



## **Conservation Area Assessment**

# Tenterden

Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve all aspects of character or appearance that define an area’s special interest.

There are 43 Conservation Areas in Ashford Borough.

## TENTERDEN CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

**AREA APPRAISAL** [Brief, objective description of Conservation Area - scale, location, other special characteristics]

Tenterden was initially the subject of a detailed architectural and townscape assessment in 1967 the result of which was "Tenterden Explored", an analysis report published at the time and produced by Frederick Mac Manus and Partners and the late Gordon Cullen. Tenterden Conservation Area was designated thereafter, firstly in 1974 and amended in 1977.

The area straddles the A28 passing through it from Ashford to Hastings and its form at the centre has a special character typifying much that is evident in large and small amounts throughout the Weald of Kent but more so because together the historical evolution that has occurred over many centuries has produced an area of considerable beauty.

There is a wide range of architectural heritage with successive styles well represented. However, the charm and intrinsic character are derived not only from the many Listed Buildings located throughout the whole length of the High Street, but from the way the buildings and spaces they relate to create places of visual and functional interest with attractive vistas and views forming the town's special personality.

The varying architectural character of the individual buildings and groups of buildings distributed well back from the main road along a major length of it at the western end with matured trees, grassed areas with promenaded walkways at varying levels is a special overriding characteristic.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	<p>The Conservation Area as originally designated in 1974 and later extended is linear in form rising in gradual level changes to a slight hill like position at the centre point. The land on either side of the road slopes gently down to open countryside beyond. This relatively close relationship between urban and rural form is a special attraction of the town in its immediate setting with views towards the area from quite far away vantage points especially from the south-west along the Smallhythe Road and the west from the Hastings/Rolvenden Road.</p> <p>There are some large open parkland and farm areas off the main road penetrating quite close to the main urban spine running through the centre especially at the south-west end where the large country houses located in that area along the Smallhythe Road are surrounded by matured relatively manicured landscaped spaces all of which add to the overall topographic character of the Conservation Area setting.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
archaeological significance and potential of the area	<p>The origins of Tenterden dates back to Roman and Saxon times but there are no scheduled monuments of archaeological interest within the area or indeed in the immediate hinterland beyond it. Nevertheless there is considerable archaeological interest in the area with virtually the whole central zone of the designated Conservation Area from East Cross to West Cross encompassing most of the built area on either side of the High Street earmarked by the Kent County Council as an area of archaeological potential.</p>
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	<p>The interrelationship between the wide variety of spaces in size and character that make up the townscape quality is an essential feature of Tenterden's heritage value.</p> <p>There is an overall spatial hierarchy to these spaces the majority of which focus on the town centre and the entrances to it. Within these main areas there are many overlapping and relatively minor spaces themselves adding to the visual quality Tenterden is renowned for.</p> <p><b><u>Entrances</u></b></p> <p>There are three main entry roads from Ashford, Rolvenden and Smallhythe which provide differing visual relationships between the town and the surrounding countryside.</p> <p><b><u>Entrance from Smallhythe</u></b></p> <p>This entrance consists of a chain of 'country houses' entering the town from the country plus a gradual spilling out of housing from the town.</p> <p>Moving along the Smallhythe Road the most prominent indication of a town centre of character is the distant sight of the tower of St Mildred's seen over country fields. To the left of the road as it bends around a gentle corner is Morghew House in its country park setting and between it and the road is the open well treed but manicured Tenterden Cricket Ground. From this point up to the semi-urban housing concentration at the western end of this stretch of road there is spacious parkland with Heronden standing well back in its grounds. To the right, the town is primarily seen over the fields. To the left as the road turns the corner The Cedars a smaller version of Heronden is set in its own park. At this point the road is climbing with a tall hedge on the right which screens new development. Beyond is a belt of fine trees and a housing development on the town side. Descending the hill the chain of spacious houses and parkland is continued with tall mature trees, good enclosing walls and with red brick and tile houses gradually curving out of sight. The road termination is marked by Westfield House a dominantly formed Georgian House with a large prominent roof. To the left there is a spacious green</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>sward and large trees which, with the parkland buildings create a rural character opposite an attractive little semi-rural terrace. In this space the country/town transition occurs with its semi-rural appearance and lack of highway clutter. The last view of this entry place is of a widening out of the High Street to the right with a public house well sited on the corner. To the left is the regrettably badly storm damaged gatehouse of Heronden Hall a symbolic structure at this point, the whole junction area framed by Listed Buildings and matured landscaping. The expanses of green in this area suggest that, with proper traffic controls and other streetscape improvements it could be enhanced.</p> <p><u>Entrance from Rolvenden and Cranbrook.</u></p> <p>This more open traffic emphasised entrance rises gently up into the town with two footpaths, one on the road line, one passing through trees away from the road. The town is sighted upon arriving at the crest of the hill.</p> <p>At this entry place there is Heronden Park on its right and the boundary walls of Westwell on the left. The road then merges into West Cross. To the left at this point there is a mature retaining wall and the sloping verge to the right thickly planted with bushes and trees.</p> <p>The first real glimpse of the town appears when the pub sign is sighted over the crest of the hill. To the left an old retaining wall continues to maintain the semi-rural character mixed with matured and proportioned trees.</p> <p>The Westwell built form is in two parts, first a traditionally formed square and second an 'estate layout' on a curving road with detached and semi-detached houses. This mixture of modern but reasonably isolated houses with the more compressed speculative development and the Georgian buildings is oddly formed and not overly attractive.</p> <p>At the crest of the hill the town is finally fully discovered through a change in level with the road and footpath closer together.</p> <p>Beyond this point the road continues to rise more gently with the footpath at a lower level with a grassy slope dividing the two. This formation is continued into the town, the only change being a variation in levels. At this point at the entrance to the High Street the nature of the place is emphasised by a small group of commercial buildings mixed with large trees overhanging the road. These emphasise the sense of 'gateway'.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p data-bbox="683 280 965 313"><u>Entrance from Ashford</u></p> <p data-bbox="683 347 1394 627">This entrance lacks much of the historical character of the western and southern entrances with a long, semi-built-up road suddenly stopped by a folly marking the end of suburbia and the beginning of town. This folly is situated on a bend in the road and is a focal point of the vista into the town. Before this entrance place the road from St Michaels to Tenterden is about one mile and nearly all built up of little architectural character.</p> <p data-bbox="683 660 1394 1400">St Michaels itself comprises nondescript modern development mainly of ribbon development form so there is no question of moving from country to town but from suburbia to town. In essence in this area Tenterden spreads out to meet St Michaels. At the junction of Beacon Oak Road the tower of St Mildred's Church can be seen in the distance. Various institutional buildings are located at this point such as the Unitarian Meeting House, the Catholic Church of St Andrews and Tenterden County Secondary School. The spaces between filled with little houses, but the overall appearance is reasonably pleasant.. Moving along this stretch of road towards East Cross the Church view disappears. At a relatively short distance from East Cross suburbia stops and the old town begins; the buildings crowd up to the pavement and opposite there is a predominance of green and trees. The road takes a gentle S bend curving away out of sight. Half-way along this bend there is a facing row of shops and houses with white painted weatherboarding a predominant material. This entrance has some excellent road curves and contours with space for more planting and should be the subject of further study.</p> <p data-bbox="683 1433 829 1467"><u>Town Centre</u></p> <p data-bbox="683 1500 1394 1601">The linear structure of the central area; its vistas and relationships between the different buildings and town spaces provides the overall character.</p> <p data-bbox="683 1635 1394 2139">The High Street is the spine and its unique character derives from the fact that the centre of the town is sufficiently raised on higher ground to prevent total views of the full length of the street from either the west or east ends. In effect therefore the heart of the area appears to be at the end of the street. A further characteristic, which gives the street form its unique quality, is the narrowing down of the street at the centre point. This creates a sense of 'centre place' and particularly when approached from the West (Cross) end through the well treed and green space character of that section of the overall road length with buildings alongside well set back on each side. This unique effect is emphasised by the dominance of sky and foliage and the change in road alignment at each end leaving vistas closed by trees.</p>

