

# **Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy**

## **Appendix 1: Theme 13 Conservation Areas**

**PROJECT:** Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy  
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# Appendix 1, Theme 13 – Conservation Areas

## Summary

**13.1** There are 21 Conservation Areas in Folkestone & Hythe District which were designated between 1969 and 1990. They include the historically important former Cinque Ports of Hythe and New Romney and their limbs of Lydd and Old Romney; the important former channel port and fashionable seaside town of Folkestone and its neighbour Sandgate; coastal settlements, villages of the Romney Marshes and the North Downs; as well as the unique and nationally significant coastal landscape and settlement at Dungeness. This nationally significant collection of heritage assets includes within its archaeology and built heritage evidence that can contribute to a better understanding of the development of early ports and their demise due to landscape change, the transformation of the Romney Marshes into a nationally significant centre for sheep farming, the rise of smuggling in the 18th and 19th centuries and aspects of many of the other themes covered in this heritage strategy. The assets have considerable aesthetic value and are highly valued by their communities and visitors to the area.

## Introduction

**13.2** Since 1967 local authorities have been able to protect areas through the designation of Conservation Areas. Conservation Areas are designated where a place is value for its special historic or architectural interest, and where it is desirable to preserve or enhance the character and appearance. Owners or users of a property in a Conservation Area require permission to carry out certain types of alterations to that property, to demolish or substantially demolish a building and to notify their intention to cut down or prune trees in the area. To preserve the special interest of a Conservation Area it is possible to remove the permitted development rights on small scale development and alterations within a Conservation Area through the application of Article 4 and in particular Article 4(2) Directions.

### ***Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation Areas***

**13.3** Folkestone & Hythe District has 21 designated Conservation Areas dispersed across the District with 11 located in the Romney Marsh and Dungeness, 6 amongst the North Down's villages and hamlets, and 4 concentrated on the major towns and settlement areas of Folkestone, Hythe and Sandgate.

**13.4** In character the Conservation Areas principally concentrate on the historic cores of the District's settlements, many are villages or coastal settlements. Those in the historic towns such as Folkestone and Hythe are subdivided into specific character areas reflecting the complexity of the Conservation Area or as in Sandgate, New Romney and Dymchurch have split areas reflecting the separation of locations of special interest and character. In places the Conservation Areas are not solely focused on the historic settlement cores, for example Saltwood Conservation Area includes the medieval castle and a grange, Dungeness is designated for its landscape and natural value as well as its distinctive settlement and coastal heritage assets, the Hythe Conservation Area extends to take in part of the Royal Military Canal and Sandgate its defences and esplanade.

**13.5** The earliest designation of a Conservation Area in Folkestone & Hythe District is that of Hythe in November 1969. Another 17 were designated in the next five years. Dungeness was added in 1985 and the last two at Littlestone and Frogholt in 1990. The following table illustrates the number of Conservation Areas by year of their designation.

<b>Conservation Areas by Year of Designation</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of CA designations</b>
1969	1
1970	1
1971	5
1972	3
1973	6
1974	2
1985	1
1990	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

**Written Guidance & Management**

**13.6** Compared to many other Local Authorities Folkestone & Hythe District has performed well in reviewing its Conservation Areas and completing Conservation Area Appraisals that explain the special interest, condition and vulnerabilities of the Designated Area. Since their original designation 10 of the Conservation Areas have been amended, seven of which as a result of a programme of Conservation Area Appraisal published in 2008 and 2009.

**13.7** Conservation Area Appraisals are an important part of understanding and explaining the special interest and aspects of a Conservation Area, its assets, condition and vulnerabilities. Without an appraisal it is difficult to make informed decisions that will better protect and identify opportunities for enhancement of Conservation Areas. A focused effort on Conservation Area Appraisal in 2008 to 2009 has resulted in appraisals being available for 14 of the District's Conservation Areas.

**13.8** At present 7 Appraisals have been adopted covering 8 Conservation Areas, 4 more (covering 5 CAs) have been drafted and been to public consultation (at Feb 2018) and an appraisal covering the Old Town Character Areas of the Folkestone Conservation Area is also available. Additional protection has been afforded to the Dungeness Conservation Area through an Article 4(2) Direction.

