



Conservation Area Assessment

Newenden

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.

NEWENDEN CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

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

Newenden is on the very edge of Ashford Borough and indeed is a village virtually situated on the border between Kent and East Sussex.

The village stands on a ridge of high ground on the Kent side of the River Rother. The river itself has played a significant part in the development of the village and as late as 1349 the Rother was still navigable for sea going ships. The Rother continued to be an important water way for the transporting of goods between Rye and Newenden during the later middle ages but trade is understood to have slowly declined because of the river channel silting up and because of the increased banking of Romney Marsh. This decline was further accentuated by the laying in the eighteenth and nineteenth century of good roads which provided an alternative to water transport and travel. In the twentieth century, the River Rother is now the principle outlet for the drainage of the marshlands and today very much resembles a canal with a few trees growing upon its banks.

The village lies with the designated High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Conservation Area also falls within the designated Special Landscape Area (Kent Countryside Plan and Kent Structure Plan).

The Conservation Area itself is relatively tightly drawn around the main nucleus of the village which surrounds the crossroads of Lossenham Lane and the A28 Rye Road as well as the entrances to the crossroad from both a north-westerly and southern direction.

There are relatively few Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area. Most of the character comes from changes in topography, the abundance of mature vegetation and the historic core of the village around the crossroads area

"Plan 1" attached with this appraisal shows the public footpaths emanating from within the Conservation Area as well as the small group of Listed Buildings around the churchyard and the village crossroads. For the purposes of this appraisal, the village was divided into three separate areas which are shown on the plan marked "Plan 2".