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	<p>From the centre to the east end of the High Street (East Cross) the character is less distinguished in total but nevertheless contains some interesting buildings. Some of the more modern buildings in this locality while in many cases out of scale with the evolved historically important buildings help to define the space.</p> <p>The Town Hall close to the heart of the town centre with its projecting canopy creates a visually pleasing place spoiled to a very large extent by the uncompromising car parking spaces in front of it which continues some distance along that street side. This area needs re-organising in order to enhance this space.</p> <p>Generally the eastern end of the town centre is in stark contrast to the western half. From Station Road to East Cross and the junction at the Recreation Ground the appearance is totally different with its almost urban sprawl form and character exacerbated by traffic problems.</p> <p>Between the Town Hall/Civic space and East Cross the pavement on the south-east side widens just prior to arriving at the open area leading to the Recreation Ground. This area with the forking of the road leaving the centre by Ashford Road towards the north and Oaks Road towards the north-east has a special character in many ways parallel to the western part of the High Street. The buildings sweep along a treed Promenade and this produces an enclosed entry place.</p> <p>A noticeable aspect of the hierarchy of spaces is that they are not isolated and separate but well integrated. They are also not always defined by buildings or walls but spaces in their own rights. This produces a depth of visual character not always evident in historic towns based often on narrow through roads.</p> <p>Linking the spatial structure are rows of buildings which in the main fall into groups, thus the character is defined by the cross mixing of places and groups sometimes overlapping with each other.</p> <p>A further characteristic is the skyline silhouette of the buildings along both sides of the High Street formed by buildings of varying height, scale, form and architectural style. Combined with this the west east alignment the High Street provides a variable light and shade effect which depending on the orientation of the buildings and groups of buildings accentuates the volumes, planes and mouldings of many of the building forms.</p>