**13.9** Despite this a third of the Conservation Areas and several of Folkestone's Character Areas do not have information to inform their appropriate management.

**13.10** Table 13.2 below lists the District's Conservation Areas by date of designation and identifies those with Conservation Area Appraisals.

**13.11** Folkestone & Hythe District Council have included on their website, . <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/downloads/file/1428/eb-1115c-defence-heritage---napoleonic-v03-consultation-draft>, some basic introductory information

for those who want to undertake development or other works in a Conservation Area and also provide an interactive map to identify if their property lies in one, Copies of adopted and in-draft Conservation Area Appraisals can also be found on the website.

Conservation Area	Designated	Last Amended	Conservation Area Appraisal	Type	Comment
Hythe	14/11/69	8/5/08	Adopted	Historic Town & Military Canal	
Elham	13/11/70	27/11/08	Adopted	Historic Town	
New Romney Cannon Street	5/2/71		Draft Combined	Historic Town	
New Romney High Street	5/2/71	7/4/93	Draft Combined	Historic Town	
Lympne	12/3/71		Draft	Village	
Dymchurch Church Area	3/12/71			Historic Settlement	
Dymchurch High Street	3/12/71			Historic Settlement	
Folkestone, Leas and Bayle	28/1/72	8/11/05	Old Town Character Area only	Historic Town	
Sandgate Esplanade	15/9/72	14/10/09	Adopted Combined	Seaside Settlement	
Sandgate High Street	15/9/72	14/10/09	Adopted Combined	Historic Town & Military Defences	
Postling	13/3/73	28/5/09	Adopted	Hamlet	
Etchinghill	20/7/73		Draft	Village	
Lydd	20/7/73			Historic Town	
Newchurch	7/9/73			Village	
Old Romney	7/9/73			Farm, Church	
Brooklands	2/11/73			Village	
Newington	25/1/74	5/1/95	Draft	Village	
Saltwood	14/8/74	22/5/08	Adopted	Village & Castle	
Dungeness	26/6/85	11/8/08	Adopted	Coastal Landscape & Settlement	Article 4 Direction
Littlestone	17/4/90			Seaside Settlement	
Frogholt	29/8/90		Adopted	Hamlet & Setting	

**13.12** Historic England have provided advice and guidance on the designation, appraisal and management of Conservation Areas<sup>1</sup> to assist local authorities, those involved in planning and development, property owners and other interested parties. The advice is in accordance with the NPPF and emphasises (para 2) that:

- work in designating, appraising and managing conservation areas should be no more than is necessary and that designation is justified;
- that activities to conserve and invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected and the impact on that significance;
- that those carrying out such work need enough information to understand the issues;

**13.13** The note also advises that:

- historic areas make a positive contribution to our quality of life;
- local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits;
- change is inevitable but not necessarily harmful and often beneficial;
- owners of residential properties in Conservation Areas generally consider controls that they bring to be beneficial because they help to sustain and/or enhance the value of their property. Research by Historic England suggests that this premium is on average 9%<sup>2</sup>.

**13.14** Conservation Area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties which include (para7) :

- the requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and / or enhance;
- local planning policies which pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area;
- control over demolition of unlisted buildings;
- control over works to trees;
- fewer types of advertisements which can be displayed with deemed consent;
- restriction on the types of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission (permitted development rights).

**13.15** Historic England sets out the ways in which Conservation Areas and their significance may be identified through historic characterisation studies, master-planning and through evidence collection for the local development plan. Also through local communities working on neighbourhood plans who identify areas which have a special interest to them. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF cautions local authorities to ensure that an area justifies designation as a Conservation Area because of its special architectural or historic interest so that the concept of conservation is not devalued through designation of areas that lack special interest. Regular reviews are needed to highlight areas that may be degrading to the point where the special interest is lost and de-designation warranted.

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<sup>1</sup>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016)

<sup>2</sup> Ahlfeldt, Holman & Wendland , 2012, An Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Areas on Value - LSE for English Heritage.

**13.16** While designation can assist in control over development and alteration in a Conservation Area, it will not protect an area from incremental or gradual change which can erode its character. Where appraisals have not been reviewed for some time the special interest of an area may have changed or been diluted.