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	<p>The Conservation Area is not uniform in terms of topography etc. Entering the village and the County of Kent from the direction of Northiam, it is immediately clear that the land rises to the north of the crossroads. The area between Newenden Bridge, a Listed structure, and the crossroads of Lossenham Lane and the A28 Rye Road is almost certainly the historic flood plain for the River Rother, with the rise in the land representing the natural place for the establishment of a small settlement when the River Rother was more economically important as a mode of transportation etc.</p> <p>From this point, the land is relatively flat in both easterly and westerly directions though outside of the Conservation Area and approximately half a mile of the village proper, the rising land subsequently dips towards the village of Rolvenden to the north.</p> <p>One of the key features of the village is that the group of dwellings located within "Group B" are situated up to 3 m higher than the cricket ground located on the southern side of Lossenham Lane. This difference tends to emphasise the importance of the buildings, many of which exhibit vernacular designs and indeed, these buildings help "frame" the northern side of the cricket ground, helping to produce an intimate village character.</p>
archaeological significance and potential of the area	<p>The first recorded mention of the village appears in 791 when Offa, King of Mercia, granted the manor of Newenden to the prior and monks of Christchurch, Canterbury, to feed their pigs. Additionally, in the Great Domesday survey, the village which was then known as "Newedene" was recorded as one of the only two towns in Kent to possess a market. At that time, the Weald was sparsely populated as there were no roads and goods were transported by water, Newenden developed into an important port and a trading centre for a large part of the Weald.</p> <p>Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Conservation Area is potentially a rich source of archaeological remains. Roman coins are occasionally brought to light in the neighbourhood and both Battery Bank and Battery Field on the entrance into the village from the direction of Rolvenden are officially safeguarded as potential sites of archaeological remains. St Peters Church, which dominates the crossroads area and the historic hub of the village is of fourteenth century origins though over time it has been altered. The present church tower was erected on the south-east corner of the building in 1859 and the black faced clock with gold hands on the south face was installed by the parishioners to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.</p>	<p>Many of the spaces within the Conservation Area are "private", with the degree of privacy determined by the proximity of development to the highway and the precise nature of boundary demarcation (eg fence, high hedge etc). There are no "imposing" or stately residences within the designated Conservation Area and therefore much of the character of its character is given by the relationship of individual dwelling houses with their immediate neighbours and surroundings as well as the differences in detailing between individual buildings.</p> <p>The most important space within the Conservation Area is the area to the south of Lossenham Lane and east of the A28 Rye Road. This contains the village cricket pitch and also various small areas of open land and paddocks etc. The cricket pitch is a semi formal open space and has a clear function and purpose and is well maintained. It is fenced from the surrounding open land and the River Rother which runs close by. Privacy is enhanced in respect of the boundary to the A28 Rye Road by a line of mature Oak Trees, though interestingly on the Lossenham Lane frontage the cricket ground is devoid of fencing and vegetation. As such, this area tends to be a rather "ad hoc" area for visitor/resident car parking and this is gradually eroding the distinction between highway and verge.</p> <p>Surrounding the cricket ground, the paddocks re-emphasise the rural setting of the village, especially as sheep graze on these areas and take shelter under a few imposing Oak Trees.</p> <p>For the purposes of this appraisal, the Conservation Area was divided into three groups. The townscape quality of each individual group is assessed below.</p> <p><u>Group A</u></p> <p>Essentially the "entrance" into the heart of the Conservation Area which until much closer to the Old School House next to St Peter's Church remains largely hidden from view. The entrance is characterised by mature and abundant vegetation on both sides of the road and on the northern side of the A28 there is a large area of woodland. The southern side of the A28 is characterised by residential development which is situated relatively deeply within the plots and as such is "low key". Buildings here, such as the Old Rectory, exhibit turn of the century detailing though Three Oaks is a characterful example of late 1960's/early 1970's domestic architecture with an emphasise on thermal efficiency etc. All of the aforementioned dwellings have large gardens which extend to the south and the border with the drainage channel which eventually leads to the River Rother.</p> <p>It is not until the Old School House comes fully into view that the Parish church and the crossroads area beyond becomes obvious. The Old School House, though much altered in terms of the timber framed building which existed in 1850, is a building full of character with an ornate façade</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality. (Continued)</p>	<p>and window detailing. Although it has been extended from its original form, there may be potential for consideration of listing. A photograph of the school building and the Church beyond is attached as "Plan 3".</p> <p><u>Group B</u></p> <p>Group B contains the majority of Listed Building within the Conservation Area and represents the tight knit grouping of historic buildings around the historic focal point of the village, ie the village crossroads. The buildings are also closely centred on the village church. There is no definitive building line here with development essentially taking a cluster form around the northern side of the crossroads. A small track runs around the perimeter of the church from the A28 through to footpath access close to the village hall on Lossenham Lane and this serves as access to properties such as Church Cottages and Church Cottage. All the buildings here exhibit vernacular detailing with peg tiled roofs, white painted weatherboarding and white painted simple timber casement windows being the norm though number 1 Rotherview has unusual green painted joinery! The sash windows in Church Cottages are largely still in tact and the cottages have characterful scalloped tile hanging on the first floor with steeply pitched dormers. All of the buildings help "frame" the setting of the churchyard in an intimate and rather tranquil relationship. Photographs of Group B are shown on the plan marked "Plan 3".</p> <p><u>Group C</u></p> <p>Group C has very little townscape quality and the important role that it plays is in terms of providing the setting for the built heart of the village on the northern side of Lossenham Lane. The flat nature of the land helps emphasise the topographical change to the north. Abundant vegetation and mature trees provide a characterful entrance into both the village Conservation Area and the County of Kent and the open nature of this area needs to be safeguarded from development pressure. Photographs of Group C are attached as "Plan 4".