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	<p>The town centre is divided into two main parts separated by a gently formed hill at the centre with each characterised not by continual lengths of buildings either side but in many areas by individual and groups of buildings separated by spaces not only between them but also from the main street. A further characteristic which aggregates to the total visual quality is that these spaces not only overlap one with the other but have smaller spaces of interest within them. This creates visual fluidity and a variation in view points throughout the entire length of the street. The softer streetscape character is confined to the western stretch of street with the grass areas separating the street from the buildings and building groups. The lower level west side in particular is a key part of the street form with its wide promenade made up of a variety of materials. This interplay between buildings, spaces grassed and treed areas and contour changes both across the street and along it is central to its special character.</p> <p>On the eastern side of the west section not only are buildings different in scale proportion and style they are also spaced out with glimpses of other spaces and buildings to the rear and with long frontage gardens in the main adding to the overriding 'green' character of the street.</p> <p>As the West Street area sweeps up and gently on a curve towards the town centre the buildings are bolder in form and of a greater variety of style with the Church tower at the rear on the north-east side completing the streetscape composition at that point.</p> <p>The alleyways, passages and spaces behind these buildings have their own distinctive character for example the churchyard with its focus on the church and imposing tower is itself recessed from the busy High Street. Although it may be seen from three points only this concealment gives it solitude and calm and its influence is considerable. From the churchyard there is also direct contact to open agricultural country so that even in the heart of the town one can sense this important feeling of immediacy and contact.</p> <p>Other areas of interest behind the main street façade are the network of lanes to the south of the central part of the High Street which together constitute a place. This locality can be glimpsed from the High Street from time to time. This quiet complex of lanes is of great value and contrasts from the busy shopping street. This group of churchyard, the centre of the High Street and the Backs, define the real core of the town which at the moment is cut in half by through traffic.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the use of distinctive and traditional building materials</p>	<p>In the western part of the High Street the buildings are mainly of brick, tile and white painted weather-boarding. It is the latter that has the greatest impact. East Cross is similarly identified.</p> <p>Apart from the Church there are virtually no stone buildings in the town. Little of the original character of the High Street formed by timber-framed buildings with plaster infill remains but there are one or two exceptions at the centre near to the Town Hall. The roofs in the town were probably originally of thatch but none survive in the town to-day. The town's evolved form of construction is in timber, brick and tile with many half-timbered buildings refaced with copies of historical façades. For example some timber-framed buildings simulate brick and stone construction by having façades of mathematical tiles and white wood quoins. Many buildings have been clad with weather-boarding or tile-hanging, either plain or patterned. White painted weather-boarding predominates and creates a sense of homogeneity. This simple economical and uncomplicated material mixed with a varied use of tile hanging on some façades creates a pattern of colour set in matured landscaped areas gives a brilliant texture to the street appearance. Combined with these essential characteristics there is an abundance of bay windows, projecting cornices and string courses plus a variety of windows and doors with crisply moulded frame surrounds and door cases and bracketed canopies and hoods.</p>
<p>the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area</p>	<p>A critical feature of the 'green' character of Tenterden is the relationship of the spine road to its setting.</p> <p>The normal relationship in historically evolved towns is for the road serving the area to be relatively close to the buildings aligned along either side. The special character of the Tenterden Conservation Area is that the space containing the road is wide and with a difference in level between the road and the buildings on one side as against the opposite side. this change in level is at the footpath promenade position along the north side of the main western end of High Street. These varying levels come together at the central construction at the brow of the slight hill at that point. At that position the western treescape ceases and the street form takes on a harder urban appearance.</p> <p>The trees in the western section include several fine specimens combined with specific clumps which give shade to the area and an attractive skyline silhouette. This bold landscape structure is reinforced by the green swards on either side of the street and on the southern side of the long front gardens to the properties along that side. This tree grouping characteristic is repeated in the East Cross area thus creating a soft visual green entrance place to an entirely different built form to that part of the Conservation Area.</p>