**13.17** As can be seen from Table 13.2 above 85% of Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation Areas were designated more than 40 years ago. The documentation that explains the special interest and the basis upon which the majority of these early Conservation Areas were designated is not readily available and indeed may not survive. While two thirds of the Conservation Areas now have some level of appraisal there are those that have not been assessed through an appraisal and even where there are those that have been appraised these are now approaching a decade since appraisal.

**13.18** While the limited resources available to Local Authorities will inevitably lead to increasing pressure on their ability to assess and monitor Conservation Area, the potential for local community and interest groups to become involved in and support the process is recognised. Historic England have funded the development of toolkits to assist groups of local residents to evaluate the heritage in their area. This has been taken forward in a number of areas including the adjacent Dover District where local interest groups with the support of the Council have surveyed and drafted Appraisals for a number of Conservation Areas.

**13.19** Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas ) Act 1990 places on local planning authorities the duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas. Appraisals that identify opportunities and threats can be developed into Management Plans. Such management plans can be specific to a Conservation Area or can be generic plans that are supported by specific local planning policy.

**13.20** Whilst some Conservation Areas will experience the constant pressure of change and require considerable management others will experience minimal change and require only limited management to secure the special interest of the area. Without access to information and guidance, active monitoring and management plans in place an area is likely to be subject to change through poorly considered alterations, especially to building facades and boundaries, which make a significant contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

### ***Protection of Heritage Assets within the Conservation Areas***

**13.21** Conservation Area designation provides a level of protection for most heritage assets within its boundary and setting, there are a number of heritage assets with the Areas that are also afforded additional protection through their own designation. A review of the 21 Conservation Areas has identified that Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and locally identified Historic Parks and Gardens are also to be found within them.

**13.22** A total of 523 Listed Buildings lie within Conservation Areas within Folkestone & Hythe District, 57% of the 913 in the District. Every Conservation Area contains at



least one Listed Building. The largest numbers are found within Hythe (101), Folkestone Leas and Bayle (96) and Sandgate High Street (72). The smaller towns of Elham, New Romney and Lydd also have substantial numbers within their Conservation Areas. The presence of such significant numbers of Listed Buildings at Hythe and Elham was likely to have been a prime motivation to their relatively early designation in 1969 and 1970. A number of the Conservation Areas have limited numbers of Listed Buildings, Littlestone for example has a single Listed former Water Tower while the District's largest Conservation Area at Dungeness includes only 4 Listed Buildings. The motivation for the designation of these areas lies in wider qualities than their Listed Buildings although in both cases the built heritage plays a significant part.

**13.23** The Conservation Areas contain numerous other historic buildings and structures which are important in their own right and which contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area. For example, the built heritage of Dungeness plays a major role in the unique character of the area. It is important that built heritage assets that are positive contributors to Conservation Areas are recognised for their contribution and identified in Conservation Area Appraisals. Additional safeguards could include inclusion on a Local List of heritage assets.

**13.24** All of the Conservation Areas are likely to contain significant archaeological remains. Archaeological remains, whether above ground structures, earthworks or buried deposits, often contribute directly to sense of place as well as representing a potential source for research, interpretation and education (para 53 HE Advice Note 1). Four of the Conservation Areas include areas of archaeology protected as Scheduled Monuments. Of the 7 Scheduled Monuments within Conservation Areas, three lie in Sandgate High Street Conservation Area, being Martello Towers 5 and 6 and Sandgate Castle. Hythe has two sections of the Royal Military Canal, Saltwood includes Saltwood Castle and New Romney High Street Conservation Area includes Romney Priory. Additional Scheduled Martellos lie adjacent or close to the Conservation Areas at Sandgate and Dymchurch.

**13.25** Undesignated archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, medieval and later date are likely to lie in many of the Conservation Areas. Furthermore, archaeological remains associated with the special interest of the Conservation Areas are also likely to be present. For example, remains associated with the development of the historic towns and villages and the people who lived, worked and visited there; the remains of landscape features within the rural elements of Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation Areas; and remains of the castles, defences and churches in those specific areas where these are significant features. Understanding the archaeology of a Conservation Area and its surroundings is an important part of understanding the areas significance and can inform the justification for boundary changes. A number of the Conservation Areas have important archaeological remains close by which should be considered in future appraisal. For example, the Redoubt and coastguard housing at Dungeness lies outside its Conservation Area but is an important heritage asset afforded no designation protection.

