



Conservation Area Assessment

Smarden

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.

SMARDEN CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

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

The core of the Conservation Area is The Street which has a strong sense of enclosure at the western end by the junctions with Cage Lane and Water Lane. The form of both these lanes with their sharp 90° bends is distinctive feature of the village. The approach into Smarden along Water Lane from Bell Lane has a number of distinctive features of importance, in particular the view of the Cloth Hall, Hartnup House and Gilletts Farm Oast in relation to the Church. Approaching along Cage Lane there is a distinct boundary between the area lying further to the south-west and the village which is marked by the Town bridge.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	There are no marked topographical features, but there are a number of subtle changes in level which are of importance, eg. as in Water Lane.
archaeological significance and potential of the area	Parts of the Conservation Area do have archaeological significance.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	<p>A number of distinct areas can be identified within the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The area immediately around the Cage Lane/Water Lane/The Street junction by the entry to the Church. This has a particularly enclosed character with development shutting off views to the north and south with there being a view back along The Street. 2. The Water Lane area has a distinct character as does the Cage Lane area. 3. Moving eastwards along The Street there is again a change in character in the area beyond Vesper Lane created by The Minnis and the mainly Victorian development lying along the southern side of The Street.
the use of distinctive and traditional building materials	<p>There is a variety of building materials within the Conservation Area. In terms of roof tiles, peg tiles predominate. There is a mixture of red brick, some notable half timbered buildings, in particular the Cloth Hall and Dragon House together with white weatherboarded buildings, a prime example being the Chequers Public House.</p>
the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area	<p>Trees and hedges have a subtle effect of softening the character of the Conservation Area. The main open spaces are The Minnis with important trees lying along its north-western boundary. The track that leads to the fields behind is also significantly treed. The garden of Gilletts which in its entirety is an important open space, the trees on The Street frontage are of particular importance as a softening feature. The open space immediately to the east of the Town bridge forms an important part of the entry into Smarden. The area to the rear of the Telephone Exchange in Water Lane while not having the visual significance of a formal open space is in itself an important open area as it forms part of the ambience of Hartnup House and the Cloth Hall and Gilletts Farm Oast. It is important that this area remain open. Part of the setting of Cloth Hall and Hartnup House are their extensive gardens. There is important planting around Gilletts Farm Oast and along the boundaries of the aforementioned properties.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<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 predominant use within the Conservation Area is for residential purposes. While some dwellings have been created through the conversion of former shops, this is not immediately evident.</p>
<p>historical evolution</p>	<p>The heart of the village centres upon the Church Gates area at the western end of The Street. Outlying from this there are important buildings such as the Cloth Hall and Hartnup House. The village extended eastwards largely in Victorian times.</p>
<p>the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside</p>	<p>The principal relationship is in the area of The Minnis with its backdrop of trees leading to open countryside. Similarly in Vesper Lane and the area of Long Wait and Vesper Close there is a distinct relationship at this point. An important part of the approach from Smarden Bell is the open field lying on the western side of Water Lane at this point. Similarly the open areas lying to the west of the river on either side of Cage Lane form an important part of the approach into Smarden at this point.</p>
<p>the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area</p>	<p>None.</p>

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
<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>The garage building by Perrin House is visually incongruous with its assorted vehicles. Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of this site. Opposite there is the former woodworking premises which are currently vacant. This site has a limited impact on the main street frontage. There may become a point where there is pressure for redevelopment on this site.</p>
<p>the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area</p>	<p>The area of Beult Meadow in itself can be viewed as a neutral area and the area to the south-west of Vesper Lane by the entrance to the former timber yard and Long Wait again has a limited impact upon the present Conservation Area.</p>
<p>the existence of any threats to the area</p>	<p>A principal threat to the area from traffic which has resulted in damage to buildings by the Church Gate has been eliminated to a large extent through Traffic Orders. There has been pressure for a dwelling on the site by the Telephone Exchange. A proposal for two dwellings in the grounds of Gilletts was refused, while an appeal was submitted this did not proceed.</p>

OUTCOMES

Area boundary	It is proposed that the boundary of the Conservation Area should be amended to include the whole of the grounds of Gilletts, at present the boundary is somewhat illogical running across the site and immediately to the rear of the building. The area should also be extended to take account of Gilletts Manor, a converted barn lying to the north-west. The boundary so revised would encompass the whole of this part of the village as it stood in Victorian times. It is also proposed to extend the Conservation Area to encompass the whole of the open area that forms part of the curtilage of Cloth Hall and Hartnup House in the area between the road leading to the burial ground and the sewage works and the river.
Potential Article 4 Directions	None.
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	None.
Potential improvement schemes	None.

Officer:

Date: 7 November 1995