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	<p>There are other well treed areas of importance namely along Oaks Road and entering East Cross from St Michaels along Ashford Road. To a less extent the junction of Ashford Road and Beacon Oak Road is also reasonably well treed.</p>
<p>the prevailing or former uses of buildings in the area and the influence of this on plan form and building types</p>	<p>The early settlement of Tenterden was contained at the heart of the town close to St Mildred's Church. There is clear evidence of a number of 15th and 16th century properties in that area. Of the 200 or so Listed Buildings throughout the area there are 8, of 14th century origin with 44, 15th to 17th century. However, a majority of the overall listed heritage was constructed during the 18th (104 No.) and 19th centuries (71 No.). Most of the early buildings were of residential use mixed most probably with some form of craft farming (barns) or local manufacturing uses (Blacksmith etc.)</p> <p>The commercial focus has evolved historically in the central place towards East Cross and in more recent years along the northern side of the West Cross road length.</p> <p>Beyond the East Cross Gardens area the character of the area changes to largely late Victorian and Edwardian developments mixed with some new 20th century developments. A specific exception is Hales Place an impressive 16th century building with not only a walled garden but also listed garden structures, a barn and stable/house. On the other side of Oaks Road is a space called Golden Square, but no longer a square. Here there is an attractive group of 18th century tile hung houses complemented on either side by the white weather-boarding of Golden Square and Plough Cottage. Much of the triangle followed by Ashford Road, Oaks Road and Beacon Oak Road is fronted by Victorian houses now sub-divided into smaller units. Off Ashford Road is Rothley Court, a small backland development of modern bungalows from which Beachy Path leads to Danemore - flats and bungalows for the elderly built some fifty years ago, with access from Golden Square.</p> <p>Changing uses result in a change in character and one of the major changes over the last fifty years has been caused by shop conversions although originally trading took at fairs and markets on the greens. Later trading was from homes and with wares in the front windows, in due course, enlarged. The front gardens were paved over and fences removed. These changes did not spoil the building because the windows were reasonably sized to allow division into panes that retained the scale of the building. The use of steel beams and plate glass, shop windows have resulted in the whole of the lower storeys of some buildings being removed entirely mutilating the building.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>Further ramifications of changes in use concern the alterations to roads, trees, fences and gardens.</p> <p>With the increase of traffic and the continued conversion of residences to commercial use, the ground space between buildings is changing. Fortunately the green swards have not been compromised. The removal of hedges, gardens and trees when a property is converted to shopping and the space left covered with paving creates a somewhat empty space not always improved upon by the introduction of flowering tubs and plant containers.</p> <p>New buildings have also been introduced over the years and often in backland areas leading into the street or visually accessible to it. Regrettably, some of the original buildings have been removed to accommodate these often crudely detailed buildings lacking in scale and townscape context or constructed of materials not overly complimentary to the area.</p>
historical evolution	<p>Tenterden is not mentioned in the Domesday Book although it is probable that the 'denes' were in existence when the Book was compiled and attached to a distant manor. It is also generally understood that in Roman and Saxon times Tenterden was a quite small settlement buried in the depths of the immense forest of Andreasweald.</p> <p>In the 12th century the Denes of Tenterden formed one of the seven hundreds in the Weald which contributed towards the upkeep of Dover Castle.</p> <p>The earliest records of the Parish Church of St Mildreds date from the 13th century which in the 15th century was provided with a fine perpendicular tower which is a focal point in the town centre and none which can be see from many vantage points when approaching the town from the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>In 1449 the town was annexed to Rye as a limb of the Cinque Ports. The town was involved at that time in providing ships to Rye. These it is believed were constructed at Smallhythe which was then on the main channel of the Rother and accessible to ships arriving from Rye. Over the centuries Tenterden has evolved from a typical English village to become an outstandingly fine example in architectural and historical terms of a modestly sized country town astride the main route from Hastings to Ashford and Canterbury or considerable heritage value of exceptional townscape quality.</p> <p>In evolutionary terms the town is not seen as one which will expand into a large settlement although since the 1960s when the population was around 3,800 it has risen to 7,000 or so now.</p>

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	<p>The High Street forms the spine of the existing Conservation Area and from the central section in the vicinity of the Church and Town Hall to West Cross the street is lined with greens and trees which are a much admired townscape feature. There are interesting historical reasons for the street form where on the north side of the western end most of the shops and housing are of 18th century ribbon development.</p> <p>Those on the south side follow the curved boundary of the old market and many are of the 17th and 18th centuries.</p> <p>The street narrows abruptly towards the east with the shops in front of the church. It is understood that in the 13th century when originally built they encroached upon the highway but were only allowed to remain on payment of rent to the crown.</p> <p>The heart of the town centre is primarily 15th century although many of the buildings are hidden behind 18th and 19th century façades. However, some Wealden hall houses remain but adapted to modern needs. (ie. Tudor Rose Tea rooms etc).</p> <p>The architectural character of the town centre provides for a rich variety of building styles with traditional handmade Kent Peg clay roof tiles, many with timber frames, some visible but some mainly hidden by weather-boarding or Wealden clay wall tiles. There are some buildings with mathematical tiles (simulated brickwork) hung onto timber studding. A particular characteristic is the preponderance of lanes and alleyways off both sides of the High Street leading to new and old residential and commercial developments at the rear. In more recent times also to main car parks. These do add greatly to the town's charm and character.</p> <p>The third part of the area, west of Smallhythe Road, dominated by Heronden Hall, a grey stone Gothic style mansion built in 1853, the Gateway to which being badly damaged by storms in 1987, 1990 and early 1995 is now to be restored. Two others, Westfield House - an attractive 18th century house opposite Smallhythe Road and Westwell House, 1711, of fine architectural quality further west on Rolvenden Road are now divided into flats.</p> <p>The intrinsic interest, quality, character and coherence of the buildings, both listed and unlisted.</p> <p>The visual analysis of the townscape was aimed at an assessment of the townscape characteristics that distinguish between effects and relationships of buildings and spaces and which were purposely designed or accidental, essentially this involves the shape of the area, the centre and the entrances to it. By shape is meant the town structure, its levels and contours along and across its main streets which aggregate to show the full range of the town's separate parts.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside.</p>	<p>There are at least eight areas around the Conservation Area where the open countryside either directly or linked to landscaped open space penetrates into the built environment. The most notable place where this occurs is along Smallhythe Road. This urban - rural relationship is a very important Conservation Area setting characteristic. Other areas such as the land backing onto the Tenterden Railway Station are equally important connections between the town and the countryside around it.</p> <p>In assessing the importance of these peripheral areas especially along Smallhythe Road special consideration was given to the area towards the north backing up to the southern rear side of the High Street and the built up area behind the frontage properties.</p> <p>In order to assess limits to any extra designation areas the focus was on the south-west side of Smallhythe Road leading into West Cross from Morghew Park and the Cricket Ground and the area around the Railway Station on the basis that these areas offered a special aesthetic relationship with buildings of importance.</p> <p><u>Smallhythe Road Extension</u></p> <p>From the Cricket Ground looking over the Three and Six Fields area on the north-east side of Smallhythe Road towards the town centre the character is clearly distinguishable from the land to the west being very extensive, open, farmland, whereas the area to the west is more manoeuvred and related to substantial country houses. Although this area clearly offers wide ranging views towards the overall town centre built form with quite distinctive views of the Church and some key buildings and grounds of buildings (mainly roofs and rear elevations and some modern buildings of fairly bold form and appearance eg. Waitrose and Leisure Centre Buildings) and also relates to footpaths traversing the area diagonally across the land - it is felt, that since much of the area embraces properties not of special historic and architectural character especially towards the south-west, it was sufficiently different in character and appearance, to the west side, not to be considered comparable to it in special value.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>The area is well trafficked by pedestrians via the footpaths cutting across the area. The diagonal one from the Cricket Ground area, Six Fields path, is an important route and defines a broadly triangular shaped space between it and the modern housing and other built up areas to the north-west than is possible with the land towards the north-east across to the Leisure Centre Building, which if aggregated with the area to the north-west would be a very large area to have earmarked as a special historical and architectural space. Such an expanse of land to be so designated for special control would be unreasonable and would suggest that similarly large expanses of open countryside approaching the town centre from the various roads leading into it, possibly not providing quite the same, wide-spanning view of the whole town centre or as attractive should also be included.</p> <p><u>Railway Area Extension</u></p> <p>With regards the countryside area to the north, north-west and north-east of the Railway Station. Part of the land associated with the Railway Station to the south-west, is already the subject of an Article IV Direction Planning Control. This area along with the land immediately to the north and north-east is visually attractive and well defined by hedges, fences and topographical features as such it was considered to be logical to include it into the existing area to provide both conservation protection whilst also offering an opportunity for enhancement especially with regards to the immediate area to the north of the station where improvements to the car parking and associated landscaping could be made especially in the vicinity of the Nissen buildings which, while of general but recent historic interest and of a form that allows them to fit reasonably comfortably into the semi rural area in the immediate setting could, with high quality design skills employed, be replaced to enhance the area. Therefore, it is not considered that by designating this additional area, it will have a detrimental effect on the economic value of the land or its intrinsic character and appearance. This approach was considered to be more likely to provide a greater degree of potential development flexibility in any enhancement scheme for the future than would be the case if an Article IV Direction was imposed upon the land which is of a different character and appearance to the land to the west which has such a control.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>On the other hand the area to the west of Smallhythe Road offers a quality of character that is worthy of protection through Conservation Area designation especially around and including the Cricket Ground. Since the object of any proposed boundary change is to eradicate seemingly hitherto arbitrary boundary lines. The assessment of this area took into account hedges, tree lines, natural land features, topographical changes (ridge lines etc) and property lines. However, in some areas it is essential to include all land defined by existing manicured parkland or well maintained agricultural land and this would not allow for a reasonably tightly drawn boundary line to occur. In such cases the line proposed will simply be formed by linking together boundary points and features easily distinguishable from such expansive areas. On this basis the areas tight around the Cricket Ground and around Heronden and Heronden Hall and the other country houses between the Cricket Ground and West Cross were considered to be sufficiently complimentary to each other, to be aggregated together to form one continuous park area. This was considered to be a logical extension of the area around Heronden Hall, which is already in the existing designated area, rather than extend all site areas well into the countryside to the west.</p> <p>The character and appearance of the land on both sides of Smallhythe Road is therefore sufficiently different for the eastern side to be assessed and decided upon in a different way. The land is unquestionably of value in that it offers an attractive foreground to the full length of the rear of the town centre. Nevertheless, it also borders on existing housing and an industrial site to the north-west which is undistinguished in character.</p> <p>When this area was first assessed in the summer of 1995 when the whole Tenterden area and its immediate hinterland was studied in detail particular attention was given to this open area which clearly provides a visual foreground of character when viewing the town centre and its skyline from Smallhythe Road. The area spans the full width of the rear of the main building along the High Street and glimpses of the centrally positioned and dominant Church tower and key buildings, historic and modern, are possible.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>In assessing this area consideration was given to areas in the vicinity of limited or no architectural or special historic value. However, it was felt that by omitting such areas and creating in effect holes in the areas is not considered to be an acceptable planning arrangement. Areas that are often untidy, unattractive or contain uses that do not conform to their surroundings, do not necessarily have to be seen as negative spaces. Car parking areas, for example, can be seen as quasi-open space areas affording useful gaps between buildings or groups of buildings that make up overall character. Such gaps can often provide for views through or past such areas to points of interest that may not normally be seen. In the particular case mentioned by the respondent, the area is one that could in the future be enhanced through redevelopment and this is a positive and dynamic side of Conservation Area designation as distinct from preservation. Both aspects are an essential part of Conservation Areas enhancement and protection control.</p> <p>Further peripheral areas considered for inclusion into the existing area were those towards the north-east beyond the land around Hales Place and to the west of Cranbrook Road leading into the Little Westwell area close to the Cemetery.</p> <p>The latter area was assessed as indeed was the land on the north side of the road to Rolvenden leading into the same 'gateway' point from the west as to not be of sufficient historic or architectural value to merit inclusion into the existing area. It is not an area scheduled for development in the Tenterden Local Plan and although it and the area to the north of the Rolvenden Road access to Tenterden is currently open farmland, it is not too readily seen either entering or leaving Tenterden from that western area. The decision was made therefore to limit the boundary to the intersection point of the Cranbrook Road and Rolvenden Road, finishing on the Little Westwell area to the north-west of Heronden Hall and treating this as a first gateway point into Tenterden from the west. The second more built-up point being at the intersection of Smallhythe Road and West Cross is not only a more attractive built-up area but one with a 'T' road function defined nicely as a gateway with the Heronden Hill West Lodge Gatehouse building (despite its current partially collapsed condition) identifying this as a more positive gateway function.</p> <p>Similarly the land to the north-east of the land around Hales Place beyond Beacon Oak Road while reasonably attractive farmland is not considered to be of such a high quality landscape value or indeed historic value to include into the area.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area</p>	<p>There have been a number of changes to the area since its first designation in 1974 and its revision in 1977 mainly housing and commercial developments (Waitrose etc.). However, the most damage has been caused by the increase in traffic and car parking demands resulting in street scape changes; signage, safety barriers, security controls and changes in floorscape materials.</p> <p>The resultant proposals by the Kent County Council to deal with these vehicular and pedestrian traffic matters have led to considerable concern in the community.</p> <p>The loss of some floor surface materials is to be regretted especially some identified as long ago as 1967 by the 'Tenterden explored' report as being an essential part of the unique quality of the area of particular concern is where the treatment of access points to the main thoroughfare from the rear lanes and rear development areas have been changed from brick paviours, cobbles, ironstone setts etc. to tarmacadam covering.</p> <p>Damage to the edges of the grassed swards along the west end of the High Street is a notable visual blight on the area where passengers and motorists from parked cars on one side have worn out the grassed edges and traffic passing stationary double parked vehicles (on the same north side) have been driven alongside and over the edge of the green areas on the south side is a further example of damage by traffic movement especially by long, wide and heavy commercial vehicles. Other changes which are the use of inappropriate modern materials on listed and unlisted buildings especially with regards shopfronts. The aggregation of a loss of hedges, trees, traditional features street surfaces and the inclusion of hoardings, advertisements and street clutter generally has led to an overriding visually damaging effect.</p>
<p>identification of features that detract from the special character of the area and that may provide sites where change could be encouraged</p>	<p>Some of the street furniture such as street lighting (standards and lamps) in the recent past has been of a standard basic design. In addition there has been a use of a variety of highway and footpath lighting standards used lacking the design quality expected of such an outstanding Conservation Area. This has been partially rectified by the introduction of new more appropriately designed conservation style main street lamps. However, these are primarily in the central area and need to be extended along the full 1000 metres length of road through the whole area.</p> <p>The layout of street parking does not integrate well with the green areas or indeed the hard landscaped areas, this combined with the need for more suitably designed and located crossing places providing not only a sense of security to the pedestrian especially the elderly and mothers with children but also providing a visually more attractive appearance to the street.</p>



AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
	<p>A further feature of the area immediately associated with the main street is the use of utilitarian basic security railings and insensitively sited, signs, rubbish bins and traffic controls.</p> <p>The lack of greenery apart from one or two substantial trees at the eastern end of High Street is an improvement potential. Attempts have been made in the East Cross area to soften the environment by new planting and seating arrangements but this needs extending towards the central area in the vicinity of the Town Hall.</p> <p>There are some development sites that require attention, for example around the southern part of the Railway Station and at the end of Bridewell Lane. Other areas beyond the Conservation Area not considered to be of sufficient special merit to be included within it such as the Gas Works area to the north-west of Three Field path will need careful land use selection and planning and design attention in order to both protect and enhance the area it backs onto especially the car parking area at the rear of that section of the High Street.</p> <p>There are pockets of street space amongst the lanes and up and down the High Street connecting to these backland accesses plus the churchyard area where the loss of original surfaces, railings and similar details has changed these important places to their detriment.</p>
the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area	<p>All car parking areas.</p> <p>The Recreation area at East Cross end.</p> <p>The area around the north, north-east and north-west of the Station.</p>
the existence of any threats to the area	<p>Excessive development of backland sites. Changes in materials to listed and unlisted buildings.</p> <p>Additional on-street parking.</p> <p>Traffic signage controls generally.</p> <p>Streetscape clutter</p>