**13.26** Five of the Conservation Areas include six locally recognised Historic Parks and Gardens. Two HPGs can be found at Lydd, Beehives and Vine House. The Vine House HPG extends outside the Conservation Area suggesting that the boundary in

that area should be examined in more detail. Folkestone includes The Leas, a significant component of its Conservation Area. It is interesting to note that the HPG boundary recorded in the Kent Gardens Compendium extends out of the Conservation Area and immediately north of the Sandgate Conservation Area. Similarly, the Conservation Area at Saltwood includes the HPG identified for the grounds of the castle which extends outside of the Conservation Area Boundary. Again, examination of the boundaries to these Conservation Areas may be warranted in future appraisal. The remaining two HPGs within Conservation Areas are the South Road Recreation Ground in Hythe and the Prospect Cottage in Dungeness.

## Description of the Heritage Assets

**13.27** Within the resources available it has not been possible to complete a thorough appraisal or assessment of the special interest, condition, vulnerabilities and opportunities for enhancement of each of the Conservation Areas. The compilation of this theme paper on Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation Areas has relied on desk-based research using as a principle source the fourteen published appraisals to understand the common characteristics and issues. The study has not included systematic field visits to each area though a number have been visited during the compilation of the wider heritage strategy and issues have been raised through the project's extensive stakeholder consultation. A summary of each of the Conservation Areas and their issues as described in the published appraisals is set out below. It should be noted that the description and issues are presented as found at the time of writing and that aspects may have developed in the decade since the appraisals were researched.

### Dungeness Conservation Area

**13.28** Dungeness was designated in 1985, reviewed in 1989 and its first Conservation Area appraisal adopted in 2008. As well as its Conservation Area designation it is also afforded protection through being a Special Landscape Area, Undeveloped Coast and a National Nature Reserve. The Conservation Area has additional protection through the inclusion of an Article 4 Direction to restrict householder development without planning permission as well as the erection of gates, fences, walls and other means of enclosure to ensure the open character is conserved. A guidance leaflet that includes design advice is available to assist those seeking to alter their properties in the Conservation Area.

**13.29** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>3</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"Dungeness is a unique combination of stark, open, coastal landform, the world's largest expanse of shingle, a protected nature reserve of some 8000 acres and of course a large and varied collection of characteristic 'beach house' type buildings. Superficially, few of these buildings - nearly all of them houses - have intrinsic architectural interest in a conventional sense. Instead they endow this natural canvas with the physical manifestations of 'individualists' escaping the torments of the outside 'civilised' world,' a quirky, sometimes charming evocation of eccentric, independent ideas, and healthy disrespect for authority.*

*The small, often fragile, transient-looking buildings represent a singular response to the social and economic forces of a short period in the early C20. They are the reason for Dungeness being a CA, which would otherwise be unnecessary and inappropriate for the protection of the natural environment. The special interest is thus made up of this unique combination of natural and built environment, the latter being a particularly interesting expression of a historically significant socio-economic movement."*

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<sup>3</sup> Conservation, Architecture & Planning 2006, *Dungeness Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

**13.30** The openness of the landscape of this Conservation Area is broken only by the landmarks of the two Listed lighthouses and the backdrop of the nuclear power stations. The Conservation Area designation is focused on the settlement of former beach huts and fisherman's dwellings, originally designed for very short term lets and which grew in an undesignated way. One of the huts, Prospect Cottage has association with the late film producer Derek Jarman who created a garden there in 1989 which is part of the tourist interest of the play. The area is a strong draw to visitors with access facilitated through the presence of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. The incorporation of the RNSS terrace was considered in the appraisal but rejected on the grounds that incorporation would bring in a large area of marshland. The presence of the earthwork redoubt is not mentioned.

**13.31** The character of the Conservation Area is particularly fragile even to small and incremental change. The nature of the former huts makes them very small for modern living and there are pressures to extend and bring up in terms of design. Such changes are likely to affect the character of the area and what makes it special. Visitor numbers to the area is another pressure that requires careful management. The remoteness of the area can be affected by the numbers visiting, littering and damage to the landscape and property and trespass on to the unenclosed private property of the Dungeness residents.

