and Ashford Museum where the group observed and recorded the key positive and negative features which made up the character and appearance of the area. This extensive process has informed the proposed boundary of the Conservation Area. A review of the boundary of the Conservation Area has been conducted in preparing this Appraisal in order to establish whether the boundary remains appropriate. In general, it has been concluded that the boundary is the correct one for defining the area of special architectural or historic interest but a number of amendments are recommended as a result of this Appraisal.

Map 1 (overleaf) shows the proposed revised Conservation Area boundary.



MAP 1 PROPOSED REVISED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

1.2 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Designation as a Conservation Area empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses to the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, thereby fostering a sense of communal pride.

The purpose of designation of a conservation area is to preserve or enhance an area of special architectural or historic interest - and enhancement measures are proposed in this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP).

1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans

The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within and adjoining the proposed Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved or enhanced. The Appraisal will be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitively sited and designed proposals in the Conservation Area.

The appraisal and management plan defines the key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyses how they interact to enhance their individual impact. It then provides management suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that give the area its local distinctiveness.

The plan will help the Borough Council, those proposing development and the local community engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long-term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset.

As an adopted CAMP, the plan is a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

2.0 Planning Context

2.1 National Guidance

Government advice concerning conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This states that one of the Government's Core Planning Principles is to conserve heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings, in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

The Government advises local planning authorities to take account of the different roles and character of different areas and always seek to secure high quality design.

In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected by a proposal (including by development affecting its setting). The Government states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a Conservation Area, great weight should be given to its conservation.

2.2 The Development Plan

The Saved Local Plan (2000) policy - Development in Conservation Areas, and Ashford Core Strategy (2008) contains the following policies which apply to Conservation Areas.

EN16: Development or redevelopment within Conservation Areas will be permitted provided such proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals must fulfil each of the following criteria:

- a) the scale and detailed design of new work has respect for the historic, architectural and landscape context of the established character of the area;
- b) the materials proposed to be used are appropriate to the locality and in sympathy with existing buildings;
- c) the following are retained – buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;
- d) the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, or other environmental problems which would damage the character or appearance of the area; and
- e) the use proposed is appropriate.

POLICY CS1: Guiding Principles

Sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications.

Accordingly, the Council will apply the following key planning objectives:

B. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough...

POLICY CS9: Design Quality

Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria:

- a) Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place
- b) Permeability and Ease of Movement
- c) Legibility
- d) Mixed use and Diversity
- e) Continuity and Enclosure
- f) Quality of Public Spaces
- g) Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability
- h) Richness in Detail
- i) Efficient use of Natural Resources

Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2010) contains the following policy which applies to Conservation Areas:

Policy TC1: Guiding Principles

The following key planning objectives will apply to all development proposals within the Town Centre. These objectives complement the more general objectives in the Core Strategy.

- A) Conserve and enhance the Town Centre's heritage and character, especially the two Conservation Areas and their settings, in particular by respecting the scale and bulk of existing buildings and protecting important views of the town's skyline and St. Mary's Church;
- B) Create a balance and mix of uses within sites and around the town centre as a whole that helps to generate a varied and interesting urban environment that best meets the needs of all its users;
- C) Protect existing residential environments and residents' quality of life and create new living environments of lasting quality;
- D) Deliver an attractive and safe urban environment with a strong sense of place by the high quality design of buildings and public spaces to help attract investors, residents, employees, visitors, shoppers and tourists alike;
- E) Create a network of public spaces in the town centre linked to the agreed hierarchy of streets and open spaces and built to an agreed quality standard;
- F) Create attractive and vibrant main streets by achieving appropriate building forms fronting these streets, with active ground floor frontages, proportionate heights, and uses that respond to the agreed hierarchy of streets and open spaces;
- G) Secure the inclusion of public art as an integral part of development proposals on allocated and other prominent sites;
- H) Protect and enhance the Town Centre's existing green open spaces, and the river corridors by enhancing their wildlife, biodiversity and landscape value;
- I) Where development, on sites within the 100 year undefended floodplain, is otherwise acceptable, ensure that this can be achieved without worsening flood conditions on site or elsewhere;
- J) Protect and enhance the existing cycle/pedestrian network and create additional attractive and safe routes as opportunities arise, to increase the attractiveness of the town centre and create new routes between it and the green spaces and river corridors.

The Town Centre Conservation Area is located within the Town Centre Core and the Civic Quarter areas as defined in the **Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan** where specific allocations are made for a range of town centre uses.

Policy TC4 allocates the Park Mall site where proposals will:

‘Investigate the potential to move the building line forward to front Somerset Road and create a significantly more attractive street frontage here in any event’ and ‘Provide an appropriate scale and massing of development that relates well to surrounding buildings but also helps to mark key entrances to the town centre’

Policy TC5 allocates Vicarage Lane Car Park where proposals will:

‘Make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, including providing an appropriate building form and a fine grain network of streets/ paths that helps to connect and knit this site into the historic core - providing important new and enhanced links to the Lower High Street and the Churchyard’ and ‘provide a strong street frontage to Station Road with an attractive façade and active ground floor uses’. for a range of town centre uses.

Policy TC6 allocates the corner of Elwick Road & Station Road where proposals will:

Respect and enhance Memorial Gardens through careful integration of the new built form, and creating an attractive sense of enclosure to the Gardens’ and ‘Create an especially high quality building on the corner of Elwick Road and Station Road which marks this important entrance to the town and helps create a more formal street pattern by moving the building line forwards to front the streets and improve the public realm at the junction’ and ‘Seek to retain the existing Swanton Villa buildings’.

Policy TC3 allocates the Elwick Place site immediately to the south of the Conservation Area where *‘all proposals will be designed sensitively to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area’.*

This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area and the importance of its setting and, in turn, helps the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.

Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal. Context and quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of this area and the character must not be lost through undue pressure for inappropriate or poorly designed development or redevelopment of an unacceptable nature.

2.3 Special Controls in the Conservation Area

Designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that development cannot occur, but rather that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character.

Some minor development can be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission – generally referred to as ‘Permitted Development’. These are subject to the proposal meeting strict criteria, for example relating to size and detailed positioning. As the law relating to planning permission is complex, and the rules governing ‘Permitted Development’ are changing, you are strongly advised to seek advice from the Council before carrying out any development.

The Planning Portal: Information can be found under Do you need permission? section on the planning portal website (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission>)

Nevertheless, the principles contained in this Appraisal promote good practice and should be relevant whether planning permission is required or not.

Within a Conservation Area, controls are imposed which are additional to normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area. These are outlined here for information. However other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by conservation area status.

Houses and their alteration

The size of an extension that may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a conservation area. Any proposals should always be discussed with the Council at an early stage. Planning permission may be required for the erection of a building or structure within the garden of the house subject to size or siting, for example, a workshop, pavilion, greenhouse and so on.

Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles will require submission of a planning application. Any enlargement of a house by way of additions to the roof, e.g. a dormer window to the front elevation, will require a planning application to be made.

A planning application is needed for a satellite antenna where it is to be installed on a chimney, wall, or a roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a road.

Other commercial premises and flats

Any extension or alteration to other commercial premises or residential flats, which materially affects the external appearance of the building, will require a planning application to be made. This is particularly important within conservation areas, where even small alterations can materially affect the character and appearance of the area. For instance, such alterations can include rendering brickwork, replacement of slates with concrete tiles, and replacement windows.

Demolition

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building, whether in whole or in part, within a conservation area, except the following:

- any building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115m³ or any substantial part of such building
- any wall of fence (or substantial part) less than 1m high fronting onto the street or less than 2m high elsewhere
- any building subject to a formal order requiring demolition

This consent is in addition to any planning permission which you may require to replace the building.

Trees

6 weeks written notice must be given to the Council of intent to cut down, top, lop, uproot or destroy a tree within a Conservation Area. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within 6 weeks of the notice being given, work may go ahead. This requirement does not apply to trees which have a diameter less than 75mm when measured at a height of 1.5m above the ground and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.

Unauthorised Works and development

Sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the Borough Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take enforcement action once it is aware of any alleged unauthorised works and after detailed investigation.

Maintenance and Repairs

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are limited. The principal guardians of the character and appearance of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area and who are responsible for maintaining their individual properties.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost through the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, roads, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as street furniture, signs, lights, and hard surfacing, can change an area's character. Within the conservation area the buildings are part of a wider street scene, often of buildings of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one building can affect not only the individual building, but the whole street. Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials or designs are used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Where a number of different designs are used along a street, the rhythm and unity of its original appearance can be spoilt.

Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably affect the street scene. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. In older buildings paint or render can also trap moisture which may cause damage to walls.

Boundary treatments

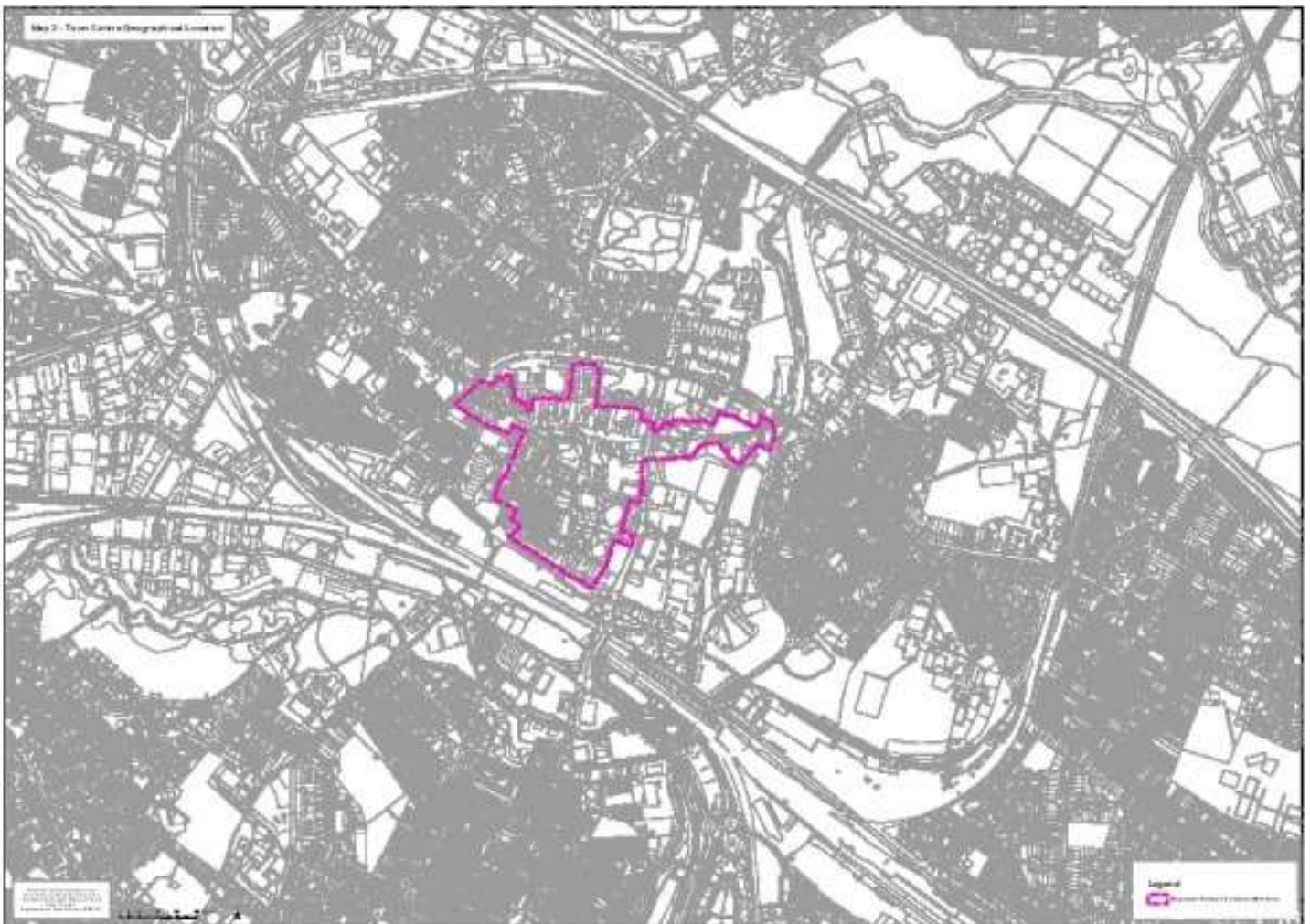
Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or ragstone wall, railings, white painted picket fencing, or hedge should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area.

3.0 Context and Development

3.1 General Description

The Conservation Area covers over 20 hectares of the town centre, including the Church and adjoining square, High Street, North Street, Bank Street, residential streets, Memorial and Vicarage Gardens, extending down East Hill towards the River Stour. There are many listed buildings within the Conservation Area, particularly around St Marys Church and Middle Row.

MAP 2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



3.2 Historical Development

Located strategically on a rise in the land of the Stour river valley, close to a river crossing point and on the route of an important Roman road linking Tenterden to Canterbury (along the line of the current Beaver Road and Station Road), the area has been populated in some form since the Iron Age period. Ashford town probably originates from a settlement established around 893AD. It became large enough to have a mention in the doomsday book in 1086, listed with a church and two mills under the name 'Essetesford'. The name may derive from 'Eshset', an early name proposed for the upper River Stour (on the ford of which the town is located), or from the Old English words 'aescet' or 'aescseat', meaning a collection of ash trees, or a corner angle where ash trees grow.

The settlement developed in a linear fashion along the main east-west highway, now the High Street, which linked eastwards down East Hill to an ancient bridge crossing near the confluence of the Rivers East Stour and Great Stour. North Lane, now North Street, led out of town towards Canterbury and Faversham, an important port in earlier times, and Marsh Street, now Station Road, led south across the River Stour towards Beaver and Kingsnorth. St. Mary's Church, now a grade I Listed building, which has been the town's key landmark since medieval times formed the town's southern boundary until expansion in the 18th Century. A church has probably been located on this site since the 11th century, but the current building seems to have been constructed some time in the late 14th or early 15th century. Certainly, by 1500 St Mary's had already been remodelled several times, with the nave rebuilt and a 37m high bell tower with pinnacles added in c.1475. Remnants of earlier fabric have been found in the building, including Caen stone quoins in the northeast and southeast nave, and a blocked 14th century window in the west wall of the south transept.

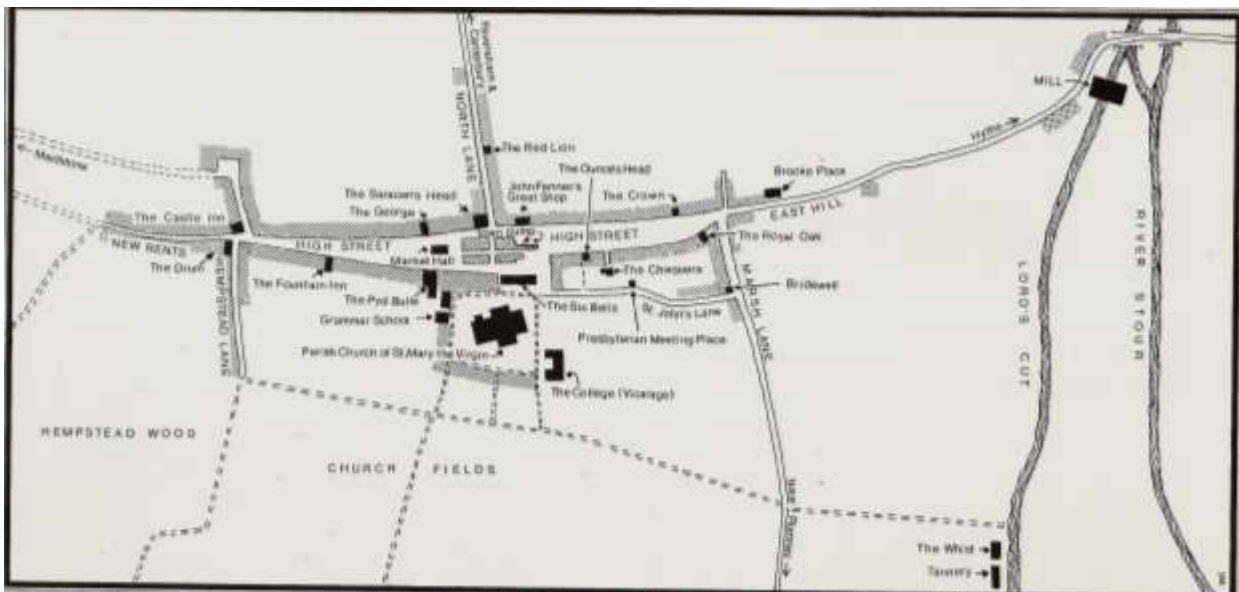
Ashford officially became a market town with a charter granted in 1243 primarily for livestock. A weekly Saturday market was held in the High Street as well as an annual fair. The market led to the further development of the east-west running High Street, known as the King's Highway at this time, with the establishment of a variety of new businesses lining the street including butchers, fishmongers and corn merchants. Carpenters, tanners and blacksmiths also serviced the needs of those living in the town or visiting from the surrounding countryside. By 1500 some permanent stalls had been established in the market and a purpose-built market hall had been constructed where North Street, the route into town from Canterbury and the High Street meet.

This area, known as Middle Row, incorporated the town cage (re-discovered in 1981), permanent shops and a meeting hall at first floor level. There were also a number of inns, such as The George on the High Street (still in use as an inn today), and several local breweries. As the primary thoroughfare of the town and the town's market place, the High Street created a predominantly linear urban form, widening out in the centre to accommodate the market buildings and spaces. High Street and North Street were lined with narrow long, 'burgage' plots (plots leased to town residents, or 'burgesses', by the local lord). The narrow street frontage would have been used for trading with residential and warehouse space located at the rear accessed via a narrow alleyway between the buildings or from a rear service lane. The plots were narrow as the frontage space onto busy streets was at a premium and therefore limited. The constraints of space on the High Street resulted in the increasing encroachment of buildings onto the Churchyard. This area had remained open land until

1464 when the College of Priests was established in the yard. By 1550 at least three sides of the churchyard were lined with buildings.

The plan of the town centre including the High Street, North Street and Middle Row still follows the medieval street pattern though the Lower High Street is probably now slightly narrower than it was in the medieval period. The long, narrow building plots that still line much of the High Street generally continue to follow the boundaries defined by the original burgage plots. Medieval buildings would have been mostly of timber-framed construction, two or three storeys high, with steep-pitched thatched roofs and large square timber panels infilled with wattle and daub or 'close studded' timber framed buildings with closely-spaced, vertical, non-structural timbers on the exterior. Other typical features include 'jettying' the building at first floor level to create extra space, and carved timber bargeboards, brackets and posts. A significant number of medieval buildings have survived in the town centre primarily located along the High Street and North Street and around the Churchyard. Fine examples of Medieval timber framed buildings can be seen at The College in the Churchyard, which was originally the three-winged College of Priests and jettied buildings can be seen at 7, 13 and 20 North Street, 63 High Street and in Middle Row. Although many medieval buildings were re-fronted in later centuries, the medieval timber frame fabric and the gabled rooflines and catslide roofs of the medieval buildings can still be seen.

During the **sixteenth and seventeenth centuries** the town expanded slowly along the existing medieval streets, with new buildings being constructed on the fringes of the High Street and North Street. Ashford was designated a 'post town' between Maidstone and Canterbury in 1675 and developed an inn and boarding house trade. The churchyard increasingly became developed with domestic buildings and a Grammar School founded by Sir Norton Knatchbull, was built in the yard (c.1635), now a Grade II* Listed Building the school was moved to another site in 1874. No maps from this time exist but the map below, based on the evidence of documents from the time, shows the approximate extent of the town (built up areas shown as hatching), and some of the key buildings.



MAP 3 ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA ILLUSTRATION C.1660 – 1700 (SOURCE: SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ASHFORD. LIFE IN THE KENTISH MARKET TOWN. RESEARCH BY MEMBERS OF THE ASHFORD LOCAL HISTORY GROUP,1980)

Older timber buildings began to be replaced with new timber structures or were re-fronted or modernised with more fashionable architectural features, such as dormer windows and shallow canted bays. Older features were disguised, with many jetties in particular being under-built with brick, such as at Talbot House in the Churchyard. New building types were also introduced in the town, including small chapels that catered for the tendency towards non-conformity in the Ashford during the 17th century. 17th Century building materials include Kent peg roofing tiles and orange/red Wealden clay tiles and bricks and at 1 Middle Row, a copy of the building's original 17th century 'pargetting', a decorative treatment using plaster has been recreated.

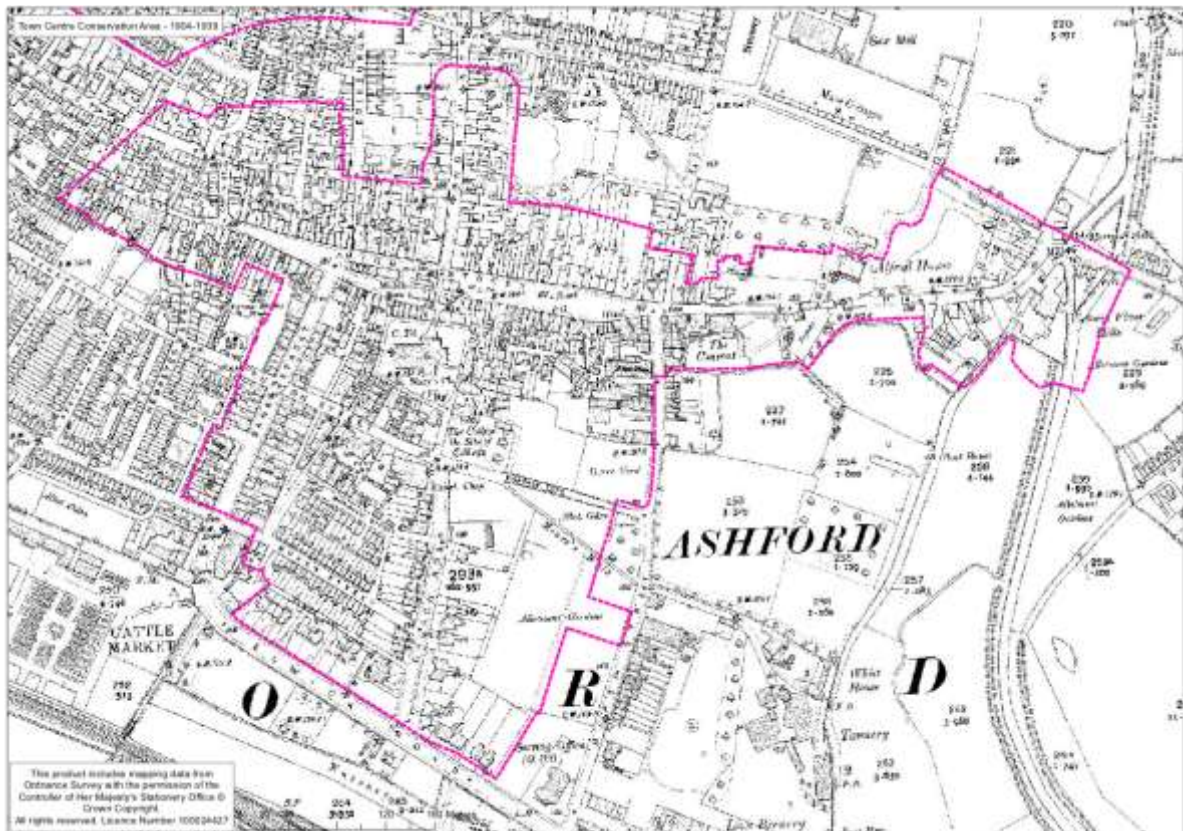
In the **eighteenth century** Ashford became a meeting point for the new turnpike roads constructed across Kent (1762-1795). Improved travelling conditions increased the number of visitors to and through the town, with markets and local businesses benefiting, particularly those related to the hospitality trade and there were over 20 inns in the town centre by the mid-18th century. This commercial success encouraged the first significant residential development outside the medieval centre, along East Hill joining the lower High Street at its eastern end. East Hill's elevated position overlooking the River Stour created an ideal site for a country style villa and a number of large Georgian villas were built by the town's wealthier residents, such as Nightingale House. Many of these large detached houses still remain, though no longer in residential use, many directly abutting the road and are notable for their plainness of style. In the rest of the town, the focus of development was on gentrification rather than new construction. The town was still relatively compact extending from New Rents in the west to the bottom of East Hill, and from the top of North Street to the south side of the churchyard with the edge of the town still adjoining open countryside. However, many buildings were re-fronted with new formal brick facades, incorporating sash windows, classical features and large cornices or parapets to disguise the steep-pitched roofs behind. These facades were concentrated on visible public elevations such as at The George Hotel and 9 North Street.

Up to the **nineteenth century**, Ashford's commerce primarily focused on the market, which had become one of the largest in southern England, and on coaching routes to Hythe, Maidstone and Canterbury. In the 1840s, however, Ashford entered a period of massive population growth when the South Eastern Railway Company opened their railway line between Ashford and London in 1842 followed by other lines. As Ashford was located at the intersection of routes the town changed rapidly from an agricultural to an industrial economy and the population grew from 3000 in 1841 to 13,000 by 1901. The impact on the size and layout of Ashford was substantial with the railway creating a new focus and town boundary to the south of the town centre. Large quantities of new housing were built for workers at the edges of the existing town, some beyond the Conservation Area boundary in Apsley Street and East Hill. Good quality terraced housing with good-sized gardens for the middle classes were laid out on church 'glebe land' (land owned by the church from which it derived an income) immediately south of the Churchyard on Tufton Street, Church Road, Norwood Street and Queen Street. Large detached and semi-detached villas were constructed further south along Elwick Road from 1865 marking the southernmost boundary of the nineteenth century residential expansion of the town.

local building materials began to be used side by side, to create typically Victorian multi coloured brickwork patterns or limestone dressed neoclassical buildings. Particularly significant facades can be seen on the Lower High Street and in New Rents, as well as on Bank Street, where the most complete nineteenth century building scheme was carried out. There were also significant public improvements starting with the town centre streets being paved between 1780 and 1800.

With the railway already at its greatest extent by 1900, Ashford's physical expansion began to slow and development in the early **twentieth century** was largely piecemeal replacement of buildings in the town centre. These were generally informed more by contemporary architectural trends such as Neo-Classicism than local vernacular traditions such as the prominent neoclassical facade at the northern end of Middle Row added in 1926 and the neo-Georgian Lloyds building on the corner of Bank Street. The Odeon cinema on the High Street amalgamated the sites of several historic buildings when constructed in 1926. A tank was presented to the town in 1919, now on display in St Georges Square.

The map below shows a similar pattern of development to the earlier 1843 – 1893 map but with the addition of villas to the east side of Church Road and Elwick Road. Bank Street was further developed and the mill building at the bottom of East Hill has been extended. Housing development also been extended north of Park Street.



MAP 5 ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA 1904 – 1939

The memorial garden became located on glebeland purchased from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1923. Nearby Vicarage Field, now a small green public square with lime trees and shrubs, formerly the graveyard of St. John's Hospital, was acquired in 1951. The adjacent remaining graveyard, a Grade II Listed building has mainly early C19 memorials including oval bodystones, table tombs and some headstones with sun-ray or urn motifs.

The construction of the ring road around the historic centre in the late 1960s/early 1970s involved the demolition of significant numbers of buildings, breaking historic street patterns and severing the centre from historic access routes and residential areas around the core. North Street and New Street were truncated to the north.

3.3 Setting and topography

As identified within the historical development section, the setting for the Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area now comprises the ring road and associated development which affected historic street patterns and severed the centre from historic access routes and residential areas around the historic core.

To the north of the Conservation Area, a concrete car park and ramp (right) present a long bland frontage facing the ring road and dominate the setting of this part of the Conservation Area. A view of the church is interrupted by the ramp.



The T-shaped Park Mall (left) comprises a narrow pedestrian thoroughfare running north from High Street leading to a wider square. The mall is a modern inward looking shopping arcade which is poorly related to the surrounding historic townscape.

Charter House is also located immediately to the north of the Conservation Area and dominates the skyline of the town centre in near and distant views.

To the east, the listed buildings (including walls) and parts of Ashford School fronting East Hill including mature tree groups are included within the Conservation Area. The modern, somewhat utilitarian buildings within the site (right) are new buildings and outdoor sports facilities which as a result of their scale and height (in relation to the boundary wall) have a neutral impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.



Although the school's boundary wall alongside the ring road (Mace Lane) is in part a remnant of boundary walls of gardens backing on to Mace Lane (see Maps 4 and 5), its relationship with the Conservation Area is tenuous at this point. The section around the junction with East Hill is newly constructed in an area previously occupied by a group of Victorian houses and the ragstone section is modern (erected following the ring road). Nevertheless the wall forms an important



part of the setting of the Conservation Area and is important to the character of this part of Mace Lane (the ring road).