## OUTCOMES

Area boundary	<p>I recommend four changes to the existing boundary; around Heronden Hall; along the west side of Smallhythe between the Cricket Ground and Heronden Hall; around the north, north-west and north-east of the Tenterden Station area and finally the Cedar Works, housing development site behind the western end of the High Street to the north-east of Cherry Orchard (off Smallhythe Road).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Heronden Hall : The original boundary is proposed to be altered by extending it to correspond more precisely with boundary fences, hedges and natural features.</li><li>2. Smallhythe Road; west side :  The existing boundary to be extended up to and including the Cricket Ground drawn reasonably tightly around Heronden and along the access road to it from the Gatehouse on Smallhythe Road across to the north-west around the perimeter of the parkland between Heronden Lodge and the 'Cedars' Listed Building to the east of Heronden Hall. This proposed change links together a series of parkland type spaces up to the start of the more modern urban expansion to Tenterden to the south-east of West Cross (between the Gas Works site and Smallhythe Road). It also includes the road and hedgerow along it up to Cherry Orchard Gardens housing area.</li><li>3. Station Area:  The recommendation includes the Article IV Direction area to the south-west, an attractive open area providing views to the Station from public footpaths further to the west and areas to the north and north-east, some of which is already used for car parking and which could be developed to enhance the area with new landscaping treatment and some potential building development closer to the Station.</li></ol>
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	<p>This whole area will make a significant contribution to the setting of the Station and associated buildings themselves important landmark buildings contributing to a sense of place with their interesting architectural forms. The spatial character clearly defined by open green spaces, trees and hedges will add to the panoramic character of the area associated with the Station and Railway lines in it.</p> <p>4. Cedar Works Area :</p> <p>The design quality of the housing within this area is of sufficient merit in site layout and actual building terms for it to be added to the designated area.</p>
<p>Potential Article 4 Directions</p>	<p>Although the area around the northern and north-eastern part of the Station was considered as a possible Article IV Direction site to compliment and extent that already agreed for the south-western area I have decided that the integration of this area into the existing Conservation Area is sufficient to protect this heritage site.</p>

#### Site Policies (proposals and protection)

Tenterden in its region acts as a major centre for rural communities and provides facilities such as schools, banks, shops, leisure facilities site many of which cannot be provided in the surrounding villages and hamlets.

#### **The Case for Conservation**

Conservation involves dynamic processes as well as a need to preserve and protect heritage. Given the beauty and charm of the town the normal approach is to maintain the status quo. However, the attraction of Tenterden bringing trade to the town creates pressures for change. Conformity to modern building and planning laws make it difficult to reproduce the intimate layout and human scale that has evolved so successfully over the years of such areas. Too often destruction of the scale and homogeneity of a street by replacing for example two or three old houses by one large new building, is not considered by developers seriously enough when responding to the need to protect an area by enhancing action. Similarly, incompetently designed alterations, (suburban type shopfronts and fittings, poor lettering and incongruous fascia boards) and the increasing use of illuminated signs, the adoption of gimmicks such as reproduction wrought iron decoration, crazy paving, coach lamps and log-slice name-plates and the butchery of trees add to need to control the demands of market forces for such developments. Clear cut conservation policies are therefore required to prevent such actions.

#### **The Case for Development**

The fabric of the town, (buildings, land and infrastructure) is decaying in parts and the cost of upkeep is becoming an increasing burdensome problem for owners and authorities responsible for this.

For example, the layout of the town is now not suited to the ever increasing in motorcars; streets are under pressure to be widened or need to be made safer for pedestrians and there is a lack of car parking.

It is clear that arguments for development against preservation are likely to cause friction. However, property developers are now recognising that there is a special case in areas of Special Historic Value and therefore more prepared than in past times to respect the need to protect heritage provided the policy for protection is reasonably based and allows for some degree of flexibility in special circumstances.

There is therefore a need for policies concerning existing buildings and townscape

Such heritage controls should fall under two headings; first concerning individual buildings and groups of buildings and second the distinctive environment created by the relationship between these buildings and groups ie. Townscape and its infrastructure (roads etc.).

It is recommended therefore that policies should be established concerning (a) conservation (b) building conversion (c) renewal of all buildings (d) protection/enhancement of land uses and (e) general heritage protection.

(a) Conservation

All buildings should be periodically inspected to check the aesthetic, historical and structural condition. Advice on the care of old buildings should be given in the form of a pamphlet in which the importance and value of buildings and their care should be explained to owners. This advice should cover the use of traditional building materials (ie. plain tiles, mathematical tiles, pavings etc.), for all repairs to walls, roof and paving, (eg. handmade clay tiles of similar colour to those existing, and not concrete tiles or other substitute materials).