### **Elham Conservation Area**

**13.32** In 1970, the village of Elham, a former small market town nestled in a valley in the North Kent Downs became Folkestone & Hythe District's second Conservation Area designation. A Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2008.

**13.33** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>4</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"For much of its history, Elham was a small market town; although its status has declined to that of a large village, this has tended to preserve rather than to erode its character, and it retains many of the fine buildings of its late medieval and Tudor heyday, including the large Transitional church of St Mary and a number of fine timber-framed houses of the C15th, C16th and C17th. Its layout also preserves a touch of its former urbanity, notably in the two closely built-up former market places at the bottom of the High Street and in the (surprisingly formal) Square. There are some 43 listed buildings within the village (52 counting the nine listed C18th grave-markers), making it one of the most historically interesting – and picturesque – villages in east Kent."*

**13.34** The CAA takes note of the archaeology and historic development of the settlement from Saxon times. It was granted market rights in the 13th century and developed into a small market town and remained so until the 18th century. Elham almost doubled in size since the Second World War with the introduction of the car and access to the nearby motorways providing an impetus for new estates. Thanks to its status as a former market town the town has retained a formal arrangement that is legible today especially with the number of open spaces within its core. Building types include a proliferation of old inns around its former market areas, a number of former industrial buildings, the 12th century church of St Mary the Virgin and

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<sup>4</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Elham Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

vernacular jettied buildings. The majority of Elham's pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings are listed. There are exceptions including the Methodist Church built in 1839.

**13.35** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- unsympathetic alteration, especially to unlisted buildings. Re-fenestration of houses around the square is highlighted;
- poor-quality new development has been particularly damaging. The appraisal notes that "the late 20th century has made some outstandingly Philistine contributions to Elham's villagescape" and highlights the infilling of gaps between traditional buildings on street frontage, the set back of inappropriate scaled buildings and utilitarian sheds surrounded by parking lots. The setting of the CA is affected by poor reproductions of the vernacular just outside its bounds.
- UPVC windows have disfigured buildings;
- the relationship of the village with its landscape is significant to its character and this has been eroded with suburban growth.
- Elham's popularity with visitors causes parking pressure in its open spaces undermining the special qualities of the area at busy times.

### **Frogholt Conservation Area**

**13.37** Frogholt is the most recent of the District's Conservation Areas, designated in 1990. A Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2008.

**13.38** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>5</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"Set in the Parish of Newington, Frogholt is a tiny settlement of 8 dwellings situated close to the North Downs in south east Kent. Located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) it is largely unchanged since the C18th and maintains a distinct identity and sense of place, even with it's close proximity to the M20 and Folkestone Eurotunnel Terminal."*

**13.39** The CAA describes the historic development of this small hamlet grouped on a single probably pre-Conquest lane on the historic route between Ashford and Folkestone. The hamlet has been little affected in form since the 18th century when it comprised a group of small farmsteads focused on a mill and the Seabrook stream. It enjoys a backdrop of the North Downs, although since the 1980s has been affected by the proximity of the Channel Tunnel development and infrastructure. Four of its eight dwellings are Listed, the earliest being the 14th Century hall house Old Kent Cottage and the remainder dating up to the 18th Century. The hamlet's unlisted buildings, even those developed in the 20th century make a make a positive contribution to the sense of place with their rural vernacular architectural style.

**13.40** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- The presence of the M20 and Channel Tunnel infrastructure, though well mitigated visually has affected the CA through the introduction of noise.

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<sup>5</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Frogholt Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

## Hythe Conservation Area

**13.41** On the 14th November 1969, the Hythe Conservation Area became the first such designation in Folkestone & Hythe District. The Conservation Area was reviewed and extended in 1992 and then again in 20018 following adoption of a Conservation Area Appraisal. The original 1969 Conservation Area focused on the medieval town core with Oaklands, the Royal Military Canal and the South Road Recreation Ground added in 1992.

**13.42** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>6</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"The town's 1000 year evolution chronicles the survival of a town whose principal sources of livelihood were lost, testifying to the adaptability of its people. It first became a Cinque Port, with its associated privileges. When the harbour silted up, despite great effort to prevent it, seamen turned to fishing, smuggling and marine salvage.*

*In the C19 and early C20 Hythe was a military town, with The School of Musketry and three forts at the western fringes. The famous Mackeson Brewery (redