



## **Conservation Area Assessment**

### **Biddenden**

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.

## BIDDENDEN CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

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

The central focus of the Biddenden Conservation Area is the High Street with the Grade I Listed Buildings lying on the southern side associated with this there is the Church together with Kent House which was the former Rectory. Hendon Hall and Biddenden Place are two country gentlemen's residences set in their own grounds lying to the south of the High Street. To the north of the High Street there is the Cloth Hall which is a notable building which was former Weavers Cottages. North Street runs towards Headcorn and includes a small group of Listed Buildings at the northern end of the current Conservation Area. There are areas that have been infilled in the 1940s and 1960s at The Weavers and Townland Close.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	The area can be seen to have two main elements. The Tenterden Road/North Street axis with a second axis along the High Street leading down to the Church. In topographical terms the principal change in topography is in the area to the rear of Hendon Hall through to the Church where the land slopes away down to a stream.
archaeological significance and potential of the area	There are areas of archaeological significance.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	<p>A number of distinct areas can be identified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The area around the Church with associated open land to the south.</li> <li>2. The area of the High Street with its intensive development along each side of the street with visual closure to the east by the development lying to the north of Biddenden Place.</li> <li>3. The gentlemen's country houses formed by Hendon Hall and Biddenden Place and their associated areas of open space.</li> <li>4. The linear extension of the core area of the village along North Street with earlier development punctuated with much later development.</li> </ol>
the use of distinctive and traditional building materials	The predominant building materials within the Conservation Area are tending towards red brick and plain tile with some half timbering.
the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area	<p>The area of fields and a playing field lying to the south of the Church form an integral part of the setting of this approach into the village. Hendon Hall and Biddenden Place have significant areas of open space around them. Attempts to develop areas within Hendon Hall have been successfully resisted. Similarly an integral part of the character of Biddenden Place and significant grounds around it. Hedges and trees around Biddenden Place are a significant feature. Hendon Hall is particularly marked by the significant wall which is listed. The space around Kent House is an important part of the setting of that building and this has been successfully defended in the past. The planting around Cloth Hall is a significant part of its present setting. The area to the rear of Lilac House and 25 North Street forms an important open area in terms of providing a backdrop to these buildings and also a buffer between the development fronting North Street and Spinners Close. This is of particular importance given that this area has been opened up through the development of the former North Mansion House Garage site and the area lying to the rear.</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 land use within the present Conservation Area is residential. There is a shopping/restaurant area within the High Street together with a fruit distribution warehouse lying at the eastern side of North Street.</p>
<p>historical evolution</p>	<p>The heart of the earliest part of the village is centred on the High Street. Subsequently the two gentlemen's houses lying to the south were erected and the major alterations to the form of the village occurred firstly in the late 1940s with the erection of The Weavers and the Meadows estate. Subsequently in the 60s the erection of the Glebelands and Townland Close materially altered the form of the village again. In terms of the present Conservation Area the main impact of this was the erection of dwellings lying along the eastern side of North Street.</p>
<p>the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside</p>	<p>The strongest relationship between the area of the Conservation Area and open countryside is the area to the south of the Church. This approach along Sissinghurst Road is marked by this open space. There is little relationship within the main core of the High Street. In the Tenterden Road approach to the village there is a marked boundary by the Malt House across through Mill Field and The Fairings along the well treed boundary which forms a distinct boundary between this area and open countryside. There are very limited or no relationships through the North Street frontages. It is only further north to the north of the Police house that the countryside becomes a significant factor again.</p>
<p>the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area</p>	<p>This is very limited.</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>There are no significant features that detract from the special character of the area. The timber buildings within the John Mayne CP Primary School are in a prominent visual position and do not enhance the Conservation Area.</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 the village car park and public toilets is a neutral area as is the frontage of The Weavers and Townland Close. In built form terms these areas do have a significance in that they do provide some enclosure and the green areas to the front are pleasant. The fruit wholesale business at the northern end of North Street is of longstanding and has little effect.</p>
<p>the existence of any threats to the area</p>	<p>The possibility of development within the grounds of Biddenden Place and in the area to the rear of Lilac House.</p>