</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the use of distinctive and traditional building materials</p>	<p>The whole gamut of vernacular styles is represented within the village though, as previously stated, there are no large manor or stately houses within the designated Conservation Area. The emphasis is on vernacular domestic architecture and buildings have obviously evolved over time. Nevertheless, white painted weatherboarding both partial and full and façades of buildings is particularly prevalent as well as partial brick façades with either weatherboarding or vertical tile hanging above. Tile hanging exhibits either a "mottled" or strongly red/brick earth coloration and roofs have a pleasant undulating visual texture resulting from the use of Kent Peg Tiles. Rather unusually, the oast house situated back from the A28 to the south of the White Hart Public House has a slate roof, one of the few buildings within the Conservation Area to utilise this type of covering. Noticeably, buildings tend to have steeply pitched roofs emphasising the traditional plan form used for dwelling construction rather than the twentieth century trend for a larger plan area spanned by a single low roof pitch. Roof design is of critical importance in any new development within the Conservation Area and indeed, the issue generally has been taken up by the countryside Commission via their publication in Spring 1995 of a book entitled "Local Attraction".</p> <p>Boundary treatments vary between the three groups. In Group C, boundaries have a strongly rural/agricultural feel with post and wire fencing to the rear of the cricket ground and natural hedge boundaries to the A28. Dwellings on the northern side of Lossenham Lane situated within Group B are generally located at a higher level and front gardens in many cases have attractive hedge rows planted at the junction with the Lane. Around the churchyard area, the lack of any discernable vehicular highway as such creates an environment wherein picket fencing is practical and visually pleasing. Lastly, in Group A the boundary treatments of the four dwellings on the southern side of the A28 road is natural, utilising mature hedging and mature trees.</p>
<p>the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area</p>	<p>Please refer to the plan marked "Plan 5" accompanying this appraisal. For convenience, the same groupings "A-C" are used:</p> <p><u>Group A</u></p> <p>The woodland on the northern side of the A28 confirms the rural nature of the wider setting of the village within the Weald and vegetation on the opposite side of the road screens the majority of the elevations of the buildings from immediate view - only brief glimpses are possible when travelling by in a vehicle. The area is effectively a "green" entrance into the Conservation Area and the grouping of buildings round the crossroads.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area (Continued)</p>	<p><u>Group B</u> Vegetation tends to be boundary hedging between dwellings and to domestic frontages, though on the northern side of the churchyard where the land rises to the agricultural fields on the top of the scarp, many mature trees still exist and these frame the village when viewed from the direction of Northiam and Newenden Bridge. Essentially, there is a green "backdrop" to the group of vernacular buildings.</p> <p><u>Group C</u> Group C is similar to Group A in that it represents the green entrance into the village and the County of Kent from a southerly direction. The mature trees on the eastern side of the A28 Rye Road provide tranquillity and a sense of enclosure to the western side of the village cricket ground and along with the abundant hedge rows either side of the road help provide a strong and focused view to the buildings around the village crossroads. As such, protection of these elements from intrusive development needs to be carefully controlled and monitored.</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 Conservation Area is approximately 90% residential. The other 10% of the area is made up of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The White Hart Public House; the dominant building on the A28/Lossenham Lane crossroads being the last remaining public house in the village (it is reported that in the early sixteenth century Newenden is reputed to have had sixteen "ale houses"). ■ The village garage ■ The village post office/store ■ The village hall which was built in 1922 <p>Apart from the Oast House adjacent to the White Hart Public House, there are no oast or barn conversions within the Conservation Area. The majority of residential dwellings that exist appear to have originally been erected for such residential purposes.</p>
<p>historical evolution</p>	<p>Please refer to preceding paragraphs and the area appraisal contained on Page 1.</p> <p>The pattern of buildings suggests a cluster form of development around the village crossroads and at the foot of the scarp of the rising land to the north and in close proximity to the River Rother. Over time, there has been a slight expansion via infill development in a north-westerly direction out of the Conservation Area and also infill development, including Council development such as Copt Hall, along Newenden Lane filling in the gaps between long existing dwellings on the northern side of the road.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
historical evolution (Continued)	The village as a whole has not experienced substantial twentieth century development, due largely to the constraints imposed by topography and the fundamental townscape difficulties that would arise from development on the southern side of Lossenham Lane and on the scarp rising to the north of the village.
the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside	The undeveloped nature of the southern side of Lossenham Lane and the A28 from the crossroads area to Newenden Bridge means that there are outstanding views south available from the majority of dwellings on Lossenham Lane and those which rise up the hill out of the Conservation Area in a north-westerly direction. By the same token, there are characterful long range views of the village when viewed from East Sussex and the Northiam area.
the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area	<p>None obvious from the survey work, bearing in mind that the Conservation Area is tightly drawn around the historic nucleus of the village.</p> <p>Bourne's Yard at the wharf area close to Newenden Bridge is perhaps the most visually intrusive development within the Conservation Area and the site is characterised by a number of vernacular robust agricultural type buildings interspersed with twentieth century steel framed storage barns etc. The latter are not visually pleasing and in any future development of this site, buildings of character need to be retained and new visually sensitive development needs to be encouraged.</p>
identification of features that detract from the special character of the area and that may provide sites where change could be encouraged	See above in respect of Bourne's Yard at the wharf. A Local Plan Policy may be desirable setting out a position of encouragement for sensitive and appropriate re-development, albeit re-development which retains the use of the site for employment purposes.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<p>the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>the existence of any threats to the area</p>	<p>With the majority of buildings around the crossroads and Lossenham Lane and the A28 being Listed, control over external fenestration changes is possible and the majority of dwellings do not appear to have been spoiled by either DIY or PVCU replacement joinery. The inappropriate removal of boundary demarcations, whether to the churchyard area or indeed to Lossenham Lane itself, could be a potential threat. However, there do not appear to be parking problems in the area of sufficient scale to trigger widespread removals.</p>