The trees around the River Stour and beyond extend the verdant view of East Hill looking east and form an important part of the setting of the East Hill character area.



The eastern edge of the Conservation Area fronts Station Road (ring road). The tall blocks on the eastern side are generally screened from the Conservation Area by mature trees (below left) but where they are not they tend to dominate the historic character (below right).



The domestic scale of buildings on the western side of Station Road, adjoining Memorial Park, mean that they have a neutral impact on the setting of this part of the Conservation Area.





To the west, New Rents is physically halted by the ring road but is visually linked to the large scale modern blocks arranged along a road visibility splay to New Street opposite. The development provides an unsympathetic setting for this part of the Conservation Area

To the south of the Conservation Area new development will replace the vacant sites and will provide the setting for the Conservation Area. Ashford College will be located to the south east of the Conservation Area and new development will be sited to the south off Elwick Road.



The trees around the River Great Stour and beyond are visible to the south of Bank Street and form an important part of the setting of the Bank Street character area.



4.0 Character Appraisal

Whilst Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area as a whole represents an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, for the purposes of this appraisal, the Conservation Area has been split into ten sub-areas which comprise distinctive character areas:

1 High Street/ Lower High Street and Church Yard

2 New Rents area

3 North Street

4 Bank Street

5 Church Road/ Tufton Street

6 Queens Street/ Norwood Street

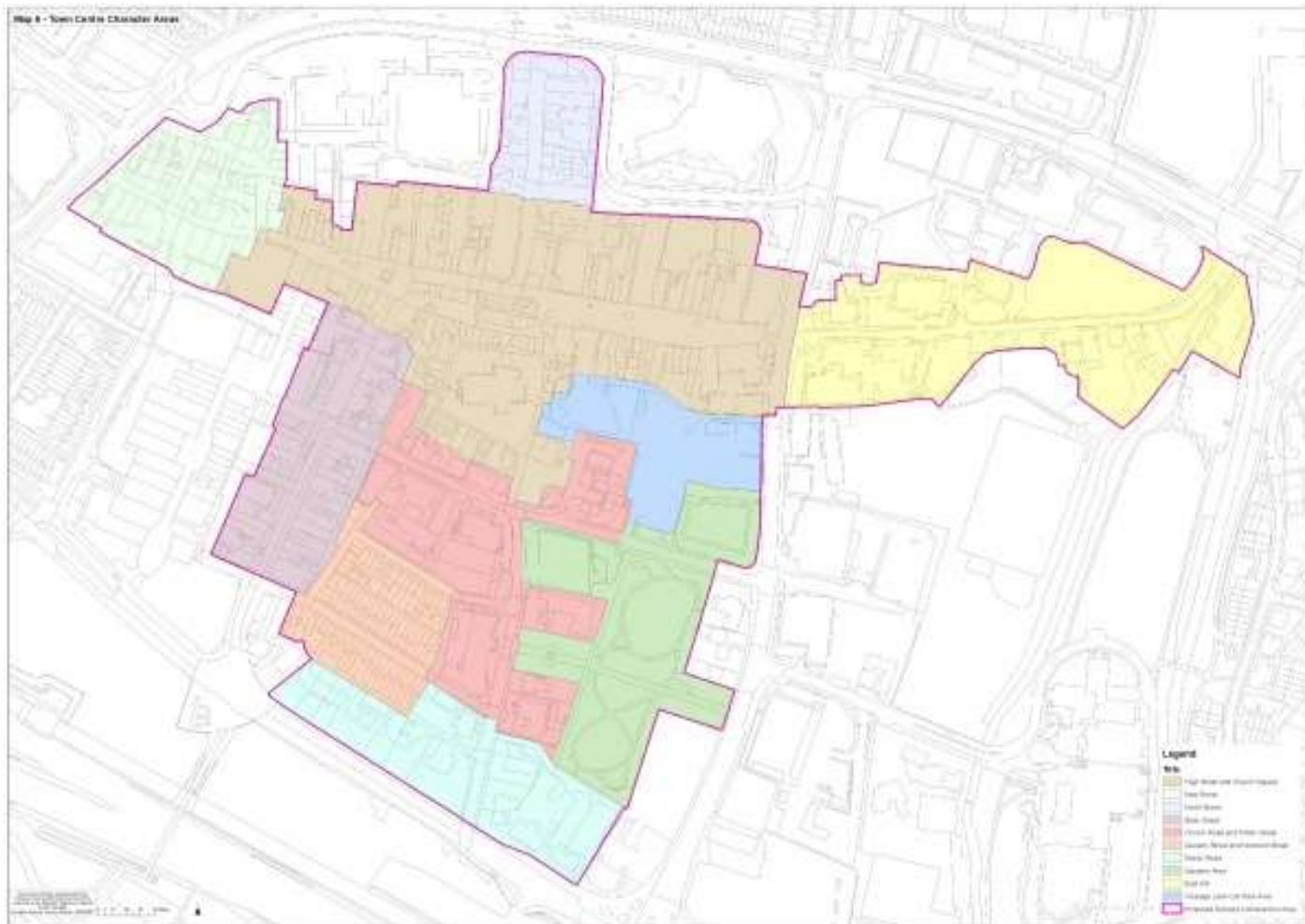
7 Elwick Road Area

8 Gardens Area

9 East Hill

10 Vicarage Lane Car Park Area

MAP 6 CHARACTER AREAS



Map 7 shows the key features of the Conservation Area.



MAP 7 KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

1 High Street/ Lower High Street and Church Yard

The east – west running High Street/ Lower High Street forms the heart of the original medieval town. The wide central street, the 2/3 storey buildings with steeply pitched roofs (sometimes with dormer windows or chimneys) and the narrow commercial frontages on the deep former burgage plots act as strong reminders of this period and form an important part of the historic character of this character area. The street is now pedestrianised (with the exception of limited vehicular access) with street trees, planters and a variety of surfacing. Heritage style street furniture is used in this area. Buildings are set to the back edge of the pedestrianised street along a regular building line and enclose the space. The predominant building materials within the High Street/ Lower High Street are white or cream painted render (including those associated with half-timbered buildings), red/ orange brick and plain tiled or slate roofs. The shops and other commercial uses provide active frontages on the ground floor (including cafes extending out onto paved areas) which, together with significant pedestrian movement, make this the busiest part of the Conservation Area.



High Street (left) and Lower High Street (right)

At its widest point close to the junction with North Street, the High Street is subdivided by buildings occupying the centre of the space, Middle Row, to form two narrower, more enclosed spaces



Buildings (on the left of each of the above photographs) now occupy the centre of the High Street changing the original width to two more enclosed streets. Situated on an island in the High Street, the mid 19th Century stuccoed former market building is now sub-divided into shops. This central unified group of buildings forms an important set piece within the town centre. Restrained modern shop fronts and advertising assist in retaining the group value of the buildings. The public house and street tree close the vista (above left) and from a square when viewed from the west.



The distinctive rounded façade of the former Market building with paired columns at first floor level (left) represents the start of the subdivision of the High Street, when approached from the west, and acts as a focal point within this part of the Conservation Area.

The recently erected bandstand with railway motifs (right) acts as a further visual focal point within this section of the High Street.



St. Mary's Church is tucked just behind the originally widest point of the High Street close to the junction with North Street. The original 11th Century ragstone church was extended in the 13th Century and restored with a rebuilt west tower and vestry in 1881. The church tower is a prominent landmark from many parts of the town centre acting as a marker of the historic centre and assisting orientation within the centre.

The churchyard presents a contrasting green open space with mature trees within the heart of the town centre.



The detailed leaf motif topped railings (left) surround the church yard and help unify the appearance of the square.



The constraints of space on the High Street resulted in the increasing encroachment of buildings onto the Church Yard in medieval times. Church Yard is now an enclosed, inward looking tranquil space surrounded by predominantly residential properties yet is only a short step from the bustling High Street. The generally two storey terraced buildings face directly onto the narrow adjoining footpath and the churchyard. The predominant building materials within the church square are white painted render (including those associated with half-timbered buildings), red/ orange brick and plain tiled or slate roofs. Buff coloured concrete blocks form the footway around the square.



As well as buildings of a domestic character, the College of Priests (bottom right) was established in the yard in 1464 and is set well back from the predominant building line. The bingo hall building and roof is visually intrusive within the eastern side of the square (bottom left). Ashford museum is located within the square (top right).

The eastern part of the central block of buildings at Middle Row is further sub-divided into two closely spaced blocks which, in turn, back onto buildings surrounding the north side of the church square forming a number of narrow, east – west running, enclosed lanes and north – south running passageways – in stark contrast to the wider High Street.



Narrow lanes are generally enclosed by 2 storey buildings. Jettied overhanging upper floors reduce the width of the lane further and gable ended roofs and chimneys emphasise the height adding to the sense of enclosure. Restrained shop fronts and advertising generally fit well within the historic buildings and the intimate street scene.



An important feature of the character of this part of the Conservation Area is that St Mary's church tower can be glimpsed through the north- south running passageways

A significant number of medieval buildings have survived in the High Street. The original medieval buildings, with projecting upper floors and carved timber bargeboards, brackets and posts add significantly to the historic and architectural interest of the town centre.



Although many medieval buildings were re-fronted in later centuries, the medieval timber frame fabric and the gabled rooflines and catslide roofs can still be seen.



Rear of medieval properties on the south side of the High Street (right)

Retention of, and respect for, the original character and features of these buildings particularly in terms of shop fronts and advertising has greatly added to the historic and architectural interest of this part of the Conservation Area.



As the street narrows towards New Rents, the presence of more modern development is evident with the entrances to the County Square and Park Mall shopping centres and other infill development visible in the street scene.



The fully glazed entrance to County Square and associated frontage buildings (right) follow the regular building line and height of buildings in the High Street. The height of the shop fronts aligns generally with others within this part of the Conservation Area. The projecting upper floors west of the entrance are reminiscent of the medieval built form but the significant bulk intrudes into views to and from New Rents. Though the buff coloured brick is not generally within the limited palette of materials used in the High Street, the vertical window proportions respond to the fenestration of the Georgian frontages.



The two storey entrance to Park Mall (above left) projects significantly beyond the regular building line of the High Street and interrupts the historic street form. Modern infill development (above right) follows the regular building line and the height of the shop fronts aligns with the street scene. The flat roofs, unrelated sub-division of upper floors, buff coloured brickwork and horizontal window proportions do not respond well to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



The narrow Taylors Passage (left) follows a medieval route and now connects Park Street with High Street.



Details on upper floors at the eastern end of the island blocks at the centre of the High Street add to the richness of the buildings and the character of the Conservation Area.



The entrance to the historic North Street is marked on the western side by a modern shop unit (above left). The splayed corner of the building and stepped down scale at the corner of the street do not respond well to the building on the eastern corner (above right) or the historic pattern at street corners within the Conservation Area. The projecting canopy undermines the horizontal subdivisions attempted on upper floors and the dominant first floor sign is not typical of the scale or location of signage in the character area. The large fascia on the building marking the eastern corner is also out of scale with the listed building and its features.

The apparent width of the Lower High Street is reduced through the introduction of a row of street trees which effectively divide the space into two narrower, more enclosed spaces. Lower High Street slopes gently down towards the east where the previously continuous route into East Hill is now severed by the ring road.



The street trees visually separate the two sides of Lower High Street. The gentle curve in the street adds to a sense of enclosure.



The scale and dominant materials of buildings in the High Street continue in the Lower High Street. The projecting canopy (above left) does not fit with other restrained shop fronts.

Lower High Street is probably now slightly narrower than it was in the medieval period.



There is evidence of backland development glimpsed from Lower High Street.



The entrance to Lower High Street from the east is marred by two modern flat roofed buildings with dominant horizontal features such as fascias and windows which do not respond well to the proportions and features of the character area.

The properties in this character area are generally in good condition but parts of the public realm (street surfaces and street furniture) are in need of rationalisation and maintenance. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition.

2 New Rents area

At the western end of the High Street, New Rents narrows, curves and rises gently to give a much greater sense of enclosure. New Street runs parallel to New Rents and at St George's Square turns sharply south to form Castle Street and re-join the High Street. Gilbert Road leads north - south linking New Rents and New Street.

New Rents, New Street, Castle Street and Gilbert Road are directly fronted by buildings of 2/3 storey height with steeply pitched roofs (sometimes with dormer windows or chimneys). Narrow commercial frontages (including the appearance of the new development on the southern side of New Rents and the eastern side of St George's Square) are reminiscent of narrow medieval frontages.

The streets are now pedestrianised (with the exception of limited vehicular access) employing a variety of surfacing. There is no space for street trees in New Rents though street trees have been planted in St George's Square. Heritage style street furniture is used in this area.

The predominant building materials within this character area are white painted render or bricks, red/ orange brick and plain tiled or slate roofs. The shops and other commercial uses provide active frontages on the ground floor which forms an important part of the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



View of enclosed, curved and rising New Rents looking westwards (above). A small clock tower appears to act as a landmark within the new development to the south.



View of New Rents looking eastwards (above) shows an important glimpse of St Mary's church tower acting as a marker of the historic town centre and assisting orientation from this street.



New Street (left) has a domestic scale of generally 2 storey properties with restrained shop fronts. A gable ended building acts as a 'book end' to this part of the street. Some over-large fascias intrude into the character of the building and street scene.

Enclosure of New Rents and New Street is lost at Forge Lane (the ring road). The enclosure of New Street is also lost to the north as a result of access to the multi storey car park.



New Rents (left) and New Street (right) at the junction with the ring road.



St George's Square is surrounded by buildings with active ground floor frontages including a public house which extends seating out into the square. The focal point is the tank with covered roof. Restrained shop fronts and advertisements retain the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Planting provides a contrast to the built form and enhances the square.



Gilbert Road fronted by 2/3 storey properties with restrained shop fronts and advertising.



The tank and roofed shelter act as a focal point within St George's Square and terminate the view north along Castle Street from New Rents (left).

The hipped roofed 3 storey building with white painted quoins and restrained shop front terminates the vista of New Rents from Drum Road and is a prominent notable local building.





The wide splay of Drum Road leading south from New Rents reveals servicing areas with some blank facades and flat roofed buildings which have an adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.



This character area exhibits some traditional shop fronts and restrained advertising (above) as well as some over-prominent fascias (below).



The properties in this character area are generally in good condition but parts of the public realm (street surfaces and street furniture) are in need of rationalisation and maintenance. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition.

3 North Street

North Street extends northwards at originally the widest point of the High Street. The slightly curved street is fronted directly by 2/3 storey buildings with steeply pitched roofs (sometimes with dormer windows or chimneys) which enclose the space. The generally narrow commercial buildings front shallow plots with the original deep burgage plots eroded by a multi storey car park and access road. The street is now pedestrianised (with the exception of limited vehicular access) with very few street trees and a variety of surfacing. Heritage style street furniture is used in this area. The predominant building materials within North Street are white/ cream painted render (including those associated with half-timbered buildings), red/ orange brick and plain tiled or slate roofs. The shops and other commercial uses provide active frontages on the ground floor (including cafes extending out onto paved areas) which is critical to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Shop fronts and restrained advertising (including hanging signs) generally enhance the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



The projecting canopy of the shop building on the western side of the entrance to North Street (above) detracts from the character of this historic street. The church tower terminates the vista from the north and acts as a landmark for the historic centre of the town and assisting orientation from this street (right).



The once continuous eastern frontage of North Street is now severed in the centre.



The character of North Street is interrupted at the centre with wide openings allowing views eastwards of Charter House (left) and westwards of the Park Street service road and unsympathetic development.



A significant number of medieval buildings have survived in North Street. The original medieval buildings, with projecting upper floors, significantly add to the historic character of the town. Although many medieval buildings were re-fronted in later centuries, the medieval timber frame fabric and projecting upper floors are still visible.



The notable recessed doorway and shopfront to 11 North Street with open pediment, rectangular fanlight and 6 panelled door (right) is striking within the street scene.



The modern northern edge of North Street is today enclosed by a 3 storey building which terminates the vista from the south and screens the street from the ring road and development beyond. Whilst introducing new development across an historic route and thus affecting the historic character of the Conservation Area, this approach may have some townscape merit in enclosing the street and screening the revised urban layout to the north.



The properties in this character area are generally in good condition but parts of the public realm (street surfaces and street furniture) are in need of rationalisation and maintenance. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition.

4 Bank Street

Bank Street extends south from the High Street. The straight street was laid out in the mid 19th Century and is directly fronted by buildings of primarily 3 storeys in height with neo-Georgian and Victorian facades. The shops and other commercial uses provide active frontages on the ground floor which forms an important part of the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Some traditional shop fronts remain whilst upper storeys exhibit tall sash windows and a considerable amount of brick and other detailing.

The northern half of the street is enclosed by tall buildings and the visual width of the street is further reduced by large plane trees. The sense of enclosure is reduced south of Tufton Street with the presence of some lower scale 2 storey development, the absence of street trees and the long open views of trees to the south.



The enclosed character of the northern part of Bank Street (left) and the more open character of the southern section (above)

The street is now pedestrianised to the north (with the exception of limited vehicular access) and operates as a shared surfaced space to the south. The northern part of the street is surfaced in red pavements and granite sets with raised brick planters and contains heritage style street furniture, whilst the southern part comprises herringbone red brick in the shared surface area and granite slabs for the footways with steel street furniture of contemporary designs.

The northern part of Bank Street with street trees and heritage style street furniture contrasts with the contemporary steel furniture (right).



The predominant material within this character area is white/ cream painted render. Red/ orange or yellow stock bricks (often with contrasting detailing around windows and doors) are also present.



Light coloured render predominates within Bank Street. The ever-present Christmas lights strung across the street detract from the historic buildings and the character of this street.

The street does not have a continuous frontage as it is broken by Tufton Street and Queens Street to the east and the respective pedestrian entrances to County Square to the west.





The County Square development truncates the symmetry of the post office building



Despite the unfortunate flat roofed brick side extensions and the slight recess from the general street frontages, the contrasting scale, use of ragstone (reminiscent of St Mary's church) and prominent location set above steps at the centre of Bank Street within a wide paved apron, Centrepiece Church is a prominent notable local building.

To the western side of Bank Street, the continuous frontage is also broken by two service yards where the rear elevations of County Square are visible.



The loss of enclosed service yards and the white County Square detract from the historic character of the area.

Bank Street exhibits a number of traditional shop fronts which relate well in height, scale, materials and design to the front façade of the building (right). Equally, particularly within the southern part of Bank Street, there are a number of shop fronts (including those with large fascia boards) which detract from the features of the building in which they are located as well as the character of this part of the Conservation Area (below). Contrasting details around upper floor windows are a feature of Bank Street.



Contrasting details around upper floor windows



Internally illuminated box signs, particularly if they are located on upper floors, detract from the features of the building on which they are located as well as the character of this part of the Conservation Area by virtue of their size, lack of intricacy and detail and use of unsympathetic materials.

The properties and public realm in this character area are generally in good condition but some of the shopfronts and advertising in the southern part of Bank Street are in need of enhancement. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition.

5 Church Road/ Tufton Street

Tufton Street runs east – west immediately south of the church square, leading to Vicarage Lane whilst Church Road runs north – south to join Tufton Street close to the pedestrian route to Church Yard. The character area comprises only the northern part of Church Road. The historic character is now formed by the street layout, including a narrow passage to Church Yard and a north – south running route to the rear of properties fronting Bank Street; views to the church and a small cluster of 2 storey pitched roofed historic buildings (including a listed building) in Tufton Street. In the 1960's and 1970s the terraced housing on Tufton Street and Church Road were replaced by large scale commercial, residential and community buildings of a variety of designs and materials that have little reference to the original character of this area or the wider Conservation Area. Consequently the area has a mixed character and is in need of enhancement as redevelopment opportunities come forward. The streets are of standard tarmac with red block paved footpath only on the north side of Tufton Street.

The small cluster historic buildings (including a listed building) in Tufton Street (below). On the north side of the street the public house seeks to replicate the adjoining timber framed listed building (below right). There is also an important glimpse of the church tower acting as a marker of the historic town centre and assisting orientation within this area. On the south side of the street, Compass House has an interesting octagonal roof light, though the setting for this building is currently dominated by the police station (below left).



Church Yard Passage (left) leads from between the two timber framed buildings to the church square with the church yard trees visible from Tufton Street.

The historic unadopted route to the rear of properties fronting Bank Street (right) leads from Tufton Street to the rear of High Street. The southern section of the route contains no buildings of merit.



The remainder of Tufton Street and the western end of Vicarage Lane comprises a number of buildings from the latter part of the 20th Century.



At Vicarage Lane (left) the low scale and well recessed 3 storey red brick development with pitched roof has a neutral impact on the character of this part of the Conservation Area. The layout of buildings, fenestration and roof materials do not respond positively to the character of the area. The ragstone wall is characteristic of this part of the Conservation Area.

Within the eastern end of Tufton Street (right) the scale of the buildings appears appropriate but the layout, mass, roofscape, fenestration and materials do not respond positively to the historic character of this part of the Conservation Area or to creating a unified townscape.



The scale, mass, roofscape, materials and design of the police station building make this a particularly intrusive development within this Character Area as well as from Character Area 7: Queens Street/ Norwood Street. The vehicular access and prominent ramp result in a loss of enclosure to this part of Tufton Street; expose the parking area and building to views from the street and mean that there is no active frontage uses overlooking the street.





At the western end of Tufton Street (above) the scale, mass, roofscape, fenestration and materials do not respond positively to the character of the cluster of adjoining historic buildings (including the setting of a listed building) or to create a unity of townscape.

The northern part of Church Road within this character area abuts the open space of the bowling green and the Memorial Gardens' western entrance – both of which are important to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. This, together with street trees, gives the street a verdant appearance, acting as a transition to the Gardens Character Area. The tower of St Mary's church is visible from Church Street acting as a marker of the historic town centre and assisting orientation within the centre





The low scale brick developments (above) have a neutral impact on the character of this part of Church Road. The layout of buildings, fenestration and roofscape do not respond positively to the character of the area.



The newly built Ashford Gateway public building (left) presents a bold feature within the street scene. The scale of the building fits well within Church Road. The concave shape and block paved footway and road respond well to the entrance to the Memorial Gardens opposite. The white rendered finish is in contrast to materials within Church Road but responds well to the predominant materials of Norwood Road. New planting will enhance the appearance of the building and the verdant character of the street.

Many of the properties in this character area built in the latter part of the 20th Century are at an age where the condition (including the suitability of internal space) may be under review with a view to redevelopment at some point in the future. The public realm is in reasonable condition, including the green spaces and trees which add significantly to the character of Church Road. The Character Area may be in a period of transition.

6 Queens Street/ Norwood Street

This character area of principally Victorian terraced housing is laid out in a grid pattern as part of a wider area which once exhibited the same characteristics including Tufton Street, Church Road, Norwood Street and Queen Street. The historic and architectural character has generally been preserved, particularly in Queens Street. The 2/3 storey terraced houses sit close to the road along a regular building line. The properties in Norwood Road and on the north side of Queens Street have shallow front gardens. Many of the original railings have been removed and replaced with a range of boundary treatments such as low walls.

The predominant building materials within Queens Street is white painted render whereas in Norwood Street it is white painted render or yellow stock brick and slate roofs.

The streets are standard tarmac, except where they abut Bank Street or at junctions where red brick pavements have been used. Red brick pavements have also been used in Norwood Road on the footway next to houses. On street parking on one side of the streets somewhat detracts from the appearance of the tight-knit area. Victorian style lighting and street furniture is appropriately used to compliment the buildings. There is no space for street trees. There are remnants of the industry and shops which would have been part of the original character of this area.



After a slight bend at the junction with Norwood Road, Queens Street is a straight road with views of County Square to the west. The terraced properties are a mix of 2 and 3 storeys with white render and pitched or hipped slate roofs – some with small dormer windows and chimneys. The appearance of the street is unified by the regular building line, the scale and white rendered materials of the buildings (with dark painted horizontal bands making the subdivision of floors) and the rhythm of Victorian window and door openings. Thick double yellow lines and poor road surfacing detract from the character of the street.



The Ashford Gateway building at the eastern end of Queens Street follows the regular building line. The scale, the white rendered materials of the buildings (and the dark painted horizontal band marking the subdivision between floors) and the pattern of regular Victorian window openings fits well with the character of this part of the Conservation Area,



Houses to the north side of Queens Street have shallow front gardens. Some basements are present with black railings protecting the change in level and forming an important feature in the street scene. Original door and window openings have generally been respected in Queens Street. Traditional window and door designs have also been retained in many properties.



Within Queens Street, the unrendered brick property (above) which appears to have had an industrial past and the ground floor laundrette (right) are reminders that there would have been a mix of uses in this area and the character of these buildings should be retained.



The tall building fronting Bank Street (left) is out of scale with Queens Street and the open car park detracts from the character of the area.



Norwood Street has more of a mixed character with commercial development more prevalent.



From the junction with Queens Street, Norwood Street proceeds north fronted by single storey buildings set back from the road behind parking areas to the west and a ground floor office; 2/3 storey housing and further parking to the east. The traditional Victorian residential buildings are important to the character of this part of the Conservation Area but there is scope for some frontage development to enhance the street scene.

A view of the church tower is important in relating this area to the town centre but the pedestrian route to the centre (left) is uninviting. The visual link with the church tower and the physical link to Tufton Street and the centre should be retained and enhanced as development opportunities arise.



The east-west running section of Norwood Street is currently dominated by the police station (left). The layout, mass, roofscape, fenestration and materials do not respond positively to the historic character of this part of the Conservation Area. The high brick wall presents a dead ground floor frontage to the street. The top of the front façade of the Centrepiece church is visible at the western end of Western Street and helps terminate this vista. Telegraph posts and overhead wires detract from the character of the street.



Unsympathetic replacement windows, doors, roof tiles and front boundaries can detract from the character of the Victorian buildings and the street scene. Chimneys are an important feature in the Victorian residential street scene.



The properties in Queens Street are generally in good condition but Norwood Street has more of a mixed character with buildings that detract from the character of the area. The public realm (street surfaces; overhead wires) is in need maintenance. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in fair condition.

7 Elwick Road Area

The area comprises a series of large semi-detached symmetrical Victorian villas with 2 or 3 storey bay windows set back from the street along a regular building line behind deep front gardens (now mostly devoted to car parking) and a ragstone wall. The former residential properties are now in commercial use. Mature trees are located at the front of the former gardens enclosing Elwick Road and providing an important reminder of the character of the front gardens before being replaced by hard surfacing for parking. The well-spaced grand properties are principally 3 storeys in height (some with basements). The villas extend round from Elwick Road into the lower part of Church Road.

The predominant building materials within the area are white painted render and slate roofs. A limited number of buildings are faced with red or yellow stock brick.



The gaps between the grand villas along Elwick Road are an important characteristic of this character area and help reveal the historic and architectural qualities of the buildings as well as highlighting the scale and symmetry of the buildings.

Without screening, car parking can dominate the setting of the villas.

The retention of trees, and the hedges which subdivide curtilages, is important in retaining part of the character of the original front gardens.

The design of the modern single storey extension (left) is not well related to the host building and the sign dominates the frontage and detracts from the character of the former residential area where there is a restraint on signage.





Gaps between the villas in Elwick Road are important for revealing glimpses of St Mary's church tower, visually connecting the area to the historic centre and assisting orientation (left).

The design of the modern flat roofed brick extension (left) is not well related to the host building and detracts from the character of the area,



Planning permission has already been granted for the demolition of the above properties on Elwick Street and new designs should respond to the strong character of properties in Elwick Road. The Swanton Villas (above right), are not the same materials, or building line as the other villas in Elwick Road, but if feasible should be retained if the consent lapses.



Ragstone walling is an important contextual feature within this character area.

Villas extend into the southern part of Church Road.



The villas on the west side of Church Road reflect the scale and symmetry of buildings in Elwick Road. Ragstone walling and a mature garden with trees and hedge also feature (above left).



The semi-detached villas on the east side of Church Road are smaller in scale. Red/orange brick and decorative tile hanging and plain clay tiles predominate. Bay windows remain a feature.

The properties and public realm in this character area are generally in good condition – Elwick Road has had significant improvements to the streetscape. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition. Nevertheless, the derelict and boarded up properties at the south eastern corner of the Conservation Area detract from the good condition of the area as this part of the character area is in a period of transition.

8 Gardens Area

This area comprises the Memorial Gardens; Vicarage Gardens (and associated listed graveyard) and the bowling green which provides a contrasting area of green spaces in the centre of town. All the green spaces are heavily managed and the two gardens are formally laid out as town parks with lawned areas, mainly peripheral trees and traditional flower beds.

The areas contribute positively to the character of the surrounding streets. The mature peripheral trees at the Church Road entrance to Memorial Gardens contribute to the verdant character of the street. Similarly, mature trees fronting Station Road (the ring road) help enclose the west side of the road and provide a contrast to the high buildings opposite. Vicarage Lane has an open character fronted by green parkland on either side: Memorial Gardens; the bowling green and Vicarage Gardens.



The square shaped bowling green (right) provides a further managed open space contributing to the open character of Vicarage Lane. The boundary chain link fence somewhat detracts from the appearance of the space.



Memorial Gardens (above left) is the largest of the open spaces. Rectangular in shape, trees on the eastern boundary partially screen the surrounding tall buildings and help enclose the space. Red pavements are used for pathways through the park.

The square shaped Vicarage Gardens (above right) contains heavily pollarded boundary trees which partially screen the surrounding buildings and help enclose the space. Tarmac footways circuit the park.



Both Memorial Gardens (above left) and Vicarage Gardens (above right) offer views of St Mary's church tower acting as a marker of the historic centre and assisting orientation within the centre.



A central avenue of trees (far left) aligns with the axis of the listed war memorial (centre left) and the fire iron entrance gates from Church Road (below).



The contrasting entrances to Memorial Gardens (above left) and Vicarage Gardens (above right) on opposite sides of Vicarage Lane. Memorial Gardens is entered through a symmetrically played entrance of granite sets fringed by black painted railings set on a low ragstone wall. Vicarage Gardens is entered through a macadam footway of different widths fringed by a curved low ragstone wall and a straight concrete wall with partial brick coping. There are no entrance signs to either garden from Vicarage Lane.



Vicarage Gardens provides a peaceful and well-kept setting for the adjoining listed graveyard.



The adjoining car park and distant tall buildings visually intrude onto the listed graveyard.

Overall the gardens area is well kept and in good condition.

9 East Hill

East Hill slopes steeply down to the River Stour to the east. The trees around the river corridor and beyond are important in adding to the landscape character of the street and in terminating views looking east. The elevated position overlooking the River Stour led to the development of a number of large Georgian villas close to the road. As the hill descends, high brick walls, many of which are listed, and overhanging trees on both sides of the street enclose the narrow street and dominate the character of this area. Many of the former residential properties as well as development behind the high walls now forms part of extensive school premises. Two buildings feature within the Stour valley: a public house (a listed building) and a former flour mill (1901) which relied on water power from the river. East Hill is a narrow cul de sac with limited traffic leading to a quiet ambiance in the street



Large 3 storey villas either front directly onto the back edge of the footway or are set behind shallow gardens with boundary railings. Whilst the colour of bricks employed on these individually designed buildings is varied (red brown, yellow and buff), it is the siting and scale of these buildings and the rhythm of the fenestration which unifies their character and contributes to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



The 18th Century listed school house is visible from East Street.



Of the school site to the north of East Hill, the Conservation Area includes the listed walls, the principal trees, the listed building at the entrance to the school and the associated open space within the school; grounds immediately to the east. The remaining utilitarian buildings are generally screened by high brick walls and trees and do not have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area and are consequently excluded from it.



The linear character of East Hill is emphasised by the high straight walls which flank it. Most of the walls are listed buildings in their own right and for their group value. The walls are constructed mostly of red brick but with a section of yellow brick for part of its length. The walls are over-topped by some important mature specimen trees which soften their appearance, add to the verdant character of this part of the street and add to the sense of enclosure within the street.



Railings are an important boundary feature within East Hill and some are listed in their own right.

To the south side of East Hill two car parks serving the public house and school lead to a loss of enclosure within the street.



The public house car park (above left) is in poor condition and the school car park (above right) would benefit from some frontage hedge and tree planting.



The flour mill dominates the character of the eastern edge of the Conservation Area. Despite the unfortunate brick side extension, the towering scale, historic value and prominent siting within the Stour valley make the flour mill a notable local building.

The river is a key feature of the mill's setting (visually and audibly). The heritage engineering features of the mill's sluice gates add interesting richness and character.



The buildings and walls in this character area are generally in good condition but parts of the public realm (gravel dressing to the footway and guard rails) are in need of maintenance. Overall this part of the Conservation Area is in good condition.

10 Vicarage Lane Car Park Area

Vicarage Lane Car Park is currently the town centre's principal surface car park. The open area exposes the backs of properties together with associated service yards, parking and storage.

The open parking area reveals the back of properties which front onto Lower High Street and Charter House which towers over the historic adjoining streets.



The siting and mass of the bingo hall dominate the skyline in views from Station Road (the ring road) and around the car park. The building interrupts views of St Mary's church tower and does not present an active front to the space – rather a blank brick wall.



The dominant structure of the bingo hall (above and right) obstructs views of the important town centre landmark building St Mary's church tower.



St John's Passage provides a narrow unattractive link from the car park to the Lower High Street around the side of the bingo hall.



The car park immediately abuts the graveyard and provides an inappropriate setting for these listed buildings.

The side elevation of the Baptist church is also visible (left).

The Baptist church with its intricate white rendered front façade facing Station Road (the ring road) and decorative brick side elevations to the rear is a prominent notable local building of architectural and historic interest. The more recent flat roof extension to the rear is of less interest and is not prominent in the street scene.



Baptist church (left) on Station Road is a prominent notable local building.

The car park surfacing is in reasonable condition, but the surrounding service yard, backs of buildings and the juxtaposition of the car park with Vicarage Gardens and the listed graveyard make this area appear neglected and in need of redevelopment or enhancement.

5.0 Negative Features

Specific negative features have been included within each of the character areas but the broad issues raised are grouped together here for ease of reference.

Large Modern Buildings

Large, unsympathetically designed, monolithic buildings were introduced into the town centre from the 1960's, impacting negatively on the appearance and the character of the Conservation Area or its setting. Others either block or detract from views of St Mary's church tower.



Severed Streets

The introduction of the ring road resulted in a number of streets being severed – changing the historic street pattern of the town centre and consequently the character of those streets. The visual relationship between the historic core and the development outside the ring road is poor given the distance between buildings and the fact that new development has not been designed within the context of the Conservation Area. Large turning heads surrounded by bollards have been created where the streets within the Conservation Area meet the ring road – allowing views from the historic centre to leak out across the road towards development outside the area. These street edges do not provide a high quality gateway into the historic core of the town.



Gaps in Street Frontages

The introduction of shopping malls has resulted in the need for rear service yards. In addition, there are breaks in some street frontages. The loss of enclosure to the street and the exposed rear elevations detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Poorly maintained and underused areas

A number of sites within the Conservation Area have been identified which are poorly maintained and in some cases underutilised. Such sites do not enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.



Shopfronts and Advertisements

Whilst many buildings exhibit traditional shopfronts and restrained advertising, some shopfronts have been introduced whose designs and materials do not respond well to the design and features of the upper floors of the building in which they are situated, or the wider character of the Conservation Area. Advertisements and signs, by their very nature, need to be visible in order to attract attention and convey information. However, some insensitively designed or positioned advertisements appear as overly dominant or incongruous features within the Conservation Area. Shops with solid external security shutters which completely cover a shop front have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area and give the frontage a dead appearance.



Boundary Treatment

Traditional boundaries such as walls and railings are present in former residential areas. In some cases the removal of the boundary or an unsympathetic replacement has detracted from the character of the Victorian buildings and the street scene.

Without screening, car parking can be visually intrusive and dominate the setting of historic buildings.



Street Furniture and Surfaces

The quality and character of the public realm in different parts of the Conservation Area varies considerably with many areas are in need of renewal whilst a few areas have recently been upgraded in a contemporary style.

Much of the town centre is overly cluttered with poor quality street furniture, signage and lighting with limited coordination of style and type across the area. The presence of all year round Christmas lights strung overhead across historic streets such as North Street and Bank Street detracts from the character and appearance.



A mix of contemporary and traditional style street furniture is used within the Conservation Area.

The complex mix of natural and artificial paving materials and patterns in different streets appears uncoordinated and does not reflect the historic road layout



Overhead wires and telegraph poles are a characteristic of the Queens Street and Norwood Street Character Area and detract from the character of the buildings and the area as a whole

Street Trees

The trees in Bank Street and Lower High Street are now taller than the buildings they abut, and in some cases are touching the adjoining buildings. The impression is that the trees are now overcrowding the road space and partially obscuring the adjoining buildings.



Replacement of traditional windows, doors and roof tiles

The inappropriate replacement of traditional windows and doors with unsympathetic modern materials and designs has led to an erosion of the historic and architectural character of some properties and the integrity of groups of houses.

6.0 Management Proposals for the Conservation Area

Historic England's good practice advocates that local authorities should prepare a management plan to address the issues arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal and set out recommendations for action. Some of these actions will be applied generally to Conservation Areas in the Borough, whilst others, such as enhancement proposals, are specific to the Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area.

6.1 Management Proposals applicable to all Conservation Areas in the Borough

Application of Planning Policy

The Borough Council will consistently apply adopted and future planning policy to ensure high quality design which is appropriate to protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This will be applied to all development requiring planning or listed building consent including new development such as replacement or new buildings, small scale alterations and extensions to buildings, boundary treatment and, where applicable, surfacing front gardens. This approach will be followed for proposals both within the Conservation Area and those which affect its setting or impact on its character.

Shop Fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document

The Borough Council will bring forward a new supplementary planning document on shop fronts and advertisements which will have special consideration for Conservation Areas.

Repairs to Buildings in Conservation Areas Good Practice Guide

It would particularly assist home owners of the Borough Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas if Good Practice Guides were complemented by an information leaflet on replacement doors, windows and roof materials considered to be suitable within Conservation Areas. This will have much wider application. It will recognise the need for replacement features and will also give practical guidance on design, acceptable materials and products. The Leaflet will be publicised and be available on the website.

Building Regulations

The Borough Council will continue to apply Building and Fire Regulations sensitively in Conservation Areas and to Listed Buildings to attempt to ensure that there is no conflict with the preservation of the character of the area or the building.

6.2 Management Proposals for Ashford Town Centre Conservation Area

Redevelopment of Large Modern Buildings and Poorly maintained and underused areas

Within the Conservation Area, the Borough Council allocates the Park Mall and associated access, parking and servicing areas and the Vicarage Lane Car Park site for development. There are a number of other large modern buildings and poorly maintained and underused areas mentioned in this Appraisal where the opportunity to redevelop the site into a more sensitively designed proposal which responds to the character of the Conservation Area should be encouraged.

Enclosing the Streets

As severed streets cannot be reconnected and the visual relationship between the historic core and the development outside the ring road is lost, the proposal is to reinforce the new edge of the historic centre and to close the views from the Conservation Area. There are two options: to close the space with a building (as is already the case at North Street below left) or to close the view with landscaping, in particular, tree planting. This would have the advantage of ‘greening’ the ring road and continuing the planting which has already taken place such as in Forge Lane (below right).



Similarly the gaps within street frontages identified in the Appraisal may wherever possible be partially closed visually by new buildings or carefully sited tree planting. The opportunities for new development and/ or planting should be investigated in all locations where the historic street is severed or broken in order that enhancement proposals may be brought forward for these key edge and town centre sites.

Greening the Ring Road

The eastern edge of the Conservation Area fronts Station Road (ring road) which, along with development alongside it, forms the setting for Memorial Gardens and Vicarage Gardens. The tall blocks on the eastern side are generally screened from the Conservation Area by mature trees but where they are not they tend to dominate the historic character



Consistent with closing the view from severed streets around the ring road with tree planting, further tree planting should be encouraged along Station Road.

Enhancing Street Furniture and Surfaces

A public realm strategy should be produced for the Conservation Area, which provides a coordinated approach to paving, structures, street furniture, signage, lighting and planting. This should distinguish between different character areas within the Conservation Area, with a different (but related) approach taken to the main shopping streets and to the residential streets for example. A simple palette of materials and consistent rationale for their use would create a high quality, appropriate context for the historic buildings and streets and result is a greatly enhanced Town Centre Conservation Area. Suitable tree species should be identified for any new or replacement trees within the strategy.

Issues with maintenance and reinstatement of paving after street works need to be addressed in the strategy to avoid the inappropriate patching of paving with tarmac. Adopting the public realm strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document and linking it to S106 and CIL payments would help develop a potential income stream for implementation.

As well as the specific enhancement proposals set out in the Appraisal, the following further enhancements are recommended on a street by street basis:

High Street and Lower High Street

Replace existing paving with a restrained palette of simple, high quality materials such as red brick pavers, granite setts and York stone flags

De-clutter the street space, removing unnecessary planters, street furniture and phone boxes

Relocate lighting and cameras where possible onto building facades

New Street and New Rents

Create a high quality gateway to the historic town centre core at the junction of New Rents, New Street and Somerset Road

Identify historic streets with name plates fixed to building facades

Bank Street

Continue streetscape improvements in Upper Bank Street, north of Tufton Street

Repave the frontage of Centrepiece church to match the quality of the adjoining improved public streetscape adjacent.

Tufton Street and Vicarage Lane

Extend streetscape improvements in Bank Street to Tufton Street and Vicarage Lane, with transition from shared surface to raised kerbs at Vicarage Lane

Introduce tree planting into Tufton Street

Replace poor quality chainlink fence to Bowling Green with railings

Churchyard

Replace existing concrete block paved footpaths with red brick paving or stone flags.

Resurface and improve quality of access lane to south from Vicarage Lane

Improve paving, planting and boundary to Listed Priests College and provide on site interpretation

East Hill

Create a high quality gateway to the historic town centre core at the junction of East Hill, Station Road and Lower High Street.

Redesign the turning head at the western end of East Hill as a shared surface, using materials appropriate to the historic character of this street.

Replace unsightly guard-rails to raised footway with railings more suitable to the heritage character of the street.

Enhancements to Vicarage Gardens and Memorial Gardens

Vicarage Gardens in particular suffers from a poor boundary with the adjacent car park and poor quality park furniture and planting which is in need of renewal. The entrance from Vicarage Lane needs improving with a welcoming name board, repaired edging and walling, and renewed plant beds. The boundary of the listed graveyard to one side of the Gardens needs improving, particularly the west side adjacent to the car park where there is no sense of enclosure. A hedge would help screen the cars or future development and enclose the historic graveyard and gardens.

The legibility and identity of Memorial Gardens would be improved with welcoming entrance signs at entrances onto both Church Road and Vicarage Lane.

Managing Street Trees

The street trees in Bank Street and Lower High Street should be managed so that they remain in scale with the buildings and the width of the space available.

Reduce the number of telegraph poles and overhead wires by placing wires underground as opportunities arise

It is recognised that the cost of replacing telegraph poles and overhead wires underground is normally high but opportunities to achieve this improvement to the appearance of the Conservation Area should be taken as they arise.

Boundary hedge and tree planting

A boundary hedge and tree planting along the front of the curtilage of car parks open to views from the street would help to enclose the street scene and reduce the dominance of the parked cars.



Sources:

Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012)

Kent Historic Environment Record online

Ashford town centre character appraisal 2006 (Alan Baxter Associates)

Seventeenth-century Ashford. Life in the Kentish Market Town. Research by members of the Ashford Local History Group, 1980.

Discovering Ashford's Old Buildings. The town centre area, 1400 – 1700, Walter Briscall. 1987.

<http://www.localhistories.org/ashford.html>

http://www.thisisashford.co.uk/town/ashford_history.html

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces>

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

KINGSNORTH

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016



Tony Fullwood Associates
Chartered Town Planners



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.0 Introduction

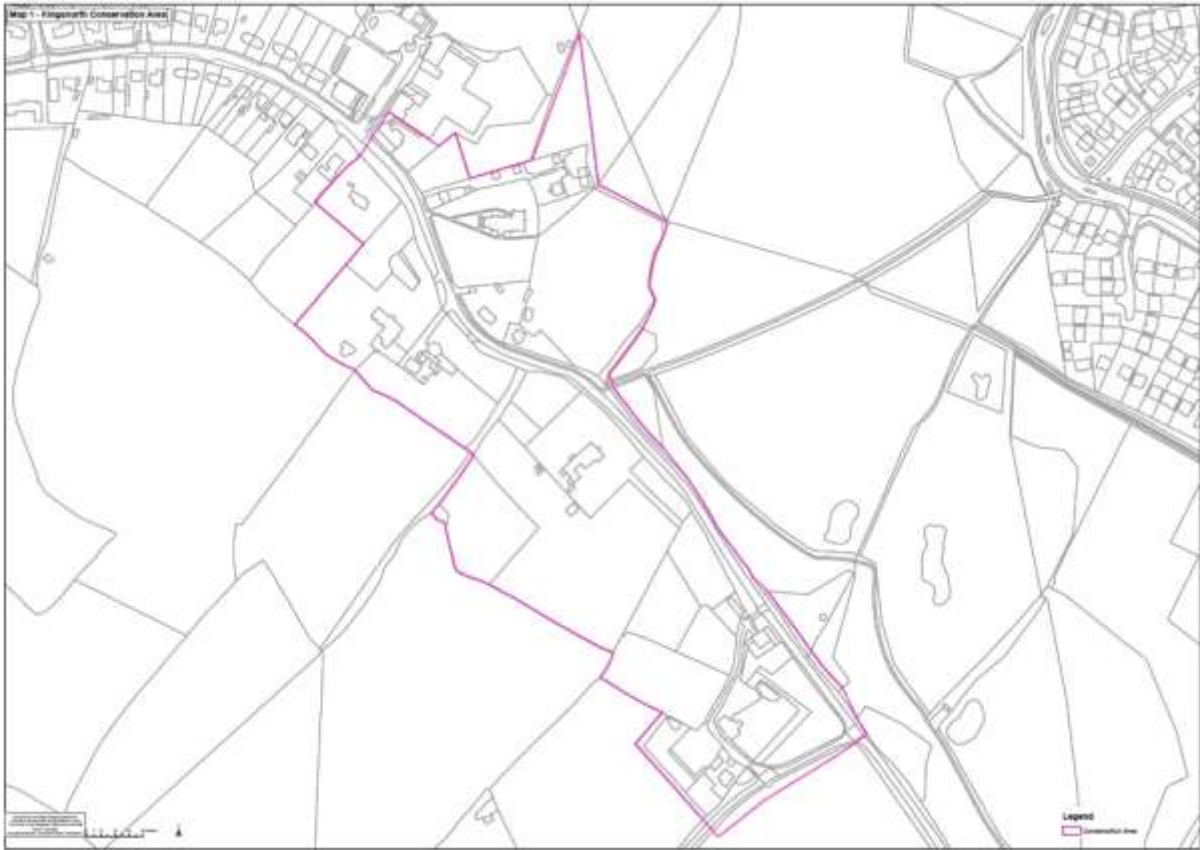
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is the first to be produced for the area and has been produced in collaboration with Borough Council Members and officers and Kingsnorth Parish Council. Local authorities are required by law to regularly review their conservation areas and produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These explain what is important about the area and what improvements are needed.

This Appraisal and Management Plan is based on best practice contained within the Historic England guidance on Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011, with Revision Note June 2012).

1.1 Conservation Area Boundary

The evaluation of the Kingsnorth Conservation Area has involved an assessment of historic maps and documents and comprehensive site surveys including a walkabout involving Ward and Parish Councillors where the group observed and recorded the key positive and negative features which made up the character and appearance of the area. This extensive process has informed the proposed boundary of the Conservation Area. A review of the boundary of the Conservation Area has been conducted in preparing this Appraisal in order to establish whether the boundary remains appropriate. In general, it has been concluded that the boundary is the correct one for defining the area of special architectural or historic interest but a number of amendments are recommended as a result of this Appraisal.

Map 1 (overleaf) shows the proposed revised Conservation Area boundary.



MAP 1 PROPOSED REVISED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

1.2 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Designation as a Conservation Area empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses to the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, thereby fostering a sense of communal pride.

The purpose of designation of a conservation area is to preserve or enhance an area of special architectural or historic interest - and enhancement measures are proposed in this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP).

1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans

The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within and adjoining the proposed Kingsnorth Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved or enhanced. The Appraisal will be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitively sited and designed proposals in the Conservation Area.

The appraisal and management plan defines the key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyses how they interact to enhance their individual impact. It then provides management suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that give the area its local distinctiveness.

The plan will help the Borough Council, those proposing development and the local community engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long-term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset.

As an adopted CAMP, the plan is a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

2.0 Planning Context

2.1 National Guidance

Government advice concerning conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This states that one of the Government's Core Planning Principles is to conserve heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings, in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

The Government advises local planning authorities to take account of the different roles and character of different areas and always seek to secure high quality design.

In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected by a proposal (including by development affecting its setting). The Government states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a Conservation Area, great weight should be given to its conservation.

2.2 The Development Plan

The Saved Local Plan (2000) policy - Development in Conservation Areas, and Ashford Core Strategy (2008) contains the following policies which apply to Conservation Areas.

EN16 Development or redevelopment within Conservation Areas will be permitted provided such proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals must fulfil each of the following criteria:

- a) the scale and detailed design of new work has respect for the historic, architectural and landscape context of the established character of the area;
- b) the materials proposed to be used are appropriate to the locality and in sympathy with existing buildings;
- c) the following are retained – buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;
- d) the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, or other environmental problems which would damage the character or appearance of the area; and
- e) the use proposed is appropriate.

POLICY CS1: Guiding Principles

Sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications.

Accordingly, the Council will apply the following key planning objectives:

B. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough...

POLICY CS9: Design Quality

Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria:

- a) Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place
- b) Permeability and Ease of Movement
- c) Legibility
- d) Mixed use and Diversity
- e) Continuity and Enclosure
- f) Quality of Public Spaces
- g) Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability
- h) Richness in Detail
- i) Efficient use of Natural Resources

The Draft Local Plan 2030, will continue this local policy protection through a specific policy, once adopted.

This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Kingsnorth Conservation Area and the importance of its setting. In turn, this will help the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.

Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal. Context and quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of this area and the character must not be lost through undue pressure for inappropriate or poorly designed development or redevelopment of an unacceptable nature.

2.3 Special Controls in the Conservation Area

Designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that development cannot occur, but rather that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character.

Some minor development can be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission – generally referred to as ‘Permitted Development’. These are subject to the proposal meeting strict criteria, for example relating to size and detailed positioning. As the law relating to planning permission is complex, and the rules governing ‘Permitted Development’ are changing, you are strongly advised to seek advice from the Council before carrying out any development.

The Planning Portal: Information can be found under ‘Do you need permission?’ section on the planning portal website (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission>)

Nevertheless, the principles contained in this Appraisal promote good practice and should be relevant whether planning permission is required or not.

Within a Conservation Area, controls are imposed which are additional to normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area. These are outlined here for information. However other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by conservation area status.

Houses and their alteration

The size of an extension that may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a conservation area. Any proposals should always be discussed with the Council at an early stage. Planning permission may be required for the erection of a building or structure within the garden of the house subject to size or siting, for example, a workshop, pavilion, greenhouse and so on.

Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles will require submission of a planning application. Any enlargement of a house by way of additions to the roof, e.g. a dormer window to the front elevation, will require a planning application to be made.

A planning application is needed for a satellite antenna where it is to be installed on a chimney, wall, or a roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a road.

Other commercial premises and flats

Any extension or alteration to other commercial premises or residential flats, which materially affects the external appearance of the building, will require a planning application to be made. This is particularly important within conservation areas, where even small alterations can materially affect the character and appearance of the area. For instance, such alterations can include rendering brickwork, replacement of slates with concrete tiles, and replacement windows.

Demolition

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building, whether in whole or in part, within a conservation area, except the following:

- any building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115m³ or any substantial part of such building
- any wall of fence (or substantial part) less than 1m high fronting onto the street or less than 2m high elsewhere
- any building subject to a formal order requiring demolition

This consent is in addition to any planning permission which you may require to replace the building.

Trees

6 weeks written notice must be given to the Council of intent to cut down, top, lop, uproot or destroy a tree within a Conservation Area. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within 6 weeks of the notice being given, work may go ahead. This requirement does not apply to trees which have a diameter less than 75mm when measured at a height of 1.5m above the ground and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.

Unauthorised Works and development

Sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the Borough Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take enforcement action once it is aware of any alleged unauthorised works and after detailed investigation.

Maintenance and Repairs

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are limited. The principal guardians of the character and appearance of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area and who are responsible for maintaining their individual properties.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost through the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, roads, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as street furniture, signs, lights, and hard surfacing, can change an area's character. Within the conservation area the buildings are part of a wider street scene, often of buildings of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one building can affect not only the individual building, but the whole street. Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials or designs are used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Where a number of different designs are used along a street, the rhythm and unity of its original appearance can be spoilt.

Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably affect the street scene. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. In older buildings paint or render can also trap moisture which may cause damage to walls.

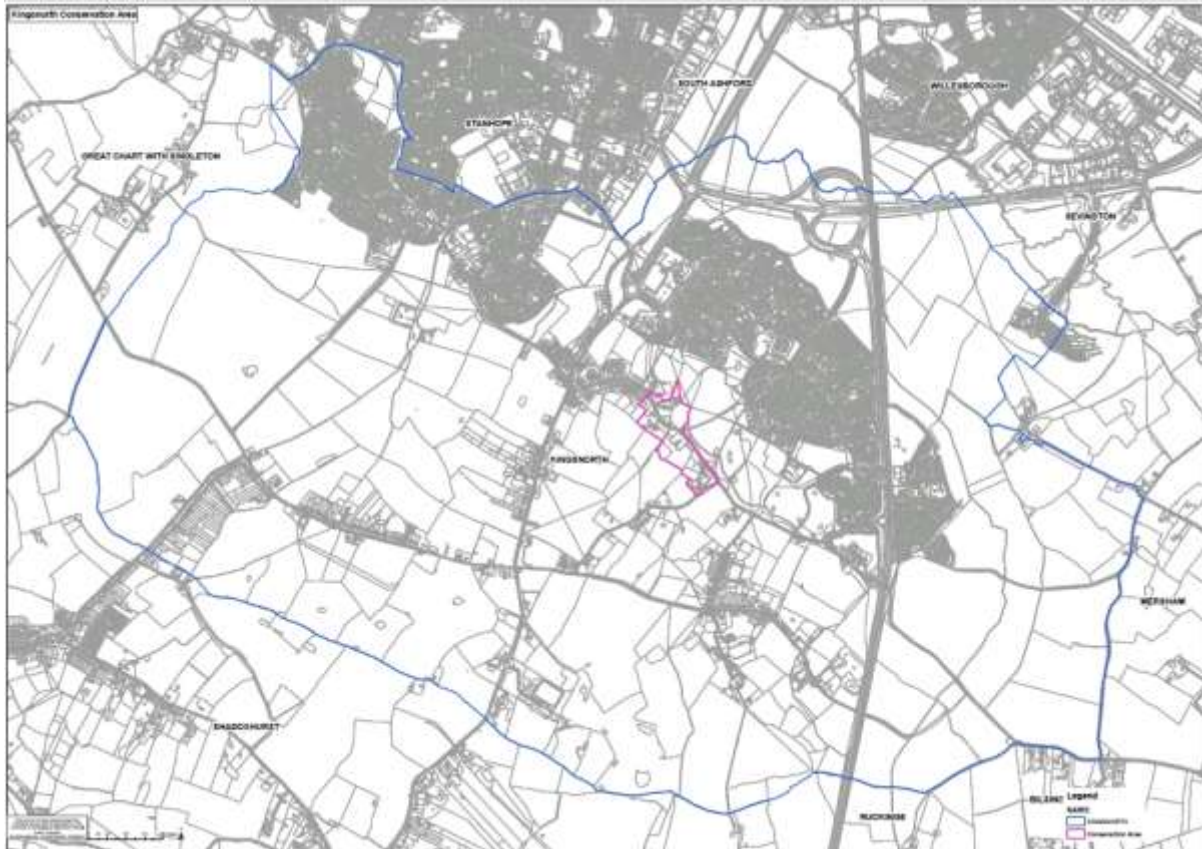
Boundary treatments

Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a ragstone wall or hedge should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area.

3.0 Context and Development

3.1 General Description

The Kingsnorth Conservation Area comprises over 9 hectares within Kingsnorth village, and includes 9 Listed buildings, including the parish church, the original village school, together with a number of old private dwellings, notably Old Mumford and Mouse Hall.



MAP 2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

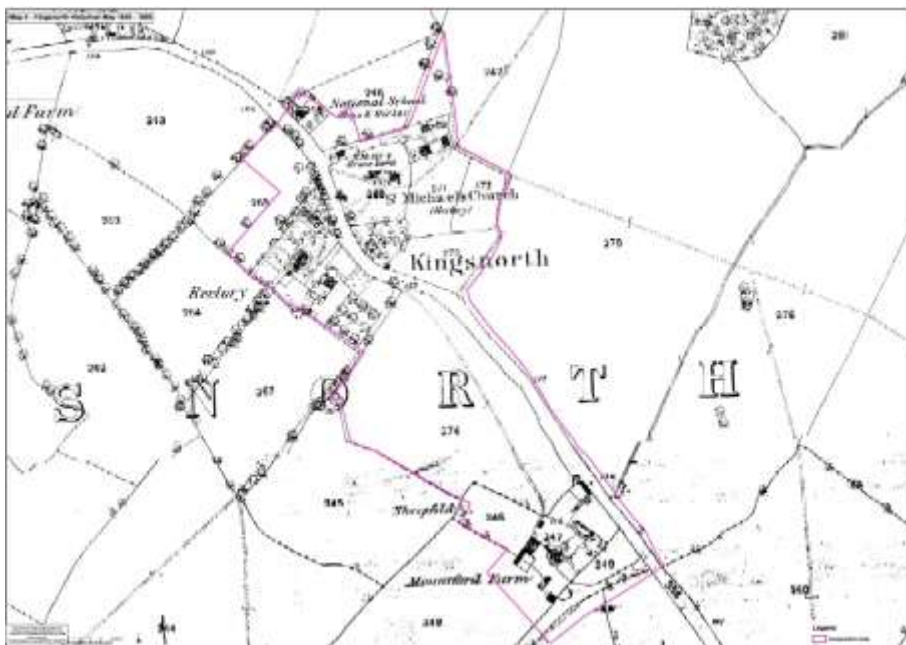
3.2 Historical Development

A transcript of the Domesday Book of 1086 indicates that there was a settlement at Kingsnorth controlled by the Manor of Wye. One explanation of the name is that it derived from the Old English *cyninges snad*, detached land belonging to a royal estate. Another suggestion is that the settlement took its name from Jutish people 'Kyn', kin folk, who settled on a wooded hill or 'snode'. Other early variations of the name are Kyngsnode; Kynsnoth, Kyngesnothe and Kingessnode.

However, archaeological excavations, carried out prior to the building of new estates in the wider Kingsnorth Parish, revealed that its earliest residents may have lived here up to 28,000 years ago. Flint tools were found at Park Farm, some possibly dating to the Upper Paleolithic period, but most from the Mesolithic period around 9,000 B.C. At Brisley Farm, a late Iron Age/early Roman settlement (200BC to 100 AD) was found with a possible Bronze Age (2500 – 650 BC) field system underneath. Two Iron Age 'warrior burials' accompanied by swords, spears, shields and other grave goods were also excavated.

A Roman settlement was discovered at the crossing of two important Roman roads on Westhawk Farm. Over 250 coins and many other artefacts were discovered on the site together with a Roman cemetery and an Iron Age burial. A site at Park Farm, which is crossed by one of the Roman roads, also yielded Roman pottery fragments, some of which were associated with the regional distribution of salt, probably made on Romney Marsh.

The current Grade I Listed Church of St Michael and All Angels built of Kentish ragstone dates from the late 14th/early 15th century, when the earlier church was rebuilt on the same foundations. It contains a painted window showing St. Michael fighting a dragon that has been dated to 1400.

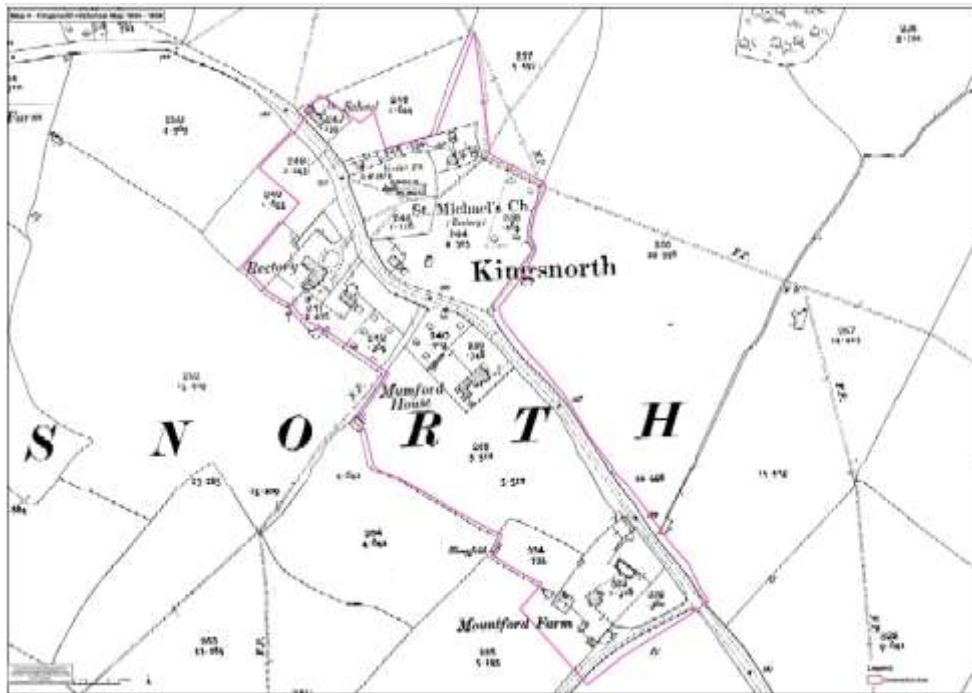


**MAP 3 KINGSNORTH
CONSERVATION AREA
1843 – 1893**

The earliest available map of 1843 - 1893 shows Kingsnorth village as a small cluster of buildings at the highest point on Church Hill, comprising the church and rectory opposite, (now known as Mulberry House and formerly Whitegates), the cottages immediately adjacent to the church, Glebe and Piran (now Candlemass) Cottages, Mouse Hall and Mumford Cottage and the village school. These buildings mostly date from the 18th Century and are built in typical Kentish style of red brick, tile-hung or white painted weather boarding at first floor level and hipped tiled roofs

The Old Mumford farmhouse and adjacent listed Barn can be seen on the map lying outside the village cluster lower down Church Hill to the south-east, and also date from the 18th Century. Formerly a farmstead called Mountford Farm, the small early C18th house incorporates a few stone foundations and lower courses of an earlier much larger house and Tudor interior timbers. It was substantially added to c.1948. Three small ponds lying to the south west and north east of the house respectively are thought to be remains of a moat.

The addition of Mumford House on the west side of Church Hill south of Mulberry House, in the mid 19th Century (see map below) is the sole addition to the village before post 1920 infill development along the road to the north west of the church which included the current village hall building. This development eventually led to the separate hamlet to the immediate west of Kingsnorth, known as Kingsnorth Pound to merge with the village.



**MAP 4
KINGSNORTH
CONSERVATION
AREA
1891 – 1912**

The RAF and USAAF occupied RAF Kingsnorth, an airfield close to the village, during World War II and two concrete pillboxes remain from this time just outside the Conservation Area, one to the rear of the school extension and one in the front garden of the house adjacent to the village hall. Built in 1940 to counter the threat of German invasion during World War II, they belong to a network of defences constructed to protect the key nodal point at Ashford which became one of several strongpoints, or anti-tank islands, created to protect strategic locations from enemy attack. These pillboxes serve as a reminder of the strategic importance of this part of Kent at that time in the communication network of south eastern England.

3. 3 Setting and topography

Kingsnorth Conservation Area is located on higher ground with the land falling to the east.

The context of the wider area has changed in the last 20 years as the urban area of Ashford has expanded towards the north of the historic village.

Extensive new development has been built at Park Farm. Nevertheless, the impact of this development on the Conservation Area has been moderated by siting it away from the historic core of the village. The Kingsnorth Buffer Zone is located to the north of the Conservation Area with retained hedged open fields with mature trees providing an important setting which helps protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and preventing the coalescence of Park Farm and the Conservation Area. The setting of the historic core of the village is also assisted by ensuring that the extensive development is sited behind substantial mature hedgerow and treed boundaries.



Hedged open fields with mature trees provide the northern setting to the Conservation Area.

Land falls away to the south west towards Mill Hill. As with the north of the historic core of the village, the hedged open fields with mature trees immediately abutting the Conservation Area provide an important setting to this designated heritage asset and allow views across the fields to the south east at the rear of Church Hill up towards Bond Lane and to the south west towards Mill Hill.



Hedged open fields with mature trees provide the south western setting to the Conservation Area.

Immediately to the west of the Conservation Area, modern, generally linear, development now links with the previously separate hamlet of Kingsnorth Pound, significantly reducing the appreciation of the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area.



Generally linear residential development forms the western approach to the Conservation Area.

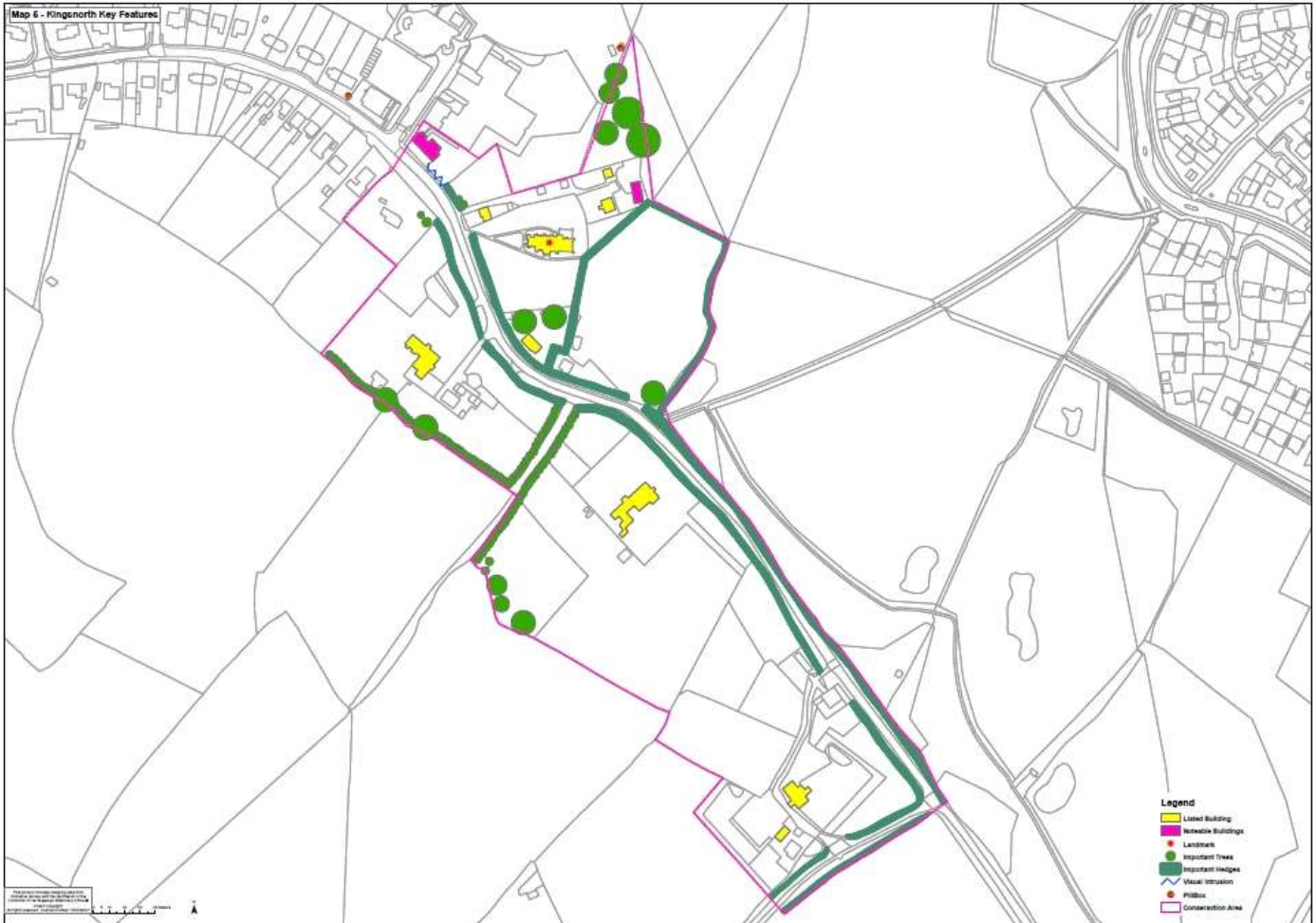
To the south of Bond Lane, which marks the boundary of the Conservation Area, hedged open fields with mature trees abut Church Hill to the east and west and provide an important rural setting to the designated heritage asset.



Hedged open fields with mature trees provide the south western setting to the Conservation Area.

4.0 Character Appraisal

Kingsnorth Conservation Area as a whole represents an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.



MAP 5 KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

4.1 Kingsnorth Conservation Area

The historic core of the village is located around the Grade I Listed Church of St Michael and All Angels comprising the rectory opposite, (now known as Mulberry House), the cottages immediately adjacent to the church, Glebe and Piran (now Candlemass) Cottages, Mouse Hall, Mumford Cottage and the village school. The buildings immediately around the church to the north side of Church Hill are smaller cottages and those which front the road are located close to it. In contrast,, the buildings to the south of Church Hill tend to be larger houses set back from the road in more substantial grounds.



The Church of St Michael and All Angels is built of Kentish ragstone and is viewed through mature trees from Church Hill and from open fields to the north. The small scale building does not have a high tower but is visible from a number of vantage points and, as the tallest and oldest building within the Conservation Area, provides an important landmark.



The prominently located original village school is built of ragstone replicating the material used for the other major public building, the church. Brick detailing with slate roof and chimney stack and large window in the gable end add to the character of the building.



The original part of the primary school (left) is located in a prominent position close to Church Hill on higher ground at the entrance to the Conservation Area. Whilst not a listed building, the building is a prominent notable local building in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village. More modern buildings and playground are located behind the original building.

The cottages dispersed immediately around the church are small in scale with small gardens.

The listed white weather boarded Mouse Hall (right) with exposed timber frame to the north elevation is tucked behind street frontage trees and a front garden with a low ragstone boundary wall. Its small scale and recessed siting ensure that it fits discretely into the street scene.





The listed Piran (now Candlemass) Cottage (left) comprises two parallel ranges. The south range is refaced with red brick now painted on the ground floor and tile-hung above whilst the north range is a C19 addition, with its first floor oversailing in imitation of timber-framing. The cottage has a hipped tiled roof with chimneys and is located within a neat hedged landscaped garden adjoining the footpath and church yard.



The listed Glebe Cottage (left) is tucked down a private road and surrounded by a well landscaped garden. The first floor of the small cottage is tile-hung and the ground floor red brick with a hipped tiled roof and an outside brick chimney stack.



A pair of white weather boarded unlisted semi-detached properties (left and below) with hipped tiled roof and chimney sit within small, neat, hedged gardens.



The cottages face onto, and are prominent in views from, the open countryside to the north east and can be seen in the same view with the church tower (right). The buildings and gardens also abut the public footpath running south west back past the church. Whilst not listed buildings, the white weather boarding and prominent location make these notable local buildings in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village.

The field to the south east of the footpath which runs south west back past the church Is an integral part of the open character of this part of the Conservation Area. The field, which leads to a garden closer to Church Hill, is enclosed by mature hedges and trees and forms part of the setting for a number of listed buildings including Piran (now Candlemass) Cottage and the Church of St Michael and All Angels.



The field (above and below) Is an integral part of the open character of this part of the Conservation Area and forms part of the setting for a number of listed buildings including the church and Piran (now Candlemass) Cottage (above)



Away from the buildings dispersed immediately around the church, the character of Kingsnorth Conservation Area is dominated by the strong hedge and tree lined Church Hill. All buildings are well screened and generally have a minimal impact on the street scene. The winding lane is enclosed by hedges and substantial numbers of mature trees, often arching across the road to add to the sense of enclosure. The limited amount of development is generally well hidden by vegetation and narrow entrances. The verdant edges, discrete development and the informal highway layout (with a footpath on the north east side of the road and grass verge with ditch to

the south west side and an absence of street lights) create an informal rural character to the lanes. The character of the lanes is unified not by the buildings themselves, but the verdant landscape framework and the discrete appearance of buildings. Mature trees are also prevalent between and behind buildings forming the backdrop and setting for development and a skyline feature.



Characteristic of properties on the north east side of the road, Mumford Cottage (left) is located close to the road but is well concealed by a tall hedge which unifies the lane.



The single storey wooden building (above) is the only building to be located directly on the roadside in the Conservation Area but its discrete scale and natural materials mean that it is not significantly intrusive in Church Hill.



Glimpses of houses can be seen along Church Hill.



The curved tile hung first floor, hipped clay tile roof and chimney of Mumford Cottage can be seen above the hedge and a glimpse of the cottage can be seen through a pedestrian gate. The listed cottage continues the limited palette of materials within the Conservation Area with a red brick ground floor.

A number of larger properties in substantial grounds are well spaced along the south west side of the road. They are generally set well back from the road behind tall hedges and trees with narrow entrances helping conceal the development. The informality is retained as a grass verge abuts the road and gravel access drives have no formal edging. The number of vehicular cross overs is limited and ensures that the verdant rural character predominates.



The new rectory (left) is located opposite the school. The large building is set well back from the road but has a more open frontage than other buildings on this side of the road.



The old rectory, now named Mulberry House and formerly Whitegates, (left) is set back from the road and hidden from view by mature boundary planting. The listed two storey building of white painted brick has a hipped tiled roof with 3 dormers. There are later C19 additions, in red brick, to the north-west and south-west.



Mumford House (left) is set well back from the road and is well screened by hedge. The glimpsed two storey listed building comprises painted brick with a hipped tiled roof with chimneys.



A converted coach house (right) is discretely located along Church Hill.

One of the characteristics of the conservation area is the separation between buildings, which leaves landscaped gaps along the roadside.



The extension to church yard (left) in 1951 to the north of Mouse Hall provides a tranquil open space abutting Church Hill.

The open character of gardens and other areas abutting Church Hill contribute to the rural character and appearance of Church Hill and therefore the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.



The hedge and tree lined public footpath leading south west from Church Hill (left) is part of the Greensand Way and is characteristic of the rural context of this lane.

The verdant rural characteristics of Church Hill continue into Bond Lane. The lane is narrow and winding with grass verges and no footpaths. Hedges and trees continue to predominate and buildings are scarcely visible.



Bond Lane (left and below) forms part of the rural character of the Conservation Area. The willow signifies a pond along the northern side of the lane.



Old Mumford Farmhouse (left) and the converted listed Barn to the south of Old Mumford Farmhouse (below) are screened from Church Hill and Bond Lane by hedges, trees, and a high fence and gates. The two storey listed house is faced with painted brick and stucco, and has a tiled roof. This is the remaining part of a once larger house. The two storey listed barn has a red brick ground floor and dark stained weather boarded first floor with hipped tiled roof with 2 hipped dormers.



5.0 Negative Features

Overall the condition of the Conservation Area is good with buildings, gardens and public spaces all well maintained but there are a limited number of negative features which detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Overhead wires and telegraph poles are a characteristic of Church Hill and detract from the character of the buildings and the rural character of the lane.



- Although often discretely sited, domestic paraphernalia can urbanise and detract from the setting of buildings or the uncluttered open rural character of the Conservation Area



- Advertising outside the old school building and the chain link fencing fronting Church Hill to the rear of the building detract from the features of the building and the entrance to the Conservation Area.



- The more open frontage of the new vicarage is not characteristic of the other gardens fronting Church Road



6.0 Management Proposals for the Conservation Area

Historic England's good practice advocates that local authorities should prepare a management plan to address the issues arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal and set out recommendations for action. Some of these actions will be applied generally to Conservation Areas in the Borough, whilst others, such as enhancement proposals, are specific to the Kingsnorth Conservation Area.

6.1 Management Proposals applicable to all Conservation Areas in the Borough

Application of Planning Policy

The Borough Council will consistently apply adopted and future planning policy to ensure high quality design which is appropriate to protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This will be applied to all development requiring planning or listed building consent including new development such as replacement or new buildings, small scale alterations and extensions to buildings, boundary treatment and, where applicable, surfacing front gardens. This approach will be followed for proposals both within the Conservation Area and those which affect its setting or impact on its character.

Repairs to Buildings in Conservation Areas Good Practice Guide

It would particularly assist home owners of the Borough Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas if Good Practice Guides were complemented by an information leaflet on replacement doors, windows and roof materials considered to be suitable within Conservation Areas. This will have much wider application. It will recognise the need for replacement features and will also give practical guidance on design, acceptable materials and products. The Leaflet will be publicised and be available on the website.

Building Regulations

The Borough Council will continue to apply Building and Fire Regulations sensitively in Conservation Areas and to Listed Buildings to attempt to ensure that there is no conflict with the preservation of the character of the area or the building.

6.2 Management Proposals for Kingsnorth Conservation Area

Reduce the number of telegraph poles and overhead wires by placing wires underground as opportunities arise

It is recognised that the cost of replacing telegraph poles and overhead wires underground is normally high but opportunities to achieve this improvement to the appearance of the Conservation Area should be taken as they arise.

Hedge planting along front boundary the rectory

The more modern house has a neutral effect on the character of this part of the conservation area. A boundary hedge along the front of the curtilage would help to enclose the street scene define the boundary between public and private space and help reinforce the verdant character of Church Hill.



Churchyard

Red tarmac footpaths provide a durable surface to paths through the churchyard but are out of keeping with both the historic character and natural management of the area. When the footpaths next need repair, top dressing with a locally sourced gravel would be a low cost way to reduce the visual impact or resurfacing with bound gravel could be considered.



School frontage

The high chainlink fence boundary to the school playground, particularly fronting Church Hill, is a visual detractor within the Conservation Area, being of poor quality and in poor condition. When the fence is replaced, higher quality replacement fencing potentially of a lower height (subject to the school's needs) should be considered.

Greensand Way footpath

This long distance footpath can become overgrown and rough underfoot and would benefit from more regular clearance and grass cutting.



Sources:

Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012)

Kent Historic Environment Record online

Kingsnorth Conservation Area Assessment 1996

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

<http://kingsnorthparishcouncil.co.uk/history-of-parish/>

WOODCHURCH

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016



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ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.0 Introduction

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. This draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is the first to be produced for the area and has been produced in collaboration with Borough Council Members and officers and Woodchurch Parish Council. Local authorities are required by law to regularly review their conservation areas and produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These explain what is important about the area and what improvements are needed.

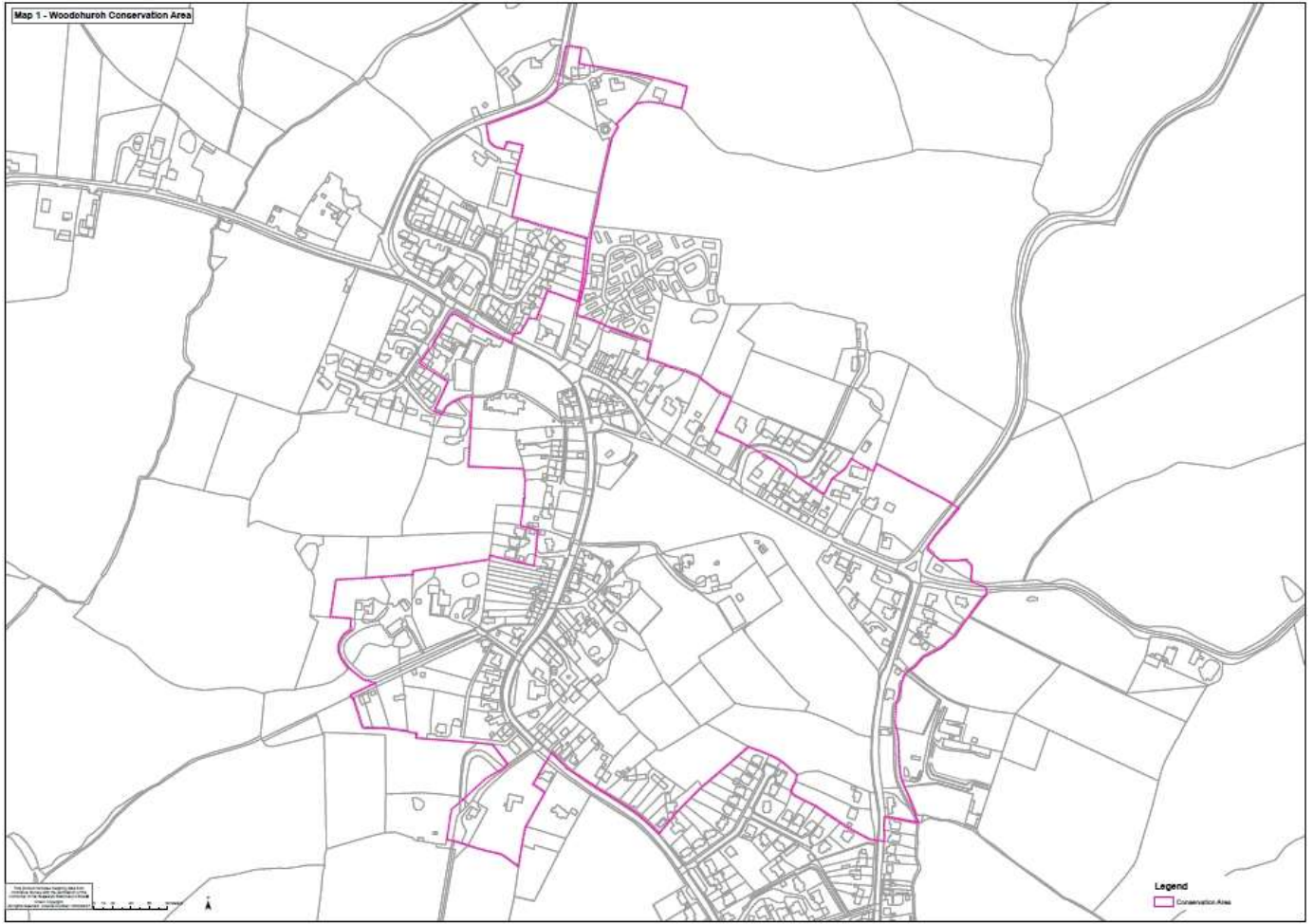
This Appraisal and Management Plan is based on best practice contained within the Historic England guidance on Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011, with Revision Note June 2012).

1.1 Conservation Area Boundary

The evaluation of the Woodchurch Conservation Area has involved an assessment of historic maps and documents and comprehensive site surveys including a walkabout involving Ward and Parish Councillors where the group observed and recorded the key positive and negative features which made up the character and appearance of the area. This extensive process has informed the proposed boundary of the Conservation Area. A review of the boundary of the Conservation Area has been conducted in preparing this Appraisal in order to establish whether the boundary remains appropriate. In general, it has been concluded that the boundary is the correct one for defining the area of special architectural or historic interest but a number of amendments are recommended as a result of this Draft Appraisal.

Map 1 (overleaf) shows the proposed revised Conservation Area boundary.

MAP 1 PROPOSED REVISED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



1.2 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Designation as a Conservation Area empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses to the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, thereby fostering a sense of communal pride.

The purpose of designation of a conservation area is to preserve or enhance an area of special architectural or historic interest - and enhancement measures are proposed in this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP).

1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans

The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within and adjoining the proposed Woodchurch Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved or enhanced. The Appraisal will be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitively sited and designed proposals in the Conservation Area.

The appraisal and management plan defines the key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyses how they interact to enhance their individual impact. It then provides management suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that give the area its local distinctiveness.

The plan will help the Borough Council, those proposing development and the local community engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long-term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset.

As an adopted CAMP, the plan is a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

2.0 Planning Context

2.1 National Guidance

Government advice concerning conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This states that one of the Government's Core Planning Principles is to conserve heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings, in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

The Government advises local planning authorities to take account of the different roles and character of different areas and always seek to secure high quality design.

In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected by a proposal (including by development affecting its setting). The Government states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a Conservation Area, great weight should be given to its conservation.

2.2 The Development Plan

The Saved Local Plan (2000) policy - Development in Conservation Areas, and Ashford Core Strategy (2008) contains the following policies which apply to Conservation Areas.

EN16 Development or redevelopment within Conservation Areas will be permitted provided such proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals must fulfil each of the following criteria:

- a) the scale and detailed design of new work has respect for the historic, architectural and landscape context of the established character of the area;
- b) the materials proposed to be used are appropriate to the locality and in sympathy with existing buildings;
- c) the following are retained – buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;
- d) the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, or other environmental problems which would damage the character or appearance of the area; and
- e) the use proposed is appropriate.

POLICY CS1: Guiding Principles

Sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications.

Accordingly, the Council will apply the following key planning objectives:

B. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough...