(b) Building Conversion

Greater control is required over the conversion of residential buildings into shops to prevent damaging change in external appearance. (ie. existing shop windows should only increased in size in the centre of the town. Encouragement should be given to the reversion to residential use of premises that have been converted into shops beyond the centre of the town ie. the removal of shopfronts and the reinstatement of windows and doors as formerly. All adaptation should be designed by a competent adviser on heritage detailing to prevent phoney or incorrect reproduction of past styles and details.

(c) Renewal

Where it is necessary to replace an existing building or buildings the new building(s) should conform to the 'envelope' of the original building ie. heights of walls to eaves or parapets and height to roof ridge etc., and the frontage width should be maintained.

New buildings should maintain the old building line wherever possible.

Where renewal is undertaken its effect on place or group silhouette, scale and townscape should be established to the satisfaction of the Ashford Borough Council.

New buildings can be of contemporary design. This does not preclude the use of materials and proportions that are in character with the town.

(d) Protection and Enhancement of Land Uses

Land indicated as being suitable for development or redevelopment should be developed in accordance with an approved design and development brief to avoid the attractive form of the town being submerged by casual exploitation of sites in isolation of their setting character.

There are certain views, effects and relationships which can be regarded as unique and germane to the continued existence of the town's identity and which should be preserved.

(e) General Heritage Protection

(i) Setting

In view of the inter-relation of different parts it is obviously less easy to define a code for the conservation of the townscape than it is for separate buildings. However, it should not be difficult to assess the impact of any new development on the existing scene so that a proper new relationship is achieved.

(ii) Spaces

It should therefore be possible to protect the spaces and places and special characteristics of the area even though some of the component part of the buildings may have to be altered. Thus a square would remain an enclosure even if one were to rebuild one side in a different manner to the original.

(iii) Streetscape

There is a need for a co-ordinated streetscape policy to comprehensively link together floorscape treatments, car parking improvements new landscaping areas and a rationalised signal, street lighting, traffic control system and street furniture provision.

(iv) Design and Development Briefs

A further policy provision is required to establish a design and development brief for the extended area around the Station.

Finally (v) A heritage policy is required covering historic details, materials and finishes to listed and unlisted buildings for the whole area in accordance with Government guidelines for the Historic Environment.

<p>Potential improvement schemes</p>	<p>A number of potential improvement areas emerge from the assessment exercise:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At all west, east and southern entrances to the Conservation Area. (Landscaping, traffic controls, surfaces and services)</li> <li>2. Station Road from High Street to the Station including the areas around the Station. (Building development landscaping, traffic controls, surfaces ad services)</li> <li>3. Bell Lane (surfaces)</li> <li>4. Recreation Ground (Landscaping)</li> <li>5. East Cross (surfaces, signage and landscaping)</li> <li>6. Town Hall : central area (surfaces, car parking and spatial re-arrangement)</li> <li>7. The Lanes (surfaces)</li> <li>8. The Churchyard (railings and surfaces)</li> <li>9. The West Cross/Smallhythe junction area (surfaces, controls and signage)</li> </ol> <p>Most of the improvement areas proposed touch onto the main highway through the town or minor roads and lanes linked to it and since it is known that proposals to deal with increased traffic movement and pedestrian safety are under consideration by the Kent County Council there is an opportunity for a comprehensive plan of action to be formulated in order that the quality of the area that has clearly evolved at the western end without undue serious spoliation as yet can be extended into the more urban east end. This will most probably result in changes in the widths of parts of the main road and rearranging the car parking areas whilst still maintaining services to shops. However, this should be carried out only after the issue of car parking throughout the area has been properly examined.</p> <p>In addition there is a need to rationalise pedestrian movement and safety precautions throughout the area especially crossings in appropriate places that respect the desire lines of movement and the built environment they should sensitively respond to.</p>
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	<p>Additional tree planing and ground cover is required in strategic places but positions of public sewers, drains and other services would have to be known and taken into account in any such improvement scheme.</p> <p>Security and Safety railings will be needed where the pavements are narrow but they should be of an acceptable design.</p> <p>Gathering places for the public should be encouraged particularly in areas ideally suited for bus stops or in association with important buildings (Town Hall site). The location and good design of such sites and of the shelters and associated street furniture will be important. The eastern end of the town could be greatly enhance by the introduction of suitable tree planting and appropriately sited areas of ground cover, together with the provision of public seating.</p> <p>The existing clutter of street signs, lighting and street furniture needs improvement and given the Cinque Port ancestry of the town such street facilities could be co-ordinated into a historic theme using a Tenterden coat of arms or symbol to link the facilities together into a homogeneous way.</p> <p>The streetscape needs much attention and a greater use of traditional materials. Safety kerbs and blind crossing surfaces should blend into rather than clash with attractively weathered evolved surfaces. Reinstatement of railings would help in many areas especially around the churchyard area.</p>
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Officer: JOHN WOODWARD

Date: 20 September 1995