OUTCOMES

<p>Area boundary</p>	<p>Please refer to the plan marked "Plan 6" which shows boundary changes and the need for site specific policies.</p> <p>No deletions are proposed and all of the changes are designed to add relatively small areas to the Conservation Area which will hopefully give more logical boundaries.</p> <p>On the northern side of Lossenham Lane, the present Conservation Area boundary runs through the middle of a number of domestic curtilages and bearing in mind the impact on both control of demolition and erection of new buildings that this poses, it would be sensible to follow domestic curtilage boundaries as far as possible. Bakers Cottages situated behind Pear Tree Cottage can be seen from the cricket ground on a relatively high part of the scarp thus representing visually prominent development. The cottages and their domestic curtilages should therefore be included in the Conservation Area, as should the rear garden of Pear Tree Cottage which is presently excluded. Church Cottage and the dwelling adjacent which was granted on appeal in 1983 do not have well defined curtilages and the status of the land to the north and its relationship to Church Cottage in terms of everyday use is unclear. Nevertheless, this area represents one of the highest parts of the scarp and is bounded by mature vegetation. It forms part of the important backdrop to the development at the foot of the scarp and should be included as development in this area of the village would have a particularly damaging and visually intrusive result.</p> <p>Moving westwards, the village cemetery is rather perversely excluded from the Conservation Area at present, despite being reached by a footpath only a short distance from the old school and St Peters Church. It has a functional relationship with the village and is a tranquil area surrounded by woodland to the south and open fields to the north. As such there is a strong case for its inclusion within the Conservation Area and to make a more logical boundary on the northern side of the village.</p>
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Area boundary (Continued)	<p>Moving to the western area of the village on the southern side of the A28 Rye Road, the present Conservation Area boundary again bisects domestic curtilages unnecessarily and therefore the opportunity should be taken to run the Conservation Area boundary the full length of the domestic gardens down to the edge of the drainage channel which circumvents the village and eventually ends up in the River Rother. Perversely, the dwelling known as "Three Oaks" appears to have been intentionally excluded from the Conservation Area as a late 1960's/early 1970's rather futuristic single storey dwelling house with a clear attempt of utilising a thermally efficient design given the southern orientation on relatively high ground. This dwelling is worthy of Conservation Area protection.</p> <p>Lastly, on the eastern side of the village cricket ground, the present boundary is rather bizarrely drawn, possibly linking up with a series of Oak Trees in the small areas of paddock/agricultural land, the protection of which was considered desirable at the time of designation. As this area adds to the rural setting of the heart of the village and emphasises the strong connection with agriculture, a more logical boundary is desirable and this is shown on Plan 9.</p>
Potential Article 4 Directions	<p>Removal of Schedule 2, Class 31, Paragraph B rights within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 for the demolition of boundary walls/means of enclosure via the making of a "local" Article 4 Direction.</p>
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The wharf area/Bourne's Yard could feasibly be the subject of a Local Plan Policy identifying broad encouragement of sympathetic re-development which would retain this site in employment use though achieve the removal of twentieth century utilitarian agricultural buildings. Buildings of character at the site and on the road frontage close to Newenden Bridge would need to be retained. See Plan 6 and the site marked "A". 2. A policy seeking to protect the public semi-formal open space at the cricket ground on the southern side of the junction of Lossenham Lane and the A28 Rye Road. See Plan 6 and site marked "B".

Potential improvement schemes	<p>The only potential improvement that comes to mind is in relation to the northern boundary of the cricket pitch where there is at present no clear demarcation with the highway verge and the carriageway of Lossenham Lane. This area has developed into a casual car parking area which is starting to erode the demarcation between the amenity land and the highway. The extent of the parking problem is not known though it may be that further consideration has to be given to a sympathetic car parking scheme along this boundary in consultation with the Parish Council and local residents.</p>
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