## OUTCOMES

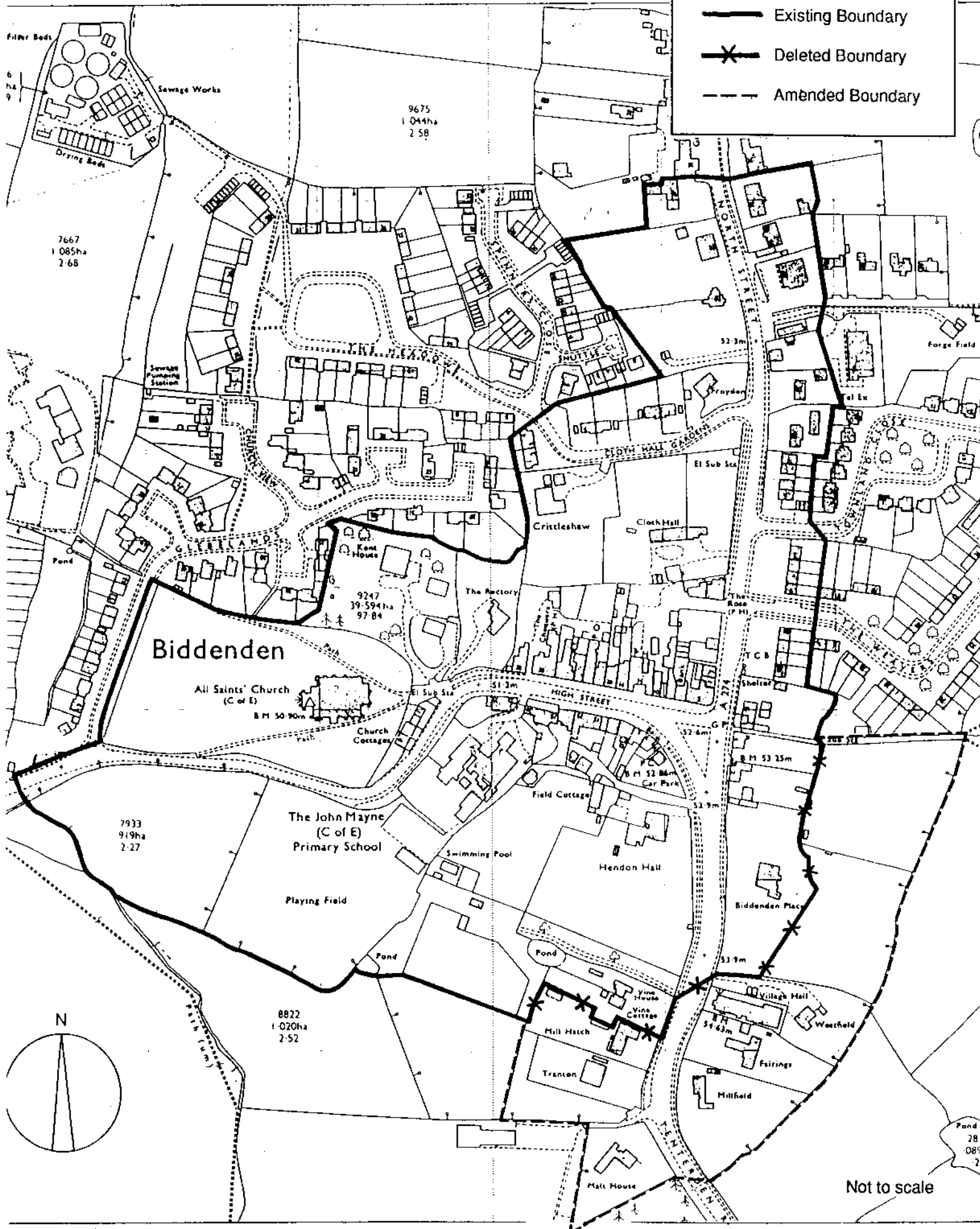
Area boundary	The present boundary follows an arbitrary line through the grounds of Biddenden Place and this with advantage could be extended to include the whole of the open area around Biddenden Place. In the approach on the Tenterden Road the entry to the village is very marked, there being a distinct boundary between open countryside and the village entry at Malt House and the area bounded by Mill Hatch, the village hall, Mill Field and Malt House should be included as an extension.
Potential Article 4 Directions	None proposed.
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	None.
Potential improvement schemes	None.

Officer:

Date: 7 November 1995

# BIDDENDEN CONSERVATION AREA

- Existing Boundary
- Deleted Boundary
- Amended Boundary



Not to scale