POLICY CS9: Design Quality

Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria:

- a) Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place
- b) Permeability and Ease of Movement
- c) Legibility
- d) Mixed use and Diversity
- e) Continuity and Enclosure
- f) Quality of Public Spaces
- g) Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability
- h) Richness in Detail
- i) Efficient use of Natural Resources

This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Woodchurch Conservation Area and the importance of its setting. In turn, this will help the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.

Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal. Context and quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of this area and the character must not be lost through undue pressure for inappropriate or poorly designed development or redevelopment of an unacceptable nature.

2.3 Special Controls in the Conservation Area

Designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that development cannot occur, but rather that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character.

Some minor development can be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission – generally referred to as ‘Permitted Development’. These are subject to the proposal meeting strict criteria, for example relating to size and detailed positioning. As the law relating to planning permission is complex, and the rules governing ‘Permitted Development’ are changing, you are strongly advised to seek advice from the Council before carrying out any development.

The Planning Portal: Information can be found under Do you need permission? section on the planning portal website (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission>)

Nevertheless, the principles contained in this Appraisal promote good practice and should be relevant whether planning permission is required or not.

Within a Conservation Area, controls are imposed which are additional to normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area. These are outlined here for information. However other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by conservation area status.

Houses and their alteration

The size of an extension that may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a conservation area. Any proposals should always be discussed with the Council at an early stage. Planning permission may be required for the erection of a building or structure within the garden of the house subject to size or siting, for example, a workshop, pavilion, greenhouse and so on.

Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles will require submission of a planning application. Any enlargement of a house by way of additions to the roof, e.g. a dormer window to the front elevation, will require a planning application to be made.

A planning application is needed for a satellite antenna where it is to be installed on a chimney, wall, or a roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a road.

Other commercial premises and flats

Any extension or alteration to other commercial premises or residential flats, which materially affects the external appearance of the building, will require a planning application to be made. This is particularly important within conservation areas, where even small alterations can materially affect the character and appearance of the area. For instance, such alterations can include rendering brickwork, replacement of slates with concrete tiles, and replacement windows.

Demolition

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building, whether in whole or in part, within a conservation area, except the following:

- any building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115m³ or any substantial part of such building
- any wall of fence (or substantial part) less than 1m high fronting onto the street or less than 2m high elsewhere
- any building subject to a formal order requiring demolition

This consent is in addition to any planning permission which you may require to replace the building.

Trees

6 weeks written notice must be given to the Council of intent to cut down, top, lop, uproot or destroy a tree within a Conservation Area. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within 6 weeks of the notice being given, work may go ahead. This requirement does not apply to trees which have a diameter less than 75mm when measured at a height of 1.5m above the ground and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.

Unauthorised Works and development

Sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the Borough Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take enforcement action once it is aware of any alleged unauthorised works and after detailed investigation.

Maintenance and Repairs

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are limited. The principal guardians of the character and appearance of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area and who are responsible for maintaining their individual properties.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost through the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, roads, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as street furniture, signs, lights, and hard surfacing, can change an area's character. Within the conservation area the buildings are part of a wider street scene, often of buildings of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one building can affect not only the individual building, but the whole street. Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials or designs are used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Where a number of different designs are used along a street, the rhythm and unity of its original appearance can be spoilt.

Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably affect the street scene. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. In older buildings paint or render can also trap moisture which may cause damage to walls.

Boundary treatments

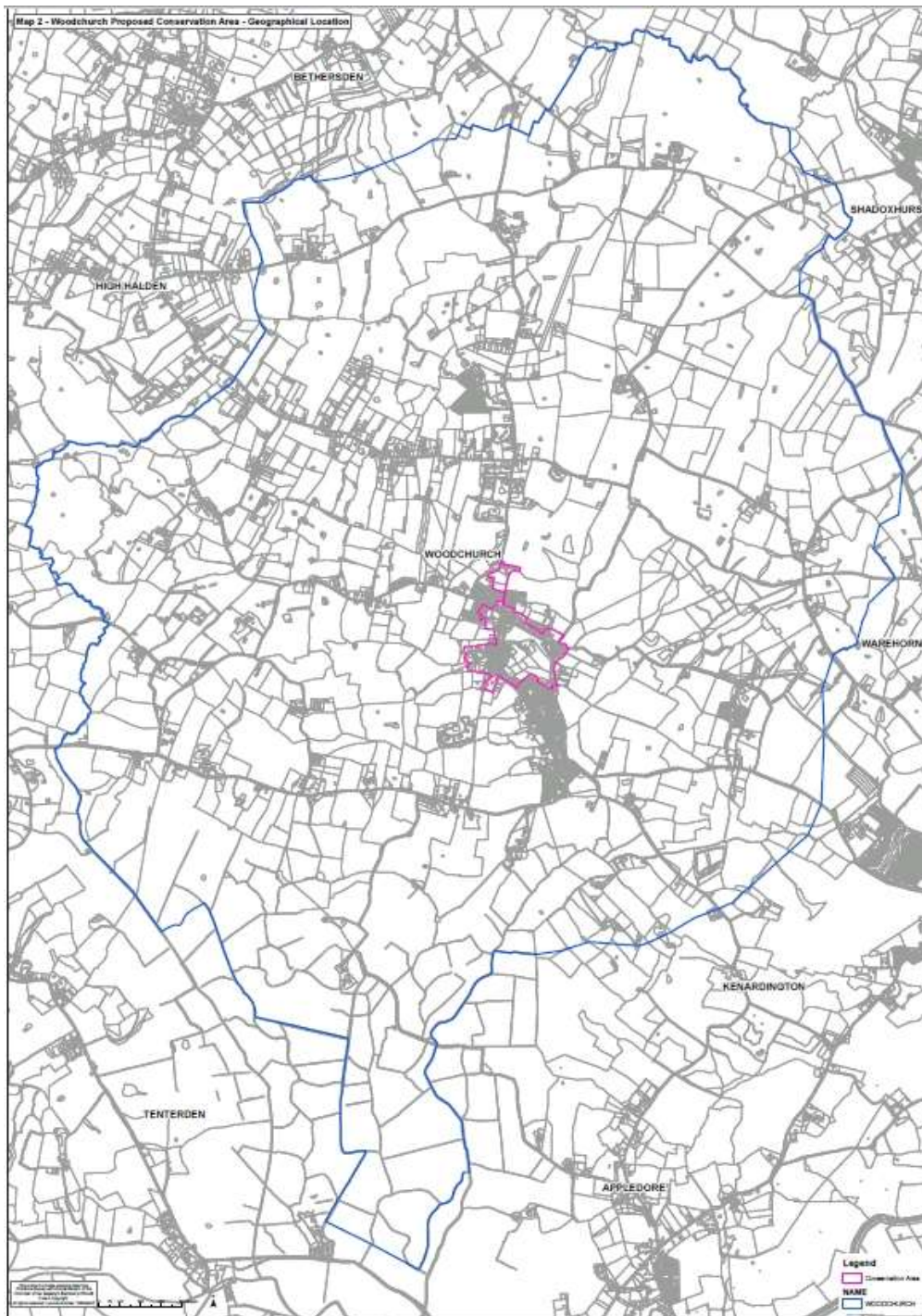
Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or ragstone wall, railings, white painted picket fencing, or hedge should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area.

3.0 Context and Development

3.1 General Description

The Conservation Area designation is 30 hectares and covers the entire village centre, including the Village Green, All Saints Church and the Windmill and includes 27 listed buildings.

MAP 2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



3.2 Historical Development

Woodchurch would have developed as a small settlement in a clearing in the great oak forest that extended from where Tunbridge Wells is today to the coast. Old maps show the name of the village spelt in a variety of ways including Wudecirce (c.1100) and Wodechirche (c.1235). The village was firmly established in the 13th century when a baron named Raphe la Thun, whose duty it was to maintain a regular force of soldiers to protect Dover Castle held a manor at Woodchurch, known as Thunland or Townland. Townland Green within the Conservation Area, is one of the oldest parts of the village, with Townland Farm and Court Lodge Farm two of the remaining buildings from this early period.

The main body of the current All Saints Church was built of Kentish ragstone in the 13th century, although it is likely that an earlier church possibly built of wood was founded in Norman times in the early 12th century. Located on relatively high ground, this large and complete Early English church with 14th and 15th Century additions, was restored in the 1840's with some Perpendicular enlargements and is now a Grade I Listed Building.

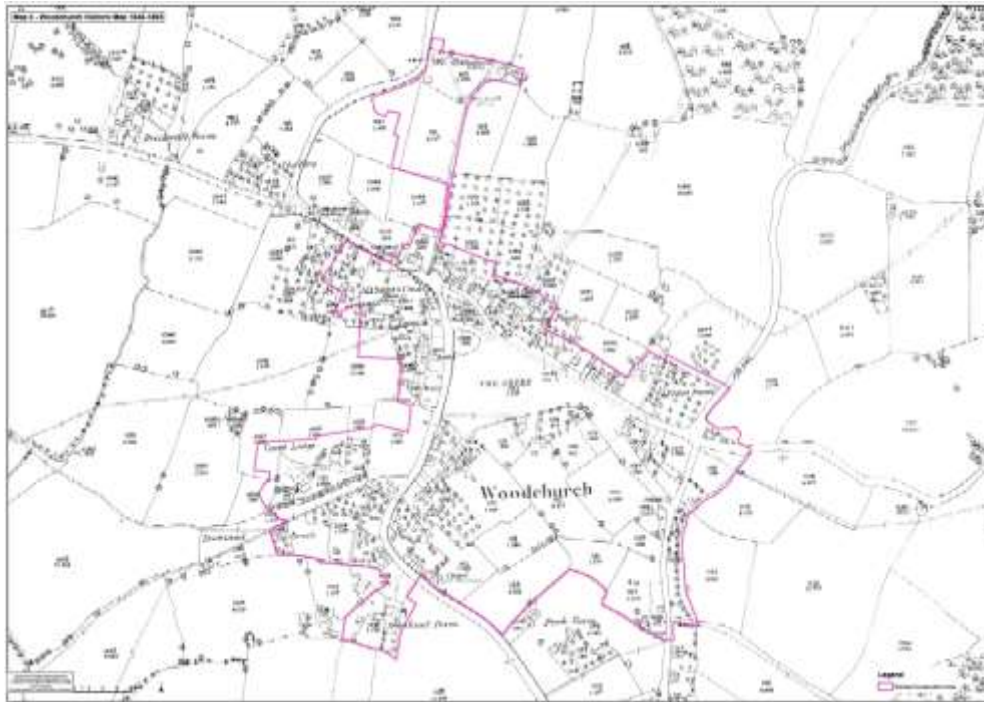
The village developed initially around the church and the Green to the east of the church, which now forms the heart of the village and the Conservation Area. The Green was originally open common land, which stretched south beyond the Conservation Area to Stonebridge before the lower green area was gradually fenced and removed from public access. Around the north-eastern edge of the Green, there are many notable listed buildings such as Henden Place and Place Farmhouse, both good examples of early Wealden Hall houses dating from the Medieval period (15th and 16th Century). Houses on this side of the Green developed along a common frontage line set back from the road and used typical materials of the Weald including Kent peg-tiled roofs, white painted weatherboard-clad elevations and the use of timber framing. Development of houses continued from the late 16th to the 18th centuries, including a row to the west of the Green just south of the church, along a public footpath called 'The Pavement' paved in blocks of Bethersden Marble, a local limestone also used in the church and outside the houses at 1 – 13 The Green. Most of these dwellings were built in Kentish style and several feature Georgian brick facades.

There are two notable Grade II listed farmhouses within the Conservation Area. The late Medieval Court Lodge Farmhouse is set well back from Front Road and surrounded by hedged gardens and fields. This timber-framed building, refaced with red brick and grey headers has a steeply pitched hipped tiled roof with distinctive massive brick chimney stack and an C18 north wing which is weather boarded on the first floor. Townland Farmhouse at 80 Front Road, dating from the 17th Century is a two-storey L-shaped building is constructed from red brick with grey headers with part of the west wing being tile hung and a half hipped tiled roof.

Overlooking the village to the north of the church is a timber windmill built in 1820 and a good example of a Kentish smock mill with a ground floor of tarred brick, faced above with white painted weatherboarding. It was one of a pair of mills known as 'the twins', both brought here from other sites. The upper mill, dating from the early 18th Century and known as the 'Black Mill' was moved from Place Lane and was used as an observation post by the military throughout the first world war and survived until 1940. The only signs of its existence today are a few pieces of its brick base. The remaining lower mill, known as the

'White Mill' was relocated from Susan's Hill and continued grinding commercially until 1926 after which time both mills fell into disrepair. The mill has undergone several periods of extensive renovation since 1946 and is now almost completely restored to working condition by local craftsmen and enthusiasts and managed by a charitable Trust.

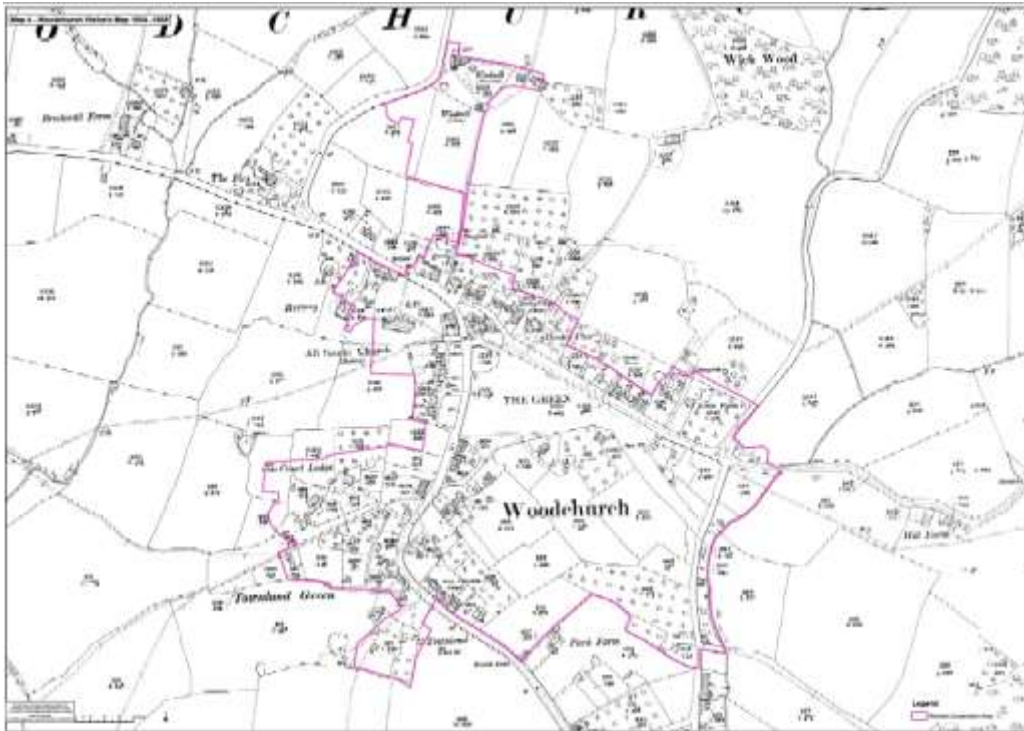
Two Listed public houses sit side by side opposite the church on Front Road. The red brick Six Bells Inn dating from the 17th Century in typical Kentish style and the Bonny Cravat Inn from circa 1800, which has had more modifications over the years.



**MAP 3
WOODCHURCH
CONSERVATION
AREA
1843 – 1893**

In the first decades of the 19th century there was an increase of almost 60% in the village population from 698 to 1095 people and the village expanded with ribbons of development spreading first along Front Road, infilling gaps between the older buildings and later along Lower Road which is largely lined with Victorian and later dwellings.

The village primary school originally built in 1844 is situated immediately west of the churchyard and was a National School.



**MAP 4
WOODCHURCH
CONSERVATION
AREA
1904 – 1939**

Map 4 above shows little change within the Conservation Area from the 19th century maps apart from a few minor infill developments on Lower Road and Front Road. In the last 50 years or so, spurs of development have extended the settlement northwards and to the south, beyond the central diamond of roads in the Conservation Area with only a few further infill developments taking land from within the diamond.

3. 3 Setting and topography

Woodchurch is located in the Low Weald, surrounded by typical Wealden landscape of hedged fields and woodland. Viewed from a distance, the village is identifiable by the two prominent landmarks, the church and the windmill, both located in the Conservation Area.

Woodchurch Conservation Area is characterised by linear development surrounding the village green and enclosed fields. This single plot depth of development results in the surrounding countryside abutting the conservation area in all areas except immediately to the north west and south east of the village. The countryside surrounding the village therefore forms an important part of the setting of the Conservation Area.

Woodchurch is situated on land which slopes gently to the south. Land between 82 - 120 Front Road (add photograph) provides a gap in the linear development which forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area. The prominent site has a hedged road frontage and open character and allows views to the countryside



beyond from the Conservation Area and adjoining footpaths. Modern development is situated in the valley to the south west of the Conservation Area but, due to the topography and road layout, this development is not highly visible from the Conservation Area. In order to respect the rural setting of this part of the Conservation Area, any proposals for development in this area must retain the front hedge and have a sufficient degree of openness and visual connection with the countryside. In order to respect the adjoining Townland Green Character Area and the siting of properties opposite the site, development should be set well back from Front Road and not be of a scale or massing which would dominate this approach to the Conservation Area or the public views from it.

To the north the land rises and the windmill sits on an open hill high above the village. The open spaces around the windmill form an important part of the setting of the listed building and the Conservation Area allowing appreciation of the visual inter-relationship of the windmill and the church.

To the north west, some modern residential development has encroached close to the setting of the Grade 1 listed All Saints Church. Nevertheless, the church and rectory abut open fields to the south and these remain an important part of the setting of the listed building and this part of the Conservation Area. Views of the village and the church can be seen from the relatively high ground behind the Rectory and Rectory Close.

The rising hills to the east of the village are an important part of the setting of the Conservation Area and are important in enclosing the views from The Green (below)



4.0 Character Appraisal

Whilst Woodchurch Conservation Area as a whole represents an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, for the purposes of this appraisal, the Conservation Area has been split into six sub-areas which comprise distinctive character areas:

1 Village Green

2 Front Street (south of the village green)

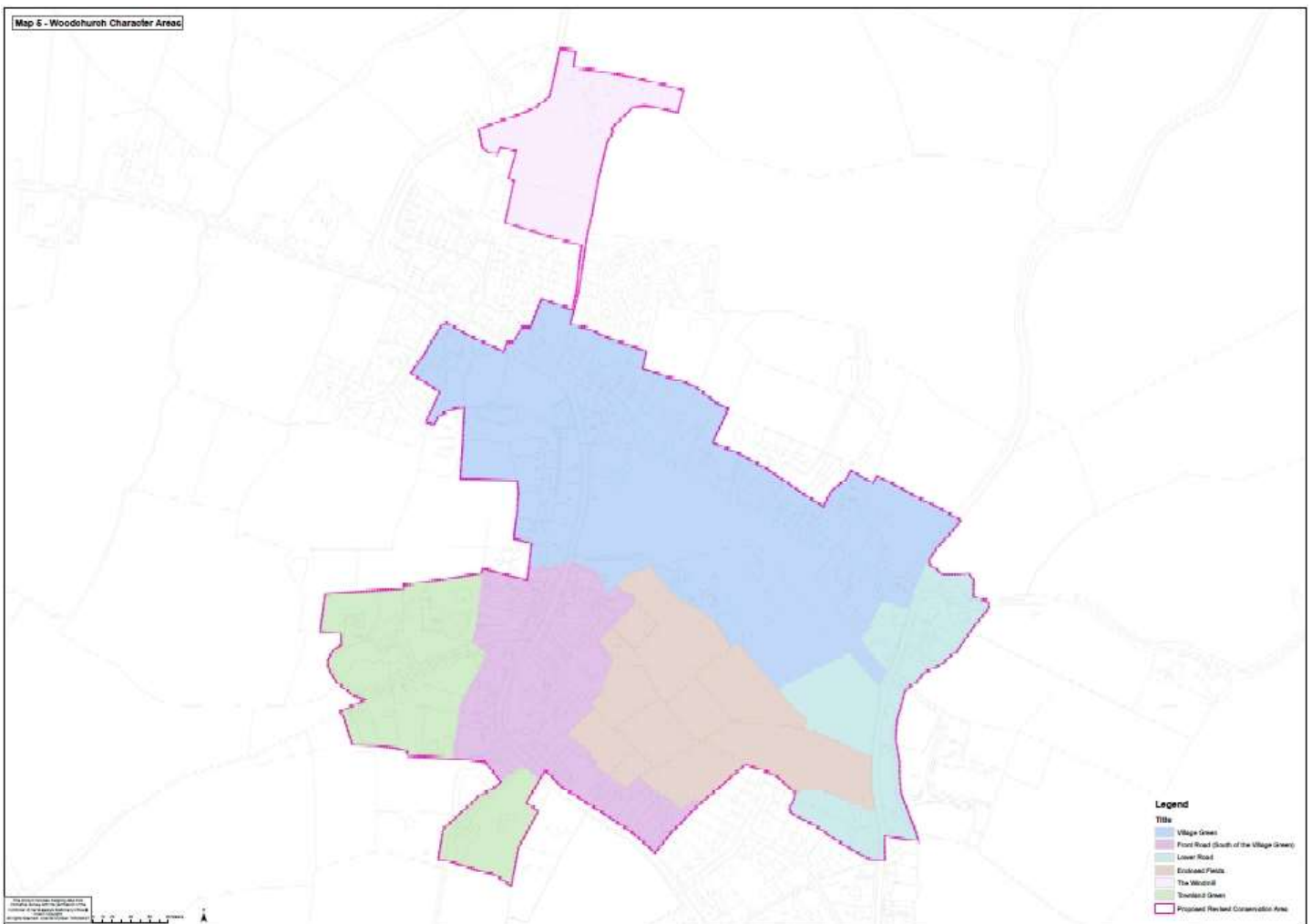
3 Lower Road

4 Enclosed Fields

5 The Windmill

6 Townland Green

MAP 5 CHARACTER AREAS





MAP 6 KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

4.1 The Village Green

The dominant feature of the Conservation Area is the wide expanse of the village green which slopes gently down towards the south east. A backdrop of woodland-topped hillside to the south helps enclose this view. It presents a typical English village scene, with the cricket square, mown grass, a church spire visible above properties to the west and various buildings nestling around the edge. Most buildings fronting on to the village green are listed buildings in their own right but their domestic scale, set back, hedged front boundaries and use of a limited range of vernacular materials unifies the group as a back drop to the green. Mature trees also contribute to the verdant character of this part of the Conservation Area. Soft grass verges and gravel paths and drives add to the informality of the street scene. The scale of the buildings and the trees cannot hope to enclose the wide space of the village green which consequently has a spacious and open character.



Fronting The Green on the northern edge, a number of two storey houses are set behind a wide grass verge, hedged boundary and front garden. The informality is retained as the grass verge abuts the road, access drives and footpath without formal edging. The number of vehicular cross overs is limited to ensure that the green predominates.



Properties to the north side of The Green stand out with their light coloured appearance formed by white painted weatherboard and light painted render. The properties are all two storeys in height with orange plain tile or slate pitched or hipped roofs - with most incorporating chimneys extending above the roof line. A former shop with shopfront can be seen at the centre of the picture - left above. The trees at the entrance to Bourne's Place form an important backdrop to this side of The Green, contribute to the verdant character and screen the more modern development.



Limited infill development is located on the north side of The Green but the small scale, height, materials, set back and hedged frontage ensure that they have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.



A row of evergreen trees at the north western edge of the Green give this area scale and adds to the verdant appearance of The Green. The row is a remnant of an earlier avenue which stretched along the whole northern edge of the Green. The early Wealden Hall house, Henden Place, is a well preserved feature on the eastern side of The Green

Two single properties and associated trees help frame the eastern and southern views from the Green. The Green forks and narrows down to Lower Road around Chequer Tree Cottage but is due to be extended further to the south of Drayson House. The rising hills to the east are an important part of the setting of the village and are important in enclosing the views from the Green.



The two storey white weather boarded Chequer Tree Cottage and associated trees (left) draws the eye and helps frame views to the east across the Green. The tall villa, Drayson House, and associated trees (right) help frame views across the Green to the south.

All Saints Church spire dominates the western view from the village green rising above the adjoining roof line and acting as a landmark from many parts of the village.



The village green slopes down to Lower Road.



The south eastern section of the green comprises entirely open space with some trees. The open space has a hedged boundary to the north which partially screens views of buildings (left) and a gappy hedge to the south – though this may be enhanced by new hedge planting associated with the permitted development.



The eastern section of The Green incorporates a road though the soft verges, lack of footways and some hedged boundaries retains the informality of other parts of The Green.

The church spire can be seen along the axis of The Green providing an important landmark feature from the junction of The Green and Lower Road (left).



Rising from Lower Road, properties on the west side of The Green are of a domestic scale in-keeping with the rest of the Conservation Area but the designs, materials and boundary treatment present a mixed character.

The west side of the village green is also enclosed by two storey red brick houses with tall orange plain tiled roofs with dormer windows and chimneys set on higher ground. Trees which are generally located behind and between the properties add to this enclosure and the verdant character of the village green.



The row of listed houses on the west side of the village green just south of the church are set well back behind deep, hedged front gardens, along a public footpath called 'The Pavement' paved in blocks of Bethersden Marble. Shared access drives have limited impact as a result of the limited number of openings and the use of gravel.

The character of development changes at the north western edge of the Green, leading to Front Road. The wide grass verge disappears and properties, including terraced houses, are set closer to the curved road giving an enclosed character. Vehicle parking has encroached into some front gardens in this area.



To the east of The Green in this area (left) hedged boundaries are less prevalent and vehicle parking has encroached into front gardens. More traditional white weather boarded houses with hedged boundaries occupy the western side of The Green (right)

Beyond this area, All Saints Church, two pubs and the primary school face Front Road in a cluster of public buildings.



The Grade I listed All Saints Church, built of Kentish ragstone, is located within an extensive church yard on relatively high ground. The church yard contains some mature trees which, along with the ragstone wall, contribute to the street scene. The windmill is visible from the church yard on higher ground to the north.



The original part of the primary school (above left) dating from 1844 is situated immediately west of the churchyard with the building in a prominent position located at the back edge of the Front Road pavement. The single storey brick building with plain tiled roof has three gables facing the road. Whilst not a listed building, the building is a prominent notable local building in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village. More modern buildings and playground are tucked behind the original building.

The adjoining village pubs (above right) are both listed buildings and are prominent in the street scene. One has a picket fenced front garden and the other has an open frontage and parking. Signage is fairly restrained and does not detract from the listed buildings or the character of the area. The individual buildings and active uses add to the character created by this cluster of public buildings in this part of the Conservation Area.

The properties around the village green and the green itself are generally very well maintained and this part of the Conservation Area is generally in very good condition.

4.2 Front Road (south of the village green)

Away from the village green the verdant character initially changes to a more urban form of development with Front Road lined with generally two storey detached, semi-detached and terraced properties set close to each other and back from the road behind small front gardens - some hedged - replicating this boundary feature prominent in properties around the green. This part of the village is largely characterised by linear development along the road. The houses are generally of red brick or tile hanging to upper floors with plain tiled or slate roofs. A few gable ended properties front the road and punctuate the sloping pitched roof form of most dwellings. The urban character is accentuated by the width of the road, on street, and curtilage, parking and overhead wires. As Front Road extends further south east the development becomes looser knit with buildings set further back from the road.



A shop with restrained signage is located in a cluster of properties close to the village green (left).



Terraced properties are part of the character of Front Road. These two storey groups each provides a unified appearance through the use of brick with tiled roofs, the pattern of window and door openings and brick arch detailing. In some cases replacement windows have not matched the original pattern and front boundary hedging has been removed diminishing the unity of the properties.

There are glimpses of the historic Townland Green area from Front Road which help to visually connect the main road with the historic hinterland of farmsteads.



There is a glimpse of Court Lodge Farm along an informal hedged track from Front Road – set behind a deeply set white painted brick detached house and a modern detached white rendered infill house (left). The siting, scale, materials and hedged frontage of the modern infill development respond to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



There is a glimpse of the entrance to Townland Farm along a hedged track which accommodates a public footpath.

To the south of the entrance to Court Lodge Farm the character of the street becomes more mixed, with no regular building line, dominant building materials, front boundaries or house designs (right). A number of bungalows are also located along this section of Front Road.



The splayed single storey white rendered garage and car sales forecourt are prominently located on the corner of Front Road (left). A shop with restrained signage is located in a cluster of properties opposite the garage (left).

A pair of tall brick villas set on higher ground are prominent notable local building in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area.



The ragstone wall and railings provide an appropriate historic boundary to the villas.

The small crescent of inter-war former public housing 65 – 75 (odd nos.) Front Road is typical of the period, comprising ribbon development at the edge of the village. The development forms a ‘set piece’ crescent of semi-detached properties set well back from the road behind deep front gardens. Materials follow the local vernacular of brick and weatherboarded facades with plain tiled roofs and chimneys. Original windows and doors have been replaced and garages and drive ways have been installed.



The Mission Hall abuts 75 Front Road. Whilst not a listed building, the building is a prominent notable local building marking the start of the Conservation Area and in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village.



A gap occurs in the developed frontage of the village to the south of Front Road and this site is allocated by the Borough Council for residential development (see Para. 3. 3 Setting and topography). The character of the south side of the road is loose knit linear development fronting the road behind hedged front boundaries.

Approaching the village green from the south, the church spire comes into view as the road turns sharply east. Views of this important landmark are available between buildings and above the tree line.



The properties and public realm in Front Road (south of the village green) are generally well maintained. Nevertheless, a number have inappropriate replacement of traditional roof materials and features such as windows and doors with unsympathetic modern materials, and front boundaries and gardens have been eroded to create parking spaces. Telegraph poles and overhead wires detract from the public realm. This part of the Conservation Area is generally in fair condition.

4.3 Lower Road Area

Lower Road is a winding narrow, hedge and tree lined lane with a strong rural character. Whilst a footpath runs along the west side of the road, a grass verge along part of its length and a grass verge on the eastern side of the road help retail an informal character. The small scale detached buildings along Lower Road and their discrete location behind hedges means that the landscape dominates the street scene. The properties are primarily of red brick with red plain tile or slate roofs and chimneys on the older houses.



Properties to the east of the lane south of the village green are set on shallow plots which are enclosed to the rear by a stream which forms the boundary to the Conservation Area. Consequently, the properties are pushed quite close to the road. Nevertheless, the properties are interspersed with large side gardens which create wide gaps between the buildings and retain a dispersed rural character at the edge of the countryside.



Single and two storey properties situated close to the east side of Lower Road but interspersed with significant areas of open space.

Properties on the west side of Lower Road and the simply designed bungalows on the east side - north of the village green - are discretely located back from the road through narrow entrances and behind hedges such that the landscape dominates the buildings.



The area is dominated by open spaces, be it garden land, fields or the publically accessible village green as it branches down to join Lower Road.

Open fields abut Lower Road to the west. Development of a detached two storey dwelling along with an outbuilding, with a holiday let and linked office (B1) on part of the open land fronting Lower Road to enable the creation of an addition to the village green is under construction.





Views east from The Green towards Lower Road show a grassed triangular road junction with a stand of ash trees around the junction and rising land beyond enclosing views to the north. The open land to the east is an important part of the setting of this part of the Conservation Area.

The properties and public realm in the Lower Road area are generally well maintained and this part of the Conservation Area is generally in good condition.

4.4 Enclosed Fields

This area adjoins the village green to the north but is otherwise surrounded by development – albeit limited dispersed development to the east. The area comprises a landscape of small fields enclosed by a network of native hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees including oak. This area forms an important part of the open character which is such a strong and distinctive feature of the heart of this village. The fields allow views of the church from certain vantage points.



View of the church spire from Lower Road across open fields at the centre of the village (left)

View from the village green south east towards Lower Road across the central open fields (right).



View north eastwards towards the open fields at the end of Kirkwood Avenue (left)

The landscape condition of the enclosed fields area is generally good with a managed network of native hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.

4.5 The Windmill

The white painted timber Windmill, set on a high point to the north of the village, is a landmark feature recognisable on the skyline from a distance. The well preserved listed building is good example of a Kentish smock mill.



The church spire is visible from the windmill across the open fields to the west of the footpath (above).

The fields to the west of the footpath not only form an important part of the setting of the windmill but also allow the visual inter-relationship of the village's two historic landmark buildings.





Immediately to the north of the mill lie the two two-storey listed houses Mill Cottage and Fairview with a red brick and tile hung exterior.

The windmill is accessed via a footpath that passes between the village pubs and along a narrow route between the backs of modern development before revealing dramatic wide views of the windmill across open fields.



The windmill is very well maintained and the adjoining fields are managed. The footpath sign is well maintained and, although narrow close to the village, the footpath itself is well used. Overall the windmill area is generally in good condition.

4.6 Townland Green

Townland Green is one of the oldest parts of the village with Court Lodge Farm and Townland Farm two of the remaining buildings from this early period. The large buildings sit in large plots containing mature trees. Each farm building is set with other buildings associated with the farmsteads. The two clusters are separated from each other by open land comprising their own grounds, long back gardens to properties facing Front Road and countryside around the south western fringe of the village. The rural character of the area is retained through the retention of the historic buildings and their undeveloped setting. Access is derived from unmade informal tracks bordered by hedges.



Townland Farm (left) is a large detached listed house set in large grounds with mature trees.

The capped oast house (right) was associated with Townland Farm and is set close to mature trees on a ridge with long views to the south. Whilst not a listed building, the oast house is a notable local building in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village. The farm and oast buildings are set apart retaining a spacious character in a rural setting.



Court Lodge Farm (left) is a large detached listed house set in large grounds with mature trees.

The oast house (right) was associated with Court Lodge Farm and is set with a converted barn in large grounds surrounded by mature trees. Although of a large scale, the buildings are set far apart retaining a spacious character in a rural setting. Whilst not listed buildings, the converted oast and barn are notable local buildings in terms of the character of this part of the Conservation Area and in understanding the historic evolution of the village.



Access to the Court Farm Lodge farmstead is derived from unmade informal tracks enclosed by hedges and mature trees.

The historic open character of this area is retained with long back gardens extending to the hedge (left)



The open long back gardens (left) are an important characteristic of Townland Green. A pair of weather boarded cottages is visible across the gardens and from the footpath passing Townland Farm.

The properties and gardens in the Townland Green area are generally very well maintained and this part of the Conservation Area is generally in good condition.

5.0 Negative Features

Overall the condition of the Conservation Area is good but there are a number of negative features which detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Overhead wires and telegraph poles are a characteristic of the Conservation Area and detract from the character of the buildings and the area as a whole. They are particularly noticeable in Front Road.



- Vehicle parking has encroached into some front gardens resulting in the loss of front gardens and traditional boundaries.



- Formal kerbed edging around The Green urbanises the informal setting.



- Modern development in the foreground of views of the listed windmill detracts from its setting



- The inappropriate replacement of traditional windows and doors with unsympathetic modern materials and designs has led to an erosion of the historic and architectural character of some properties and the integrity of groups of houses.



- Clutter to the rear of Front Road



- Whilst small in scale and unobtrusive in the wider landscape and views from The green, the building at the junction of Lower Road and The Green is dilapidated



6.0 Management Proposals for the Conservation Area

Historic England's good practice advocates that local authorities should prepare a management plan to address the issues arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal and set out recommendations for action. Some of these actions will be applied generally to Conservation Areas in the Borough, whilst others, such as enhancement proposals, are specific to the Woodchurch Conservation Area.

6.1 Management Proposals applicable to all Conservation Areas in the Borough

Application of Planning Policy

The Borough Council will consistently apply adopted and future planning policy to ensure high quality design which is appropriate to protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This will be applied to all development requiring planning or listed building consent including new development such as replacement or new buildings, small scale alterations and extensions to buildings, boundary treatment and, where applicable, surfacing front gardens. This approach will be followed for proposals both within the Conservation Area and those which affect its setting or impact on its character.

Shop Fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document

The Borough Council will bring forward a new supplementary planning document on shop fronts and advertisements which will have special consideration for Conservation Areas.

Repairs to Buildings in Conservation Areas Good Practice Guide

It would particularly assist home owners of the Borough Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas if Good Practice Guides were complemented by an information leaflet on replacement doors, windows and roof materials considered to be suitable within Conservation Areas. This will have much wider application. It will recognise the need for replacement features and will also give practical guidance on design, acceptable materials and products. The Leaflet will be publicised and be available on the website.

Building Regulations

The Borough Council will continue to apply Building and Fire Regulations sensitively in Conservation Areas and to Listed Buildings to attempt to ensure that there is no conflict with the preservation of the character of the area or the building.

6.2 Management Proposals for Woodchurch Conservation Area

Housing Site Allocation - Land between 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch

The site is allocated for housing development and there is a clear opportunity for a development of this site to make a positive contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. The site is close to the Townland Green character area and adjoins lower density development. In order to respect the rural setting of this part of the Conservation Area, proposals for development in this area must have a sufficient degree of openness and visual connection with the countryside. The design and layout of the scheme should allow for significant spaces between buildings to allow for long views through the site to the countryside beyond. In order to respect the adjoining Townland Green Character Area within the Conservation Area and the siting of properties opposite the site, development should be set well back from Front Road and not be of a scale or massing which would dominate this approach to the Conservation Area or the public views from it.

Reduce the number of telegraph poles and overhead wires by placing wires underground as opportunities arise

It is recognised that the cost of replacing telegraph poles and overhead wires underground is normally high but opportunities to achieve this improvement to the appearance of the Conservation Area should be taken as they arise.

Extension and management of the village green

The village green forms the heart of the village and its open, verdant aspect is a key contributor to the character of the Conservation Area and should be preserved.

Current plans to extend the Green into the field to the south-east provide an opportunity to consider the long term management of the whole green through a landscape management plan able to balance the heritage value with requirements for ecology, sport and recreation, landscape character and quality and visitor and community needs. As part of this plan, consideration should be given to future replacement planting of mature trees on the edges of the Green, particularly the conifers on the northern side which are a remnant of an earlier avenue.



Play and fitness equipment more recently added to the green provide valuable community facilities but their character, dominated by the use of brightly painted steel equipment, is somewhat at odds with the natural appearance of the setting. Any future play and recreational facilities should be designed to reflect the character of the green with high quality landscape design to ensure they fit well with their context.

Avoid formal kerbed edging around the village green and the east side of Lower Road to avoid urbanising the character of the area.

Soft edging should be retained to the road, access drives and footpaths to maintain the rural informality of the space.



Retain side boundary planting and hedge screening when creating parking bays

Where off street parking is proposed within front curtilages, hedged boundaries with neighbouring properties should be retained and enhanced and the maximum length of front boundary retained to help enclose the road space, define the boundary between public and private space and help reinforce the character of an area. Wherever possible permeable surfaces should be used which are in keeping with the character of the property and its curtilage.



Churchyard boundary

The boundary to the west of the churchyard near the rear of the adjacent school grounds is dilapidated and should be replaced.

Sources:

Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012)

Kent Historic Environment Record online

Woodchurch Village Design Statement 2002

Woodchurch Conservation Area Assessment 1996

'Then and Now 2006: An Illustrated History of the Village of Woodchurch Near Ashford, Kent' by Arthur Stroud (Editor), Jon Chaplin (Editor), John Hart (Editor)

<http://www.woodchurchwindmill.co.uk>

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

**DRAFT KINGSNORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

Respondent	Section of CAMP	Representation	Response
Eileen Prosser	Negative Features	Are any measures going to be taken to rectify these 5 negatives?	Actions which respond to the negative features are included in the Management Plan section. The timing of these improvements will be a matter for negotiation and availability of resources but the local priorities for action are clearly set out in the CAMP.
Kingsnorth Unknown 1	Chapter 1 - Introduction	I would generally agree with the proposals in particular the high fence around the school is very ugly.	Support noted
Church Hill Resident	Chapter 4 - Character Appraisal	I have just read your Kingsnorth appraisal plan and one minor error I can see is:- it is Candlemass Cottage that has the landscaped garden not Glebe Cottage as stated. I visited Candlemass when they had an open garden it was stunning. Glebe looked in need of some TLC. I am impressed with the appraisal and it would be good if the 5 negatives could be rectified. I love my village.	The draft CAMP states that Candlemass Cottage is located within a neat hedged garden adjoining the footpath and church yard. It is recommended that the text be amended to: <i>Candlemass Cottage is located within a neat hedged landscaped garden adjoining the footpath and church yard.</i>

<p>Kingsnorth Parish Council (L Bunn)</p>		<p>Kingsnorth Parish Council would like to thank you for the opportunity to inform the review of the conservation area.</p> <p>Having walked the site with the consultants we are pleased to note they have extended the rear boundary of the conservation area behind Church Hill to include important hedgerows and present a more logical boundary between properties in the conservation area and the open fields.</p> <p>The revised boundary also excludes the playing fields as these are already included in the buffer zone and are already adequately protected. The observations about the conservation area are supported and we will actively look to improve the quality of the signage and safer off road routes across the area.</p> <p>The views across the fields at the rear of Church Hill looking up to Bond Lane and down to Mill Hill are of particular significance and include some large Oaks which are not included in the conservation area. The extended boundary will give greater protection to this view.</p>	<p>Support noted.</p> <p>In relation to the views across the fields at the rear of Church Hill looking up to Bond Lane and down to Mill Hill the draft CAMP states:</p> <p><i>Land falls away to the east towards Mill Hill. As with the north of the historic core of the village, the hedged open fields with mature trees immediately abutting the Conservation Area provide an important setting to this designated heritage asset.</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the text be amended to: <i>Land falls away to the south west towards Mill Hill. As with the north of the historic core of the village, the hedged open fields with mature trees immediately abutting the Conservation Area provide an important setting to this designated heritage asset and allow views across the fields to the south east at the rear of Church Hill up towards Bond Lane and to the south west towards Mill Hill.</i></p>
<p>Cllr Paul Bartlett</p>	<p>Boundary</p>	<p>The only matter I would wish to raise in the consultation is the conservation area should include the area between the new school buildings and the houses alongside the Church to the west of the Church, also the conservation area should extend around these properties next to the Church, say 20 metres</p>	<p>The Church and all the adjoining cottages and their curtilages are included within the Conservation Area. A small area immediately to the north of the cottages contains a number of mature specimen oak trees and it is proposed to extend the Conservation Area to include this group.</p>

		into the conservation area.	<i>Amend Conservation Area Boundary</i>
Mr & Mrs Bell, Mumford Cottage		<p>We attended the public exhibition at the Kingsnorth Primary Scholl on 26th November and would like to make the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In general, we are supportive of the process and appreciate the updated management plan. 2. In particular, the proposed changes to the south western boundary at the rear on Mumford House and Old Mumford Farm are supported. 3. We would recommend that you consider retaining the field to the north of the church and the cottage in the conservation area. This field includes a number of large important trees and the recently planted orchard. While we appreciate this area is included in the buffer zone, it is important to conserve the old trees and recently planted orchard. 4. We would also recommend that you include all the important trees on the plan. The attached plan shows some of the large oak trees that are between 200 and 300 years old. 5. We also suggest that you include the small ponds that are within the conservation area. These features should be identified and conserved for the future. 6. It would help if the plan showed a comparison between the old boundary and the new boundary. 7. You should refer to planning application 	<p>Many of the fields to the north of the Conservation Area contain mature hedged/ treed boundaries but this extensive area is considered to be part of the setting of the Conservation Area rather than the historic core of the village. The CAMP already states that Kingsnorth Buffer Zone is located to the north of the Conservation Area with retained hedged open fields with mature trees providing an important setting which helps protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>It is proposed that the CAMP be amended to emphasise the importance of the setting of the Conservation Area by adding the following text.</p> <p>1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within <i>and adjoining</i> the proposed Kingsnorth Conservation Area can be assessed</p> <p>2.1 National Guidance <i>The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or</i></p>

		<p>15/00856/AS. It refers to anomalies in the ground survey in the fields to the south west of Mumford House that could be archaeological features and identifies a number of other important features. You should consider adding these fields to the conservation area.</p> <p>8. Planning application 15/00856/AS also refers to a 200m zone around the church that restricts development. This should be included in the conservation area appraisal and management plan.</p> <p>9. We believe that some of the properties are older than 18th century. Parts of the internal walls of our property are timber framed which we believe date back to the 15th or 16th century.</p> <p>10. The recent approval by the Council under planning application 15/00951/AS for a gravelled area (retrospective) and shed within the conservation area should be seen as negative features and contravene the controls that should be enforced in a conservation area.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing the final version of the document and the Council's continued attempts to control development in the Kingsnorth Conservation Area and reduce the impact of the negative features identified.</p>	<p><i>development within its setting.</i></p> <p><i>In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected by a proposal (including by development affecting its setting).</i></p> <p><i>This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Kingsnorth Conservation Area and the importance of its setting. In turn, this will help the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.</i></p> <p><i>When adopted, development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal.</i></p> <p>A small area immediately to the north of the proposed Conservation Area contains a number of mature specimen oak trees and it is proposed to extend the Conservation Area to include this group. <i>Amend Conservation Area Boundary</i></p> <p><i>Reference to ponds will be added to the text.</i></p> <p>The 300m Restricted Development Area around the church referred to in the</p>
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			<p>planning application has no planning status and is a guide being used by the developer in masterplanning the application site. It is not appropriate to use one developer's assessment of impact of a specific scheme within the CAMP. Rather, each proposal should be judged on its merits in the context of the CAMP.</p> <p>The proposal for gravel area and shed was not considered harmful to the character of the Conservation Area or the setting of a listed building by the local planning authority and is not considered to be a negative feature.</p>
Ernest Bate, The Coach House		I approve of the Kingsnorth Conservation Area Appraisal and support the boundary changes being suggested. I think it will be valuable to have a well considered and up-to-date management plan in place. I am happy with the wording of the draft as it is, and have no changes to suggest.	Support noted
Mr & Mrs Harris, Mumford House	boundary	We feel that the changes to the conservation Area should be extended further to include plots 345, 257 & 349 as shown in Map 3 Kingsnorth Conservation Area 1843 – 1893, so as to conserve heritage assets, including the view back to the listed buildings, and church, these views are of great significance so they can be enjoyed for the contribution to the quality of life, also wildlife for future generations to enjoy. This area should be deemed an area of outstanding natural beauty as there are very few areas like this left now	Many of the fields to the south of the Conservation Area such as plots 345, 257 and 349 as shown in Map 3 Kingsnorth Conservation Area 1843 – 1893 contain mature hedged/ treed boundaries but this extensive area is considered to be part of the setting of the Conservation Area rather than the historic core of the village. The CAMP already states that to the south west of the Conservation Area, a number of open fields with mature hedgerow and treed boundaries form the setting of the

		<p>so please help us preserve this for the sake of our village heritage, otherwise we become one of the many lost villages like many others. If the above plots were to be developed the existing landscape would be lost forever & the majority of the buildings & fields would get flooded as we are on a high water table already being on clay soil the excess water just sits on the land, Excessive flooding would cause major problems for the foundations of our property's.</p>	<p>Conservation Area. As with the north of the historic core of the village, the hedged open fields with mature trees immediately abutting the Conservation Area provide an important setting to this designated heritage asset.</p> <p>It is recommended that the text be amended to: <i>Land falls away to the south west towards Mill Hill. As with the north of the historic core of the village, the hedged open fields with mature trees immediately abutting the Conservation Area provide an important setting to this designated heritage asset and allow views across the fields to the south east at the rear of Church Hill up towards Bond Lane and to the south west towards Mill Hill.</i></p> <p>It is proposed that the CAMP be amended to emphasise the importance of the setting of the Conservation Area by adding the following text.</p> <p>2.1 National Guidance</p> <p><i>The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.</i></p> <p><i>In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected</i></p>
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			<p><i>by a proposal (including by development affecting its setting).</i></p> <p><i>This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Kingsnorth Conservation Area and the importance of its setting. In turn, this will help the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.</i></p> <p><i>When adopted, development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal.</i></p> <p>Conservation Areas are not designated to protect wildlife habitats.</p> <p>The area is not within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which has the highest landscape status in England and is designated by Natural England.</p>
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**DRAFT WOODCHURCH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

Respondent	Section of CAMP	Representation	Response
Conservation Area Boundary			
Bournes Place			
D G Lewing		With regard to the omission of Boume Place and Cherry Orchard Close and the minor regularising of various boundaries these all seem sensible revisions and can confirm agreement.	Support noted
Sue Rainer		<p>I have read the consultation document, listened to the comments of the gentleman who was at the Woodchurch Hall as a representative of the document. I have to question Why this was necessary. Whilst the document is carefully prepared and enters in to great detail about the village - it does not explain why this was commissioned and why there is a need to alter the parameters. We were advised that it removes all the modern buildings. What it does is give further freedom to developers to build what they wish without the need to consider to meet requirements of a conservation area.</p> <p>In this day and age, the conservation area should be extended out further than its current parameters and take in the land behind Bournes Place and the barn on that land. When living within a conservation area, one recognises one in a valued and cared for location, with this one respects the area and the restrictions it brings. Woodchurch needs to be preserved the future of generations to come. Not for the developers of the future who are going to be more greedier than the current ones.</p>	<p>Section 1.3 explains the purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans. The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved or enhanced.</p> <p>Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act</p>

<p>Christopher John COE</p>		<p>After studying the proposed changes to the conservation area boundary it appears that significant areas of once protected valuable land will be available for future development? I am particularly concerned about the areas of land in Front Road, particularly Bourne's Place.</p>	<p>1990 states that it is the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review past conservation area designations.</p>
<p>Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)</p>		<p>Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments in to four clear and consistent messages. 1) Whilst there are those who are in favour of expanding the Conservation Area, the vast majority see no benefit in changing the current boundaries. The appraisal document, although well prepared and well written, does not offer any solid reasons for the changes. The same principled arguments were put forward for the boundary changes affecting the Bournes Place submission site. The Parish Council agrees with residents that Bournes Place forms a constituent part of another important gateway to the central core and would not want to see any relaxation of the Planning Authority's key control mechanism and the interventions at its disposal. Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman</p>	<p>The draft Appraisal retained most of the area within the Conservation Area boundary originally designated in in 1987 and last reviewed in 1996. It is proposed to exclude areas which do not contribute positively to the special architectural or historic interest or the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>Woodchurch Village Association (CS Stafford)</p>		<p>Overview It is our opinion that in general the Woodchurch Conservation area is robust. It serves the community well and the village adheres to the principles set out in the Village Design Statement.</p> <p>Bourne's Place</p> <p>Although Bourne's Place was built in the 1980's, part of this development is highly visible from the Village Green. We are concerned that if Bourne's Place is removed from the Conservation Area, dwellings in this area could be modified in a way which is detrimental to the overall appearance of the Green.</p>	<p>Bourne's Place is a cul de sac development of detached houses. The trees at the entrance to Bourne's Place form an important backdrop to this side of The Green and contribute to the verdant character and consequently it is proposed to retain this entrance within the Conservation Area. However, the backland residential development has no strong visual relationship</p>

			<p>with the historic core of the Conservation Area and its layout, design, materials and boundary treatment are not characteristic of the special architectural or historic interest of the adjoining area. Consequently, it is recommended that the area be omitted from the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Land beyond the Conservation Area is to be treated as part of its setting and this section of the Appraisal is to be reinforced, thereby retaining control of the appearance of the Green and its setting.</p>
Land between 82 – 120 Front Road/ Townland farm			
M Wilcockson		<p>Envisage copious 'tree planting' to largely act as being keeping with the general quality of landscape/buildings which has developed 'overtime'. The 'Housing' would be back to front so that the tree planting is qualitatively chosen to enhance 'Lower Road' where there is decoration: to the new build area and it must be very well considered as Front Road is extremely busy and curved ie. dangerous. NB. Should this be a successful application, I envisage a large number of houses! FRONT ROAD HAS A LOT OF TRAFFIC ALREADY! Sorry stating the obvious. (SEE ATTACHED)</p>	<p>Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that it is the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review past conservation area designations to assess</p>

Roy Allan		<p>I would like to register my objection to the amendments to the conservation area to Front Road, Woodchurch. The area to the East of number 82 Front Road needs to be retained within the conservation area, this area is designated for residential development within WOOD1, and therefore it is of vital importance that any development respects the conservation area ; any new dwellings are designed ; constructed to the highest standard to match other properties within the surrounding area.</p>	<p>whether they remain appropriate. The Woodchurch Conservation Area was first designated in 1987 and last reviewed in 1996.</p>
Sue Garnar and Mr Steve Baker		<p>(See attachments) Further to Fridays consultation regarding the draft changes of the conservation area in Woodchurch. Please note our comments regarding the Front Road area.</p> <p>Regarding the picturesque agricultural field opposite Lavender Cottage, we do not understand why this needs to be removed from the conservation area at all. The consultant said it was because the field was cut obscurely in half by the existing conservation boundary which made no sense to him; he said that the conservation area should follow a natural boundary. Our argument is that there is a fence running through the middle of the field so why couldn't the new conservation boundary follow that natural fence line? Sheep still graze in the field and if the mature hedge was maintained, this beautiful landscape could be enjoyed by all. (See photos of the field in question showing the fence which could be used as the natural new conservation boundary)</p> <p>We feel that if this field is removed from the conservation area at this moment in time that it will give the wrong signals to prospective developers (Wood1). We and many of the villagers are fearful of what could be built on this land.It is our greatest wish that this land is not built on at all, that the green, pleasant open space is preserved. However, if there is no alternative, and sadly it is allowed to be built on, the villagers hope that any houses/cottages/bungalows that are constructed, are in keeping with the village. That the properties are kept small, attractive and blend into the rural surroundings and still offer the villagers glimpses of the green fields beyond. These dwellings should have ample off street parking, as Front Road is very narrow and this stretch is home to a blind bend. It is also on a bus route, frequented by tractors and other large vehicles. There is no pavement on that side of the road and so would be dangerous for pedestrians and school children.</p>	<p>Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012) provides more recent advice on drawing Conservation Area boundaries. It states that in almost all situations the conservation area boundary should run around rather than through a space or plot. It will generally be defined by physical features and avoid for example running along the middle of a street. This methodology has been followed consistently in reviewing the Conservation Area boundary.</p> <p>In relation to land between 82 - 120 Front Road, the designated Conservation Area boundary runs through</p>

		<p>If this rural land is taken out of the conservation area, we believe that the villagers, the Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council would lose control over what could be built on the unprotected land.</p> <p>We believe many of the villagers in Woodchurch feel that Ashford Borough Council are actually on 'our' side that you are fair and understand how we feel about preserving the openness and attractiveness of our village. We believe that you would not want the village to be tarnished by an unsuitable, unsightly development. But this could be out of your control, if this land is no longer part of a conservation area. Even if you do not feel this to be true, any unsuitable development refused by yourselves that subsequently went to appeal, would almost certainly be approved by an independent Inspector, without the added protection of the proposed development being in a conservation area. This has been proved by three previous refusals at this site, where the fact that the proposed unsuitable houses, were to be erected in a conservation area and were not in keeping with their surroundings.</p> <p>Many of the villagers feel that the change of conservation boundaries has something to do with the possible new development on Wood1. It seems too much of a co-incidence that the two are coinciding. If this is not the case, we feel that it would be much wiser to defer any changes to this part of the conservation area, if indeed it is necessary, until after the developers have submitted their plans and the villagers, the Parish Council & Ashford Borough Council are happy with and approve them.</p> <p>The bottom line is...Why does the existing conservation boundary need to be changed, what is the purpose? We hope you can understand our concerns. We all need to work together to conserve and preserve our precious green and open spaces, and not eradicate them forever. Please help us to keep Woodchurch a green, pleasant and peaceful village to live in. (SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS)"</p>	<p>a field and follows no recognisable boundary. It is difficult to justify the inclusion of only a portion of this field within the Conservation Area and not the remainder. Equally, it is difficult to justify the inclusion of this field and not others at the edge of the village. A consistent approach has been followed to setting the Conservation Area boundaries following the Historic England methodology.</p> <p>The Village Design Statement states that the site is located in a transitional position between the two distinct village character areas, namely the historic core to the north and the more recent southern end of the village principally in the last century.</p>
Reg Mendes da Costa		<p>The area which most concerns me is Planning Application 82-120 Front Road. The review has moved it from its current inclusion in the conservation area to outside that area. I would suggest that this would be a grave mistake. Applications have been submitted for development of this site, but they have been refused by A.B.C. Areas within a conservation area are given some protection against inappropriate development, which would not necessarily be available outside that area. The area covered by 82-120 Front Road occupies a</p>	<p>Land between 82 – 120 Front Road forms an important part of the setting of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>It is proposed that the</p>

		<p>prominent position within the delightful village of Woodchurch. Clearly it will be developed at some time in the future, but it is most important that the properties built there are appropriate and of a standard and style that fits in with others that make this the village that it is.</p> <p>I strongly support its inclusion within the conservation area.</p>	<p>CAMP be amended to emphasise the importance of the setting of the Conservation Area in general, and this part of the setting in particular by adding the following text.</p>
Marmara		<p>I am very concerned with the proposed removal of the current WOOD1 allocation from the existing conversation area. In particular, the removal of WOOD1, takes away any control the parish council would have with regard to any future development proposals.</p> <p>As one of the main reasons for the refusal of previous development applications was the fact that the area for development was within the conversation area, I feel we need to retain the above areas within the conservation area to help protect the integrity of the village. We need to ensure that the correct type of housing is built rather than giving developers carte blanche on their proposals. The previous developers did not listen to the requirements of the village. Their only thought was to maximise the profit potential from building large properties which are not needed in the village.</p> <p>The village needs bungalows in order to enable existing villagers in large properties to remain in the village and enable them to release their existing properties for growing families within the village. This would help to protect the existing fabric of the village for the future.</p>	<p>1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis on which proposals for development within <i>and adjoining</i> the proposed Woodchurch Conservation Area can be assessed</p> <p>2.1 National Guidance <i>The Government states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.</i></p> <p><i>In determining applications, the Government advises that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a Conservation Area affected by a proposal (including by</i></p>
Susan Mansfield		<p>I attended the meeting and exhibition in Woodchurch concerning the re-drawing of Woodchurch Conservation area and I am most concerned that such an action should be deemed necessary. It seems to me to be happening with unseemly haste, and is surprising just now, considering the costs involved with professional consultation and other elements. The predictable outcome of such an action would be to greatly reduce the influence of Woodchurch residents on building issues. The most critical proposed change is that which removes from the Area the open field and area of current Wood 1 allocation, running as it does, for a considerable distance on high ground on the main-road entrance to the village. This particular area has a great bearing on the open nature of the village. It would inevitably contribute to a noticeably urban atmosphere to have houses high on the bank and it would contribute also to the dangers already existing on this</p>	

		<p>stretch of road. Latest Plans show several driveways emerging on a deceptive bend, on a considerable slope and opposite the junction of a road serving many bungalows. It is worthy of note that when the Government Inspector visited the Site after one refusal, that his driver parked some 75 yards down Front Road with two wheels on the kerb, judging this to be his safest option. He was considerably surprised at the heavy lorry which sped past him as he left his vehicle. This road carries the majority of local and through traffic.</p> <p>It is worthy of note that each new multiple development in the village in the past 30 years has been built with only one exit onto the main road to serve many houses. If access to the site was beside the old Police House, and houses built well back on the site, with the existing hedge line protected and regulated to 6ft height the impact of any development could be kept to a minimum. In order that any future development also follows this sympathetic approach it is vital that this parcel of land in particular remains now and always a fully legal Conservation Area. The area across the road comprises a range of typical vernacular houses, with large gardens to the front. I believe I am right in saying that these were some of the first Council Housing. to be built in the U.K. and they are set out in an attractive manner. A line of tightly built modern houses is not appropriate in this position. Once built, the character of the village with its open aspects and views to the countryside, so highly valued, will be lost. Other new builds in the village in general are set back and in no instance do they dominate the area.</p> <p>To sum up....To reduce the Conservation area in Woodchurch can only serve to greatly reduce any influence the villagers, and the Borough Council, will have in future over the character of a village which is widely acknowledged to be one of the most attractive in the County. This is an ancient settlement, still a living village, it is our duty to make every effort to ensure it continues as such. To reduce the Conservation area which those with wisdom in times past have declared worthy of special protection is an impulsive.....I may say, an unworthy act, which could well create a very detrimental precedent, which could be quoted and acted upon Nationwide.</p>	<p><i>development affecting its setting).</i></p> <p><i>This CAMP helps define the distinctive character of the different parts of the Woodchurch Conservation Area and the importance of its setting. In turn, this will help the Borough Council apply the above policies within the conservation area and its setting.</i></p> <p><i>When adopted, development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and its setting as set out in this Appraisal.</i></p> <p>3. 3 Setting and topography</p> <p>This section already states that the countryside surrounding the village forms an important part of the setting of the Conservation Area. In addition, it is proposed to</p>
Christopher John COE		<p>After studying the proposed changes to the conservation area boundary it appears that significant areas of once protected valuable land will be available for future development? I am particularly concerned about the areas of land in Front Road, particularly 'WOOD1'.</p>	

		<p>Any future development in Woodchurch should reflect the current nature and needs of the village. Large scale so called 'executive homes' are not needed. In my opinion any new homes must be of a smaller and affordable design. These would provide an increase in opportunities for young people to live in and enjoy the amenities that presently exist in the village. The future lies with our young folk who would be encouraged to support the local school, shops and participate in the valuable life style that is a natural by-product of real village life.</p> <p>Consider a small scale shopping development [all under one roof]. Our present traders, General Store/Post Office/Butcher should then have better customer access and improved off street parking facilities. This, in my opinion, would be a great advantage to the village?</p> <p>The development of large, expensive housing in Woodchurch would be detrimental to the village!</p> <p>I oppose the proposal to change the existing boundary to the Conservation Area, particularly in Front Road, Townland Farm and the 'WOOD1' housing submission area."</p>	<p>include further text in relation to the open field to the south–west of the village (land between 82 - 120 Front Road).</p> <p>Woodchurch is situated on land which slopes gently to the south. <i>Land between 82 - 120 Front Road (add photograph) provides a gap in the linear development which forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area. The prominent site has a hedged road frontage and open character and allows views to the countryside beyond from the Conservation Area and adjoining footpaths.</i> Modern development is situated in the valley to the south west of the Conservation Area but, due to the topography and road layout, this development is not highly visible from the</p>
Jon Chaplin		<p>I am lucky to have lived in Woodchurch since 1994 and consider it an attractive and sustainable community. I also write as the Editor of the Woodchurch Village Design Statement (2002) team.</p> <p>I oppose:</p> <p>Any boundary changes to the Conservation Area in Front Road/Townland Farm and, by extension, the WOOD1 housing submission area. The appraisal document does not state any reasons for any of the changes. I assume that the reason for the changes near WOOD1 are simply to loosen the restrictions on potential developers. This is highly undesirable.</p>	<p>Conservation Area. <i>In order to respect the rural setting of this part of the Conservation Area, any proposals for development in this area must retain the front hedge and have a sufficient degree</i></p>
Wendy Glover		<p>I write to register my strong objection to the above proposal, especially with regards to the planning application in Front Road/Townland Farm. No good reason (or any reason) is given for this change - it is likely to have a very bad effect on the beauty and integrity of this village and allow developers to make unsuitable development/s.</p> <p>It is accepted that houses need to be built - but this is such a prominent site and the houses suggested are quite out of scale in height and on a dangerous bend</p>	

		<p>apart from anything. Changing boundaries of a conservation area is a dangerous precedent!</p>	<p><i>of openness and visual connection with the countryside. In order to respect the adjoining Townland Green Character Area and the siting of properties opposite the site, development should be set well back from Front Road and not be of a scale or massing which would dominate this approach to the Conservation Area or the public views from it.</i></p>
Mr Thurley		<p>Having carefully read the draft Conservation Area Appraisal as compiled by Tony Fullwood Associates, I make the following observations: On a wider point, the general reduction in the Conservation Area as proposed, smacks not of 'tidying up' as the draft seems to imply, but rather of the removal of restraints on potential developers. This is particularly true of the area on Front Road (WOOD1), and as such does not meet with my approval.</p>	<p><i>These additions to the CAMP would significantly increase the ability to control development on land between 82 - 120 Front Road with specific text covering this part of the setting of the Conservation Area and clarity about what is expected from the development. Such control would be complemented by the Local Plan policy covering the housing allocation. Adoption of the CAMP will make explicit the constraints on the character and appearance of future buildings and the landscape.</i></p>
Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)		<p>Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments in to four clear and consistent messages. 1) Whilst there are those who are in favour of expanding the Conservation Area, the vast majority see no benefit in changing the current boundaries. The appraisal document, although well prepared and well written, does not offer any solid reasons for the changes.</p> <p>The Parish Council challenges the authors comment that it was simply a matter of removing the more modern buildings. It feels that would simply encourage potential developers (especially the new owners of the WOOD1 site) to add-on to any existing areas of development.</p> <p>By contrast, the Parish Council has solid grounds for opposing the recommendations given its experiences of the WOOD1 housing submission site. Here, residents feel strongly that planning processes in the past appear to have offered greater opportunities for developers to achieve their objectives than it offers the Parish Council and the local community to oppose them. Reducing the Conservation Area can only send out the message to the new developers that it will be easier to obtain planning consent.</p> <p>The Parish Council would like to make it clear this is not about preventing development but about giving the Planning Authority additional influence on building and landscape design in the event of any future application, not only on Front Road (Wood1 site) but also on other peripheral areas in Bournes Place and Rectory Close, both of which featured in the consultations on future housing site allocations.</p>	

		<p>The Parish Council would see it as unfortunate if the Borough Councils expert was unaware his recommendations could impact on the separate discussions taking place over the housing submissions, unaware of the depth of feeling in the village on Community powerlessness despite it having been recorded in the Parish Councils response on the housing submissions unaware there are new owners of the WOOD1 site and unaware that 2 recent planning applications were refused on the WOOD1 site largely on the grounds that the proposals did not respect the local context. The mainstay of a subsequent Appeals Inspectors decision was the harm to the conservation area and the rural sense of place.</p> <p>The first message is that the vast majority of Woodchurch residents will not tolerate any proposal that could ultimately result in fewer constraints on the character and appearance of the buildings and the landscape.</p> <p>2) There is universal agreement that the most pressing matter is the ultimate fate of WOOD 1. It has been reported to the Parish Council that the above mentioned consultant also said that the planning criteria for WOOD 1 were already firmly in place. We do not understand or agree with his expert view and the Parish Council once again challenges that comment. In view of the flimsy and ambiguous wording in the current local plan this is clearly not the case and its presence in the Conservation Area is deemed to be very important. We cannot see how the Borough Council can support the Consultants recommendation having already accepted the local plans failings.</p> <p>The second message is the Conservation Area is the key tool the Parish has at its disposal to control not only the fabric of the village but also its rural essence. In the knowledge that a new planning application is expected to come forward soon on the WOOD1 site,</p> <p>Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman</p>	
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D G Lewing		<p>This leaves the area referred to as WOOD 1 the site along Front Road. This site is situated on one of the two main roads which run through the village and should therefore, because of its prominence, in the words of the Parish Council report, reflect the rural essence of the village. To remove this site from the Conservation Area would seriously diminish the control over the design aspects required to maintain this rural essence.</p> <p>We must bear in mind that if and when this development takes place the buildings will be in existence for many years to come and therefore should be given very careful consideration in this particular location.</p> <p>Unfortunately some developers will collect together a few standard designs and see how many houses they can cram on a site without considering the all important aspects ie. Access, safety and aesthetics.</p> <p>The site should therefore should be within the Conservation Area and be given very careful consideration so that the end result is safe and pleasing to the eye for years to come both for the existing residents and the new.</p>	<p>Noted. The tree is within the Conservation Area and is therefore already protected. As the tree is currently alive the designation may be retained. However, neither the location of the tree in a conservation area, nor its designation as an important tree would prevent any necessary tree maintenance or even felling if the tree was dead, dying or dangerous provided the work is agreed with the Borough Council.</p>
Stafford		<p>In the proposed changes to the Woodchurch Conservation Area the Oak (Quercus Robur) in the hedgerow of 82 Front Road is recommended for inclusion as an Important Tree. You need to be aware that this tree was severely damaged in the gales of December 2014 and it is currently under surveillance for possible felling. One of the two main trunks was ripped off by the wind and the remaining trunk has a large wound at the former intersection. The Tree Surgeon has carried out Crown Reduction to make the remaining trunk safe for the time being. He states that the tree may repair itself at the wound, or rot may set in. In the latter case the trunk will have to be felled in the interests of public safety as the tree is adjacent to the public road. The next review is due in Spring 2016.</p> <p>Under the circumstances we cannot agree to any change in the status of the tree at this stage. You are of course welcome to have the tree examined by your own expert for a second opinion.</p>	

<p>Woodchurch Village Association (CS Stafford)</p>		<p>Overview It is our opinion that in general the Woodchurch Conservation area is robust. It serves the community well and the village adheres to the principles set out in the Village Design Statement.</p> <p>Bourne's Place</p> <p>Although Bourne's Place was built in the 1980's, part of this development is highly visible from the Village Green. We are concerned that if Bourne's Place is removed from the Conservation Area, dwellings in this area could be modified in a way which is detrimental to the overall appearance of the Green.</p> <p>Allocated Development Area WOOD1 and its surrounds.</p> <p>We are extremely concerned that the Consultant has misread the significance of the WOOD1 area in terms of its relevance to the southern end of the Woodchurch Conservation Area. This has always been regarded as the entrance to the village and was included in the Conservation area to maintain the green and rural feel on the approach to the more historic village centre. In the description of WOOD1 it is quite clear that the intention was to enhance the Conservation Area. To remove this status from WOOD1 would be counterproductive, in that there would be no obligation to construct a development sympathetic to the original principles.</p> <p>With regard to the boundaries in this area, the information presented at the Village Consultation was incorrect. Boundary fencing does exist to the south of WOOD1. However, boundary fencing does <i>not</i> exist where the proposed line crosses the garden of Townland Farm. We fail to understand the logic whereby the boundary can subdivide a garden by a straight line and yet there is an objection to the straight line boundary in the adjacent field. There is clearly a misunderstanding. We would suggest an on-site meeting is required with your staff to sort this out before any decisions are taken.</p> <p>We were also surprised by the Consultant's comment that Numbers 65-75 Front Road were... <i>only former Council Houses and should not be included...</i> We take exception to these comments. This pre-war development is a fine example of what can be achieved by blending local needs housing into the landscape. These houses appear as a feature in the Village Design Statement because they incorporate characteristics of regional building, including cat-slide roofing. This development is part of our heritage and should be preserved in its present form.</p> <p>We are also surprised that the former Mission Hall adjacent to the above development has been excluded. We do not accept the Consultant's comment that it is too far from the village centre to be included in the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Views to Shirley Moor</p> <p>The views to Shirley Moor from Front Road adjacent to Townland Stores are an important part of the village rural scene. These views, especially the dawn scene, are very important to the</p>	<p>See response above. The Conservation Area boundary at Townland Farm is not proposed to be amended from the existing Conservation Area boundary as it is shown on historic maps and follows a tree line which is likely to represent the historic boundary. Even though a more recent permission has extended garden land beyond the Conservation Area boundary this is a recent change which does not necessitate an amendment to the boundary.</p>
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		<p>community. We do not accept the Consultant's opinion that these are not visible from Front Road due to the hedge in front of the WOOD1 site and therefore do not need to be protected. (See photo).(albeit on a dull winter's day)</p> <p>Our democratically elected Parish Council has strong views on protecting the area surrounding WOOD1. We would expect the conclusions of this well informed local body to carry a greater weighting than those of the Consultant, who at the Village Consultation presented fixed and immoveable views.</p>	
Lower Road			
D G Lewing		<p>Following the two meetings held at the Woodchurch Village Hall regarding the above and being a resident directly affected by the proposals I feel it necessary to make my thoughts known to the Council.</p> <p>I am the owner of No.25, Lower Road which you propose to exclude from the Conservation Area, I am pleased to inform you that I would have no objections to this.</p> <p>It has always been a mystery to me why it was ever included as the property next door No.27 is a bungalow of the same design and was never included. The bungalows were built in the early 60's and do not have any particular design features of note.</p> <p>With regard to the omission of Boume Place and Cherry Orchard Close and the minor regularising of various boundaries these all seem sensible revisions and can confirm agreement.</p>	Support noted for the omission of 25 Lower Road.
Windmill Area			
D G Lewing		<p>With regard to the omission of Boume Place and Cherry Orchard Close and the minor regularising of various boundaries these all seem sensible revisions and can confirm agreement.</p>	Support noted for the omission Cherry Orchard Close and boundary changes to the area near the windmill.
Dawes		<p>I support the proposed boundary changes to the area near the windmill. It would be right to omit the Millands Barn which is of no architectural value. As a small adjustment it would be sensible for the western boundary to be contiguous with the existing fence line, thus leaving the field in the conservation area but omitting a thin triangle mainly consisting of a long ridge of spoil from the old tennis court. The back is on an area which was excavated from the sloping field and would be reasonable to exclude a 2-3 metre strip round the back which, in effect, is a ditch and would provide a clean delineations between the conservation area and the</p>	<p>Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012)</p>

		building.	provides more recent advice on drawing Conservation Area boundaries. It states that in almost all situations the conservation area boundary should run around rather than through a space or plot. It will generally be defined by physical features and avoid for example running along the middle of a street. This methodology has been followed consistently in reviewing the Conservation Area boundary. It is therefore proposed to amend the Conservation Area boundary to follow the fence line and field boundary as suggested by respondents.
Charles Dawes		You state correctly that the fields to the west of the Windmill form an important part of the setting and the proposed boundary follows the outline of the field nearly all round except at the south western edge. From the Eastern end of the barn, a straight line has been drawn passing somewhere along the edge of a tennis court until it meets the southern boundary with Mill View. It would be better and easier if the boundary continued to follow the field boundary where planners and residents can easily distinguish the boundary. I feel this may have been in the consultant's mind, but he/she drew a straight line, when the field boundary has a small kink in it. This is a small adjustment, but if made, the outline of the boundary will be clear to all.	
Rectory Close			
Anna Haasjes		As a Woodchurch resident, I am writing to raise my concerns about the recent plans showing the changes to the conservation area of the village Firstly, in times of austerity, I don't understand why money has been spent on a consultant who is suggesting things like changing fences to hedges and small details which are not upsetting anyone. Why are the fields behind the rectory and Rectory Close being removed from the Conservation Area? It appears to be the first stage in planning for large scale development.	Neither Rectory Close nor surrounding fields are located within the existing designated Conservation Area and are therefore not proposed to be removed from it.

Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)		<p>Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments in to four clear and consistent messages.</p> <p>1) Whilst there are those who are in favour of expanding the Conservation Area, the vast majority see no benefit in changing the current boundaries. The appraisal document, although well prepared and well written, does not offer any solid reasons for the changes.</p> <p>The Parish Council would like to make it clear this is not about preventing development but about giving the Planning Authority additional influence on building and landscape design in the event of any future application, not only on Front Road (Wood1 site) but also on other peripheral areas in Bournes Place and Rectory Close, both of which featured in the consultations on future housing site allocations.</p> <p>The first message is that the vast majority of Woodchurch residents will not tolerate any proposal that could ultimately result in fewer constraints on the character and appearance of the buildings and the landscape.</p> <p>Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman</p>	
65 – 75 (odd nos.) Front Road			
Sue Garnar and Mr Steve Baker		<p>(See attachments) Further to Fridays consultation regarding the draft changes of the conservation area in Woodchurch. Please note our comments regarding the Front Road area.</p> <p>We live in Lavender Cottage, 75 Front Road. It is an attractive part weather boarded;semi-detached house, which is part of a pair of six very similar properties , we believe built in 1929. Although these houses are ex local authority, they appear to be fairly unique and very well designed. They are now all privately owned and admired by many, our property is even featured in the Woodchurch Village Design Statement.(see attached) Earlier this year, we opened our garden to the public to raise money for the village church and the Leo Trust. We feel that it is worth preserving and conserving these attractive houses for future generations. It would be a great pity if someone was allowed to make extensive changes to the unique appearance of these delightful properties, which</p>	<p>The small crescent of inter-war houses 65 – 75 (odd nos.) Front Road is typical of the period. The former public housing comprises ribbon development at the edge of the village. The development forms a ‘set piece’ crescent of semi-detached properties set well back from the road behind deep front gardens. Materials follow the local</p>

		<p>could easily happen if they are no longer part of the conservation area. (see supporting photos)</p> <p>The Mission Hall which is virtually on our drive has been in the village since 1899. Some of the villagers children attended Sunday School there. It is now privately owned and sadly has been left to deteriorate. It is such a shame that a once loved and cherished building can be left to become so dilapidated. We feel, and I understand many of the villagers are of the same opinion that externally it could be restored to its former glory, and remain a building of some historical & emotional importance to the village. If it is removed from the conservation area, I understand that if it is redesigned or demolished that there would be little control over what could be remodelled or rebuilt in its place. Not a pleasant thought for the village and even worse for us as it is so close to our home. Consequently, we feel that the village should hold on to its heritage and this unique, unusual building should keep the protection of its current conservation area status.</p>	<p>vernacular of brick and weatherboarded facades with plain tiled roofs and chimneys. Original windows and doors have been replaced and garages and drive ways have been installed. The Mission Hall also abuts 75 Front Road. The character of Front Road is already varied and it is therefore possible to retain this relatively in tact group of properties and the Mission Hall within the Conservation Area reflecting a period of the historic development of the village.</p>
Marmara	I am very concerned with the proposed removal of 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 80a and 82 Front Road		
Anna Haasjes	<p>As a Woodchurch resident, I am writing to raise my concerns about the recent plans showing the changes to the conservation area of the village Firstly, in times of austerity, I don't understand why money has been spent on a consultant who is suggesting things like changing fences to hedges and small details which are not upsetting anyone.</p> <p>Finally, regarding the development on Lower Road, offensive remarks made by the consultant, implies that existing homes opposite the site are of no interest. This proposed development has been turned down already, and the reasons for this decision have not changed so that should be the end of the matter.</p> <p>It seems to us that there are people who would be quite happy to bulldoze the village and build a large anonymous suburb connecting Ashford to Tenterden. Please take this as an objection to proposed changes.</p>		
Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)	Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments in to four clear and consistent messages.		

		<p>The Parish Council does not accept the recommendations relating to the removal of 65, 67, 69, 71, 73,75, 80a and 82 Front Road and the current WOOD1 allocation. By removing these, developers and the Planning Authority will be dis-burdened from taking account of the existing rural grain in relation to such features as rhythm and materials, scale, mass, volume, footprint and site layout at this important gateway to the villages central core.</p> <p>A good practical example is the The Mission Hall on Front Road (opposite the WOOD1 site) which despite being in the Conservation Area currently has been allowed by the owner to deteriorate over a number of years. The planning Enforcement team at the Borough Council has informed the Parish Council it is not a priority for them. The residents feel they would lose what control they have now if the landowner was not subject to Conservation Area constraints.</p> <p>Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman</p>	
Lower Road			
D G Lewing		<p>Following the two meetings held at the Woodchurch Village Hall regarding the above and being a resident directly affected by the proposals I feel it necessary to make my thoughts known to the Council.</p> <p>I am the owner of No.25, Lower Road which you propose to exclude from the Conservation Area, I am pleased to inform you that I would have no objections to this.</p> <p>It has always been a mystery to me why it was ever included as the property next door No.27 is a bungalow of the same design and was never included. The bungalows were built in the early 60's and do not have any particular design features of note.</p>	Support noted for the omission of 25 Lower Road;
General			
Mr and Mrs Sharp		<p>We oppose the changes to the boundaries of the Woodchurch Conservation Area.</p> <p>The purpose of a conservation area is to conserve, not destroy. Changing the boundaries of the conservation area gives developers a greater opportunity to build medium and large scale developments that are not wanted or needed. We</p>	<p>(see responses to specific boundary changes)</p> <p>When adopted, the CAMP will give additional controls over development within the</p>

		don't want fewer constraints that will affect the character and appearance of the building and landscape of the village.	Woodchurch Conservation Area and its setting by clearly setting out the existing character and appearance of the area.
Donald James Grant		<p>I object to this proposal and wish to make clear my support for Woodchurch Parish Council in regard to the proposed changes to the conservation area. I cannot see any reason for reducing the conservation area other than to make it easier for predatory developers to exploit our village. The parish council consults residents closely and has a much better appreciation of the needs of the village than any planning authority, national or local. It is not opposed to change but has a clear view of what is and is not positive change, beneficial to all.</p> <p>One of the government's core planning principals is to conserve heritage assets, including conservation areas - National Planning Policy Framework. Plans to reduce the Woodchurch Conservation Area hardly fit with that.</p> <p>We live in a village with limited sewage/drainage capacity, narrow roads, limited public transport, no local employers of note and a school already at capacity. For significant development to take place these problems would have to be rectified, in the process the village would be destroyed. That would be an act of planning vandalism.</p> <p>Woodchurch is not only a particularly attractive village, it has a real community spirit, living and thriving despite hardships thrust upon it's business by successive governments. Ashford Borough Council should strive to preserve this and to improve it. The best way to do that is to listen to the advice of our parish council.</p>	
Woodchurch Unknown 1		My concern is that by removing all the proposed areas from the conservation area, this will encourage more building applications to be made, which are not needed and no one in the village wants.	
David & Mrs Bellingham		My concern is the proposed shrinkage of the Conservation Area. This will encourage more development in the village. We have already got our fair quota of new houses and our lovely village will become an extension of Ashford.	
Richard A Copland Chartered Surveyors		There is no mention in this document of why the areas proposed to be excluded from the Conservation Area are to be removed. The general principles expressed are sound and the document is well researched but the aims of carefully preserving and improving, the character of the village and its Conservation Area	

(Richard Copland)		are negated somewhat by the reduction in area. Extending it would offer more protection from undesirable development especially since the generally expressed opinion of villagers at meetings and in answer to questionnaires that development other than small (single or double plot infill) projects are considered undesirable. If extension of the area is not considered feasible then at least maintenance of the present boundaries is considered the best option.	
Character Areas			
Ward Member for Weald South (Cllr Aline Hicks)	Character Area 4 - Enclosed Fields	<p>I do not feel sufficient emphasis has been given to the enclosed field item 4.4. Residents all tell me that this is an important asset of the village and it is this green heart that attracts new residents to the area and make Woodchurch such a distinctive village.</p> <p>On page 24 mention is made of the extra land donated recently to the village to enhance the green and I feel that a green corridor should be created from the end of Kirkwood to join up with this new area, with a connecting green route to Lower Road next to John Watsons house in Lower Road.</p> <p>This will provide for ease of movement and connectivity from the lower parts of the village up to the shops and school and the top of the green.</p> <p>There are already many little footpaths around the village that are well used and a green corridor as above will enhance the status of this lovely rural village.</p>	<p>A separate character area (4.4 Enclosed Fields) is identified for this area. The text states that the area comprises a landscape of small fields enclosed by a network of native hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees including oak and that the area forms an important part of the open character which is such a strong and distinctive feature of the heart of this village.</p> <p>The creation of further public open space may be an aspiration for part of this area which would need to be pursued separately by the Parish or Borough Council through land acquisition although the Parish Council has not responded to this effect. The appraisal stresses the importance of the open</p>

			<p>character of this area and, provided this character is retained, it is not material from the point of view of the appraisal whether the land is in private or public ownership. Section 6.0 Management Proposals for the Conservation Area (Extension and management of the village green) does not preclude the option of further extension to the Green.</p>
Robert Allen	Character Area 3 – Lower Road	<p>Dear Sir, My wife and I live at Jasmine Cottage, 6 The Green, Woodchurch, TN26 3PF. Our home is well within both the current and proposed Conservation Area. We support the Parish Council's views on the above document; but we have a concern in relation to our property specifically.</p> <p>In the document our home is Characterised as part of Lower Road and we feel we should be part of The Green (our address is a clue!). Although our home has had modern extension, the original core of the house was built in the 1870s. We have direct access from our rear garden to The Green itself and we enjoy an unobstructed view of The Green and the church as we exit the front of our home. We have lived at this address just two and a half years and, in our refurbishment of it, we have taken great care to harmonise the look of our home with other properties on The Green.</p> <p>I am, therefore, asking you to reconsider characterising our home as part of The Green.</p> <p>See attached photos</p>	<p>Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2011, with Revision Note June 2012) provides more recent advice on drawing Conservation Area boundaries. It states that in almost all situations the conservation area boundary should run around rather than through a space or plot. It will generally be defined by physical features and avoid for example running along the middle of a street. This methodology has been followed consistently in reviewing the</p>

			Conservation Area boundary. For this reason it is more appropriate to include Jasmine Cottage, 6 The Green
Negative Features/ Management Proposals			
David Bull		<p>With regards to the negative features of the village. I believe a recommendation to have landscaping across the back of the houses of Cherry Orchard has been put forward. As a resident in Cherry Orchard I pointed out at the parish council meeting that there used to be tall leylandii trees along the boundary, I understand that these trees were removed due to subsidence issues with the houses. The field is a good four foot higher than the patio adjoining the field, if these trees were removed due to subsidence issues, why would anybody recommend to replace them!? I have since found out that before the leylandii there were silver birch trees along the fence line, these were also removed due to subsidence issues with the houses. This is a north facing wall at the most narrow point about 8 feet from the field, this wall needs all the air flow it can get to remain dry. Also, who will be responsible for maintaining them, any resulting issues if a tree were to fall on my home and any subsidence related issues? I strongly object to the trees/landscaping being reintroduced on the grounds of safety and potential subsidence issues with my home.</p>	<p>Enhancement measures must be seen by the local community to be improving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As tree planting to the rear of Cherry Orchard properties and hedge planting in front of Drayson House and the garage attracted objections there is no need to retain the proposed enhancement measures and the CAMP will be amended accordingly.</p>
Mark Spain		<p>We are both residents of Cherry Orchard, and disagree strongly with some of the changes to the conservation area in Woodchurch.</p> <p>The landscaping you have mentioned to protect the exposed properties in Cherry Orchard, we are one of these properties and the wall that is is a north facing wall which we are struggling to keep the damp out of as it doesnt get much light or air flow, which if you lived in the village you would know that 90% of the weather comes from the south and adding any kind of landscaping if its trees or bushes will effect the airflow around the back of the house and will decrease the changes of it drying out and stopping the mould and damp.</p> <p>We have also discovered that historically trees were previously in place along the boundry fence but due to subsidence these had to be removed before we moved</p>	

		<p>in. If you are planning to reintroduce trees for example who will take responsibility of the cost if this happens again?</p> <p>We have a four foot retaining wall at the back of the property which holds back the field you mention the landscaping will take place in, if the roots from the additional planting damages the wall who will be responsible for the repairs if the retaining wall if its subsequently damaged by the new landscaping and any resulting damage to our property through falling trees onto our house?</p> <p>Since moving in we have been a very active part of village life and currently we are both on the committee for the Friends of Woodchurch Windmill. On a number of occasions have noticed from our house that something was not right with the windmill or that members of the public have been behaving inappropriately up at the windmill. A couple of examples are, a few years ago the fan tail had broken during a bad storm and was running out of control and there was a chance it could break off the back of the mill, if we had not been able to see this from our window we wouldnt have been able to enter the windmill and secure the fantail with a bag of straw to prevent damage to the mill or even worse damage to a person using the footpath which runs past the mill.</p> <p>Another example, recently a couple were having a picnic under the windmill with candle light, again if we could not have seen this from the house we wouldnt have been able to ask them extinguish the candles as they were a fire hazard and could have potentially burnt the Windmill down.</p> <p>We have also been very pro-active in promoting Woodchurch and especially the Windmill updating both Twitter and Facebook with some amazing photos of the Windmill all taken from our property. We currently have nearly 500 followers on Twitter and over 200 followers on Facebook. If the barrier is created between our properties and the Windmill I do feel the safety of the mill will be seriously compromised and also the promotion we do via social media will be greatly reduced as it will no longer be that easy and quick to update and promote via social media which is the way forward for promoting Woodchurch and the Windmill in the 21st century. We understand the windmill is the property of Ashford Borough Council however it does bring a fair amount of visitors not only to the village but to Kent. Which in turn brings revenue into the mill, village museum and pubs.</p> <p>Also you mention the view from Windmill South to the church but by adding</p>	
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		<p>landscaping behind Cherry Orchard you will then obscure the view from the Church to the Windmill.</p> <p>4. You also mention the low hedging around the front of Woodchurch Garage on Front road. This is also a concern, when cars are parked outside the village shop on the opposite side of the road you have to pass the cars in the on coming lane and having a hedge in front of the garage would obscure the view of on coming traffic and subsequently this could cause a serious accident.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read our concerns.</p>	
Anna Haasjes		<p>As a Woodchurch resident, I am writing to raise my concerns about the recent plans showing the changes to the conservation area of the village Firstly, in times of austerity, I don't understand why money has been spent on a consultant who is suggesting things like changing fences to hedges and small details which are not upsetting anyone.</p> <p>One of these suggestions is to plant a row of trees to screen off Cherry Orchard from the view from the windmill. These houses are over 30 years old and so surely are part of the established village fabric. No mention is made of the view of Bells Park or Mill View!</p>	
Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)		<p>Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments in to four clear and consistent messages.</p> <p>1) Whilst there are those who are in favour of expanding the Conservation Area, the vast majority see no benefit in changing the current boundaries. The appraisal document, although well prepared and well written, does not offer any solid reasons for the changes.</p> <p>3) Residents reported several historical inconsistencies in the consultants findings and recommendations. Most of these involved aesthetic issues. Examples include tree planting recommendations along boundary lines in Cherry Orchard despite trees having been felled there for safety reasons in the past and the presumption in favour of hedging at the front of Drayson House on The Green when there is clear photographic evidence of wooden fencing having been in place previously.</p> <p>The residents will no doubt write separately to disagree with those findings and the Parish Council would strongly support them in doing so.</p>	

		Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman	
Mr & Mrs G. Hastings.	Chapter 5 - Negative Features	<p>I live in one of the houses in Cherry Orchard described as having a negative impact on the conservation area .Although currently inside the area, the proposals take it outside. I really don't understand the total contempt for the houses in Cherry Orchard. They were built over 34 years ago and are populated with people who make an equal contribution to the community as anyone else. The PC and ABC continue to refer to our houses as the new/modern/unsightly development. My issues with these changes are (1) the road will be taken out of the conservation area! For what purpose other than to build the landscaping barrier mentioned. This is a case of moving the goalposts to suit this pointless targeting of Cherry Orchard. In-filling has already happened at the front of the road, the conservation area did not stop that development so there is no benefit here?(2) why build a landscaped barrier to our houses; which I can only guess will be a row of trees? Cherry Orchard is no more unsightly than Six Bells Park which is much more visible from the windmill; as are other features yet there is no mention of barriers to these. This barrier will impact on the natural rural landscape of this area. The Cherry Orchard estate has been derided and neglected for too long. It was built decades ago and is a part of Woodchurch life and environment perhaps it is about time this was accepted.</p> <p>I strongly object to this proposal to unfairly barrier off a section of your community . Surely the whole point of a conservation area is to conserve the area not change it completely; both the windmill and the Church have their faults but it would be wrong to change them and the same goes for Cherry Orchard it is a big part of the landscape and heritage of Woodchurch. I object to any barrier to Cherry Orchard. I object to adjustment of the conservation area of Woodchurch.</p>	
Jon Chaplin		<p>I am lucky to have lived in Woodchurch since 1994 and consider it an attractive and sustainable community. I also write as the Editor of the Woodchurch Village Design Statement (2002) team.</p> <p>I oppose:</p> <p>The inclusion of three items on the map of the proposed conservation area</p>	<p>Visual intrusion occurs when a site or property do not fit with the predominant character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which</p>

		labelled Visual Intrusion. Regarding any so-called Visual Intrusion, there are of course buildings and features in the conservation area that I do not like personally but no one has any right to criticise another's property or feature of it on a purely subjective basis. I believe that it is the responsibility only of the Parish Council to take whatever action is necessary to maintain Woodchurch in a tidy state.	they are situated.
Consultation process			
Woodchurch Parish Council (J Batt)		<p>Woodchurch residents have been given an opportunity to express their views on the Conservation Area boundary changes at two public meetings in November and December 2015. Their views have informed this response. The Parish Council has distilled their comments into four clear and consistent messages. The third message is that both residents and the Parish Council feel these issues are more than something we simply disagree with. There is a strong feeling that the recommendations have been informed by a cursory walk around the village and little or no meaningful historic research. Given that Woodchurch has a wealth of local knowledge and primary data at its disposal, the Parish Council feels the reviews recommendations would have been more acceptable had the process been more inclusive and undertaken at a time when the current contentious development control and future planning issues have been resolved. It would therefore request that no decisions are taken at this time. The Parish Council would welcome a review at a more appropriate time and will gladly help to facilitate it.</p> <p>4) Residents have reported that whilst we have a Conservation Area in place, there is little information or advice about the constraints. It would be useful to have data available in the Woodchurch Information Centre about how the Borough Council controls demolition, how it seeks to ensure that all new development harmonises with its context and for example whether it makes grants available for the repair of buildings.</p> <p>Cllr Rob Woods Acting Chairman</p>	The CAMP has been compiled following extensive historic research of the sources named in the draft Appraisal and research at the museum as well as several site visits to the Conservation Area and the surrounding area. In addition, advice was sought from Ashford Borough Council planning officers in relation to planning histories and issues and urban design and development management officers on the design issues within the Conservation Area. The process was designed to be inclusive with a walkabout offered to all Borough and Parish Councillors representing the area at the beginning of the process prior to writing the document. This was
Timothy ELLIOTT	General	<p>THREE POINTS</p> <p>1. Great care must be taken to contact concerned.</p> <p>This, regrettably, has not been the case. For instance, not everyone has the</p>	

		<p>capability to go on line. I also know personally of one household living in a relatively isolated property who are potentially directly affected and who had heard nothing about the Review: that is not how a democracy should work.</p> <p>2. Great care must be taken to preserve the character of this Kentish village. There are many and obvious reasons for this. It is, however, not so obvious that this is so especially in the light of the publicity that Kent as the Garden of England is currently being given on the Continent as an income-generating tourist attraction.</p> <p>3. The review must be seen as a developer's charter to build where currently planning permission has been successfully opposed.</p>	<p>attended by only one Borough Councillor, Cllr Bradford, the Chairman of Woodchurch Parish Council, Cllr Julian West and parish councillor Gina Davies. A consultation period was arranged and a local exhibition held to allow feedback to the consultant and the Borough Council and the opportunity to ask questions. The exhibition was well attended.</p>
<p>Woodchurch Village Association (CS Stafford)</p>		<p>There has been insufficient dialogue and feedback on the proposed changes. There was no public involvement or consultation before the draft plan was published.</p> <p>The village has been somewhat taken aback by the Consultant's lack of local knowledge and his blanket refusal to consider any amendments to his proposals. Thus, there is considerable local resentment about scarce funds being expended on a consultation which appears to be fait-accomplis.</p> <p>Our Parish council has held several open meetings where these and other concerns about this consultation were forcefully made. We trust you will respect and seriously consider these views.</p>	<p>Section 2.3 - Special Controls in the Conservation Area was specifically included in the CAMP in order to provide information about the planning constraints operating in a Conservation Area and it is possible to use this information at the Woodchurch Information Centre.</p>

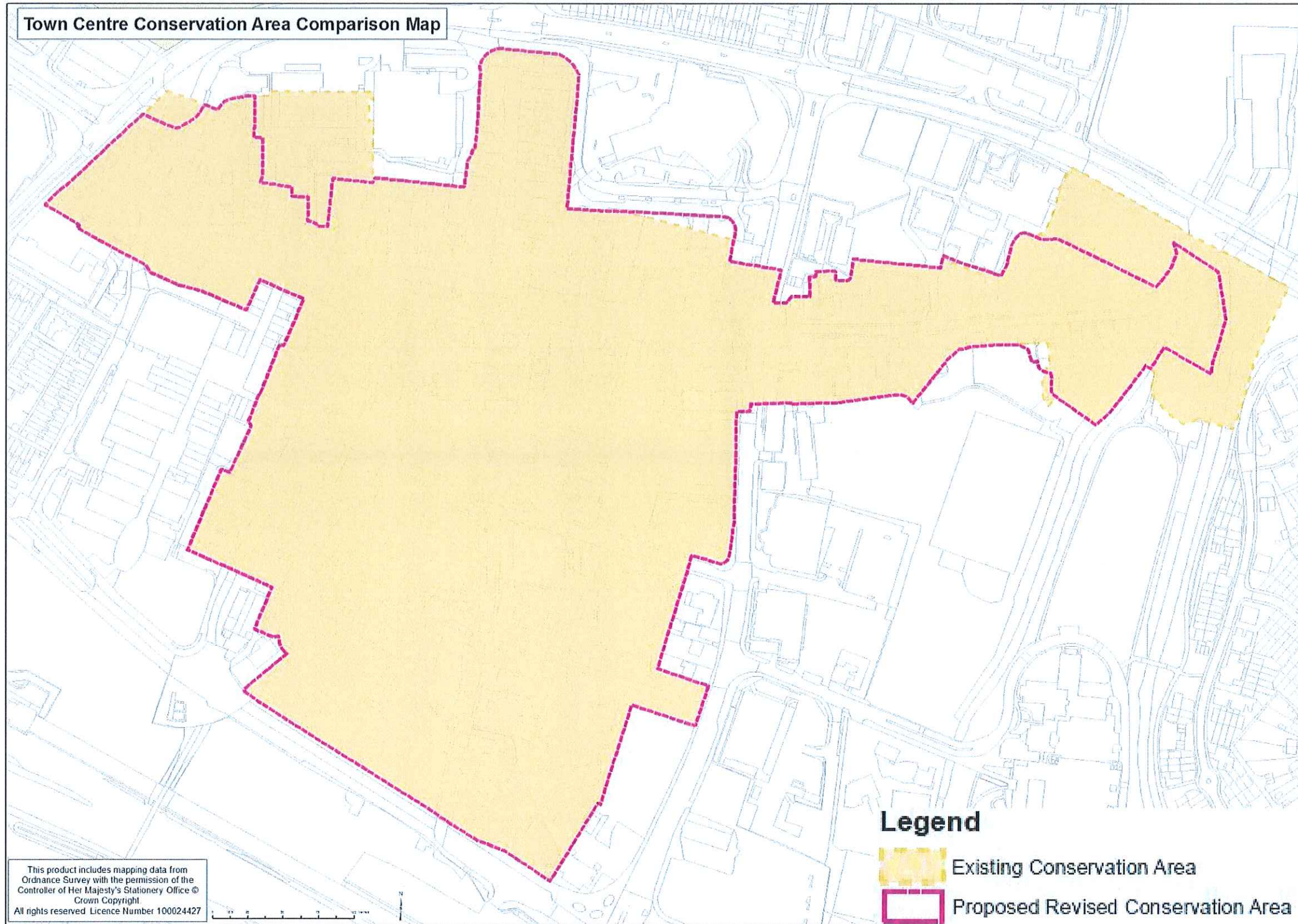
Town Centre Consultation Comments

Contact: First name	Contact: Surname	Contact: Organisation Name	repldFull	comment
Anton	Obholzer		1	I fully support these proposals
Gavin	Williams		2	Please carry on with what you are doing. Quicker if possible.
Kenneth	Blanshard		3	Chairman St Mary's Arts Trust - need Notice board near to Churchyard for posters, maps. Need to put A Boards in High Street as Churchyard can be isolated.
T R	Lacey		4	This exhibition has been put on immediately after the horse has bolted out of the stable door ie.HARD on the heels of the wanton destruction of Swanton House, Swanton Villas and the Ashford Technical Institute, buildings of high culture the council were determined to keep until an unannounced decision was taken to do away with them. Twenty or thirty years ago the council were going to demolish the Italianate structures also in Elwick Road. Except for them and the Methodist Church, the periphery of the Town Centre is now in a state of derelictions. In the past 55 years, scores of historic buildings have gone in an orgy of WANTON destruction and we are now left with the crumbs which I saw in the photograph at your exhibition. Unfortunately the elected council seem to leave all the decision-making to unelected town borough officials. If we can have referendums on community councils, then why for heavens sake not on demolition issues? Read Steve Salter's books on Ashford!!
Robert	Shrubb	South Ashford Community Forum	5	The Committee of South Ashford Community Forum have examined the documents relating to the above scheme and one of our number attended the public exhibition of the proposals held at St.Mary's Parish Rooms on Saturday 28th November. South Ashford Community Forum is fully supportive of the proposal to produce a management plan for the Town Centre Conservation Area and have no comments on the material presented.

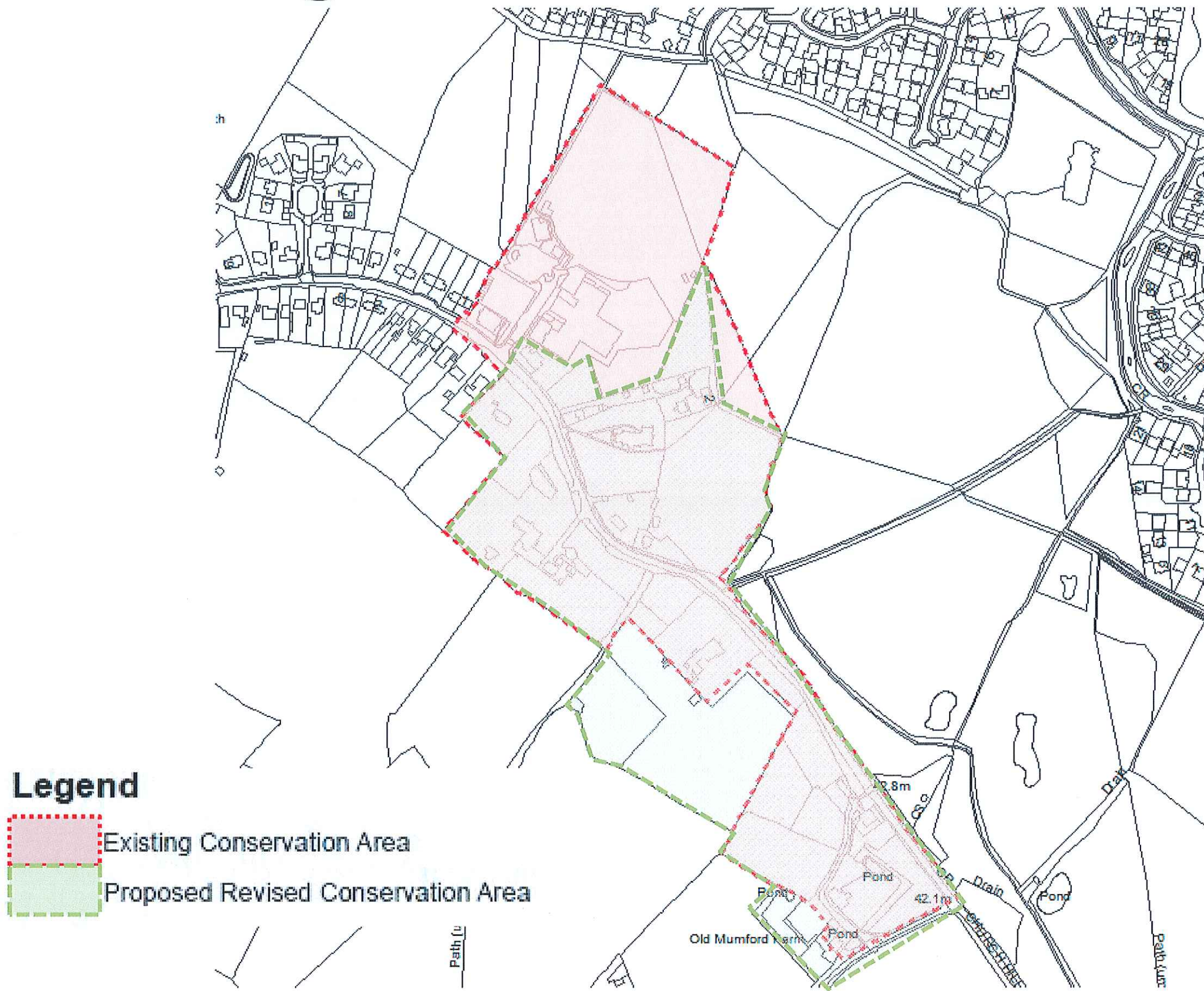
Town Centre Consultation Comments

Emily	Neighbour	Central Ashford Community Forum	6	<p>The Trustees of the Central Ashford Community Forum were very pleased to be invited to contribute to and comment on this document. Four Trustees, Jo Jowers, Christine Green, Jim Davies and Emily Neighbour joined the Inspectors as they walked around the town for a couple of hours along with one representative from Ashford Museum.</p> <p>We have looked at the Draft Document produced for consultation and are generally very supportive of all the comments, criticisms and suggestions that have been made. We hope that action is taken as a result to improve the environment in the Conservation Area of which Ashford Borough should be very proud.</p> <p>The Trustees believe that there is great potential for tourism which could encourage more visitors to the town. We would particularly like to see a leaflet available for visitors to the town, ideally a hard copy at the station but also on the website. A good one including a map and points of interest was produced some years ago by the now defunct Town Centre Partnership; Christine Green has a copy she can pass on. As it referred to the historic parts of town it would require very little updating. We are concerned that the only information offered to visitors to town on the internet is about shopping and food outlets, with no mention of the history and architecture of the town.</p> <p>Also, we would like to suggest that the other conservation areas in the Borough should also be reviewed. The Trustees would like to be involved again in the one immediately north-west of the town centre which is also part of the Central Ashford Community Forum area.</p>
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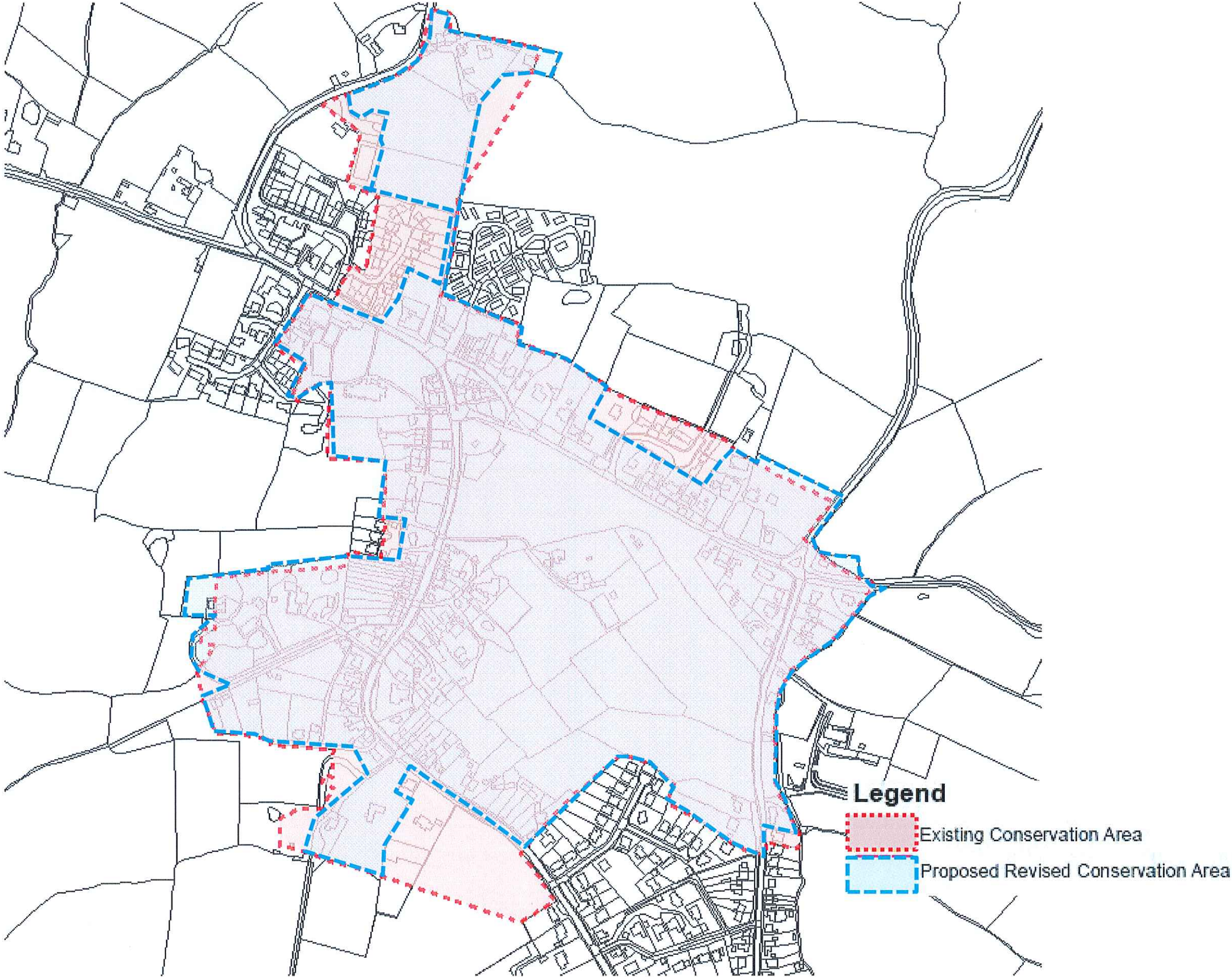
Ashford Town Centre CAMP



Kingsnorth Conservation Area



Woodchurch Conservation Area Appraisal





ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Impact Assessment

When is an assessment needed?

Councils must assess the impact of **proposed policies or practices** while they are being developed, with analysis available for members before a decision is made (i.e. at Cabinet).

Broadly, *policies and practices* can be understood to embrace a full range of different activities, such as Cabinet decisions which substantially change the way in which we do something, setting budgets, developing high-level strategies, and organisational practices such as internal restructuring. Assessments should especially be undertaken if the activity relates closely to an equalities group (see next page).

Importantly, this does not include reports that are 'for note' or do not propose substantial changes – assessments should only be considered when we propose to do something differently.

Assessments should also be carried out when conducting a large-scale review of **existing policies or practices** to check that they remain non-discriminatory. This does not mean filling out an assessment on every report on a subject – it is up to you to decide if the report's scope or scale warrants an assessment

1. General Information	
1.1 Name of project, policy, procedure, practice or issue being assessed	Conservation Area Reviews
1.2 Service / Department	Planning and Development
1.3 Head of Service	Richard Alderton
1.4 Assessment Lead Officer	Matthew Nouch
1.5 Date of Assessment	30 th August 2016
1.6 Is this assessment of an existing or a proposed project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	Proposed policy evidence document

2. What is Being Assessed?	
2.1 What are the aims of this project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	Conservation Area Appraisals help the Council, those proposing development, and the local community to be able to engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long-term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset. Adopted appraisals are material considerations in the determination of development proposals. These appraisals are also required as per planning law, and advised as evidence base documents as per the National Planning Policy Framework.
2.2 Who is intended to benefit from this project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	The whole local population, through protection of the integrity of the historic environment; home-owners and developers who will use the document as a parameters guide to what is expected in these special and unique areas
2.3 Who else is involved in the provision of this	

project, policy, procedure, practice or issue? i.e. other sections, public or private bodies	
- within Ashford BC	Development Management (Planning and Development)
- from other agencies	N/A

3. Possible Sources of Information

In order to assess the impact of proposed decision it is important to bring together all information you have on it to, analyse them and come to conclusions on how it affects those with protected characteristics.

Information on a policy, project or procedure can come in many forms :-

- Census and other demographic information
- User satisfaction and other surveys
- Previous consultation exercises
- Performance Indicators
- Eligibility Criteria
- Service uptake data
- Complaints
- Customer Profiling
- MOSAIC data

In order to come to conclusions on impacts in section 4 you **must** have taken in to account all appropriate information, and be able to provide this if necessary in support of the judgements you make.

Also, it is not enough to have broad information on service users – to meet equalities duties this information **must** be broken down – where applicable – into the relevant protected characteristics which may be affected by this decision. For example, when considering disabled access to a new community facility, overall usage figures are not enough – an understanding of how many disabled users within this total must be demonstrated.

The protected characteristics are :-

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity
Race	Religion and belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	

More information on the definitions of these characteristics can be found here - <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/>

4. What judgements can we make?				
4.1 Does the evidence already available indicate that the project, policy, procedure, practice or issue may affect these groups differently? (please check the relevant box and provide evidence where possible)	Positive Impact?	Negative Impact?	No Differential Impact	If yes, can it be justified (and how)?
Impact Factors:				
Age (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enables positive planning for the historic environment through uniting compatible aims of conservation of the historic environment with improvements – in particular in the public realm – for those with protected characteristics. This can enable historically-sensitive design that also promotes accessibility for those with mobility issues.
Disability (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enables positive planning for the historic environment through uniting compatible aims of conservation of the historic environment with improvements – in particular in the public realm – for those with protected characteristics. This can enable historically-sensitive design that also promotes accessibility for those with mobility issues.
Gender (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage / Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Religion / Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

5. Conclusions

5.1 Does the decision maximise opportunities to promote equality and good inter-group relations? If “yes” please state how?

- Yes The Conservation Area appraisals and management plans provide visions for the improvement of historic public realm (as well as private buildings and spaces) to encourage permeability for all.
 No

5.2 Based on the answers to the above can we confidently say that in its present form the decision treats different groups fairly (bearing in mind “fairly” may mean differently) and that no further amendment is required?

- Yes
 No

If further action is identified to ensure fair impacts please complete the Action Plan available on the intranet and attach it to this form

6. Monitoring and Review

How will monitoring of this policy, procedure or practice be reported (where appropriate)?

Adoption of these documents has development management implications and will impact decisions. These impacts are to be reviewed as part of the overall service review of development management in each administration.

When is it proposed to next review the project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?

Guidance provided by Historic England, the statutory body responsible for conservation of the historic environment, recommends regular review of Conservation Areas (CAs) and their appraisals every five years. This set of appraisals, one each to cover all the borough’s designated CAs will be completed over the course of the coming months.

Any additional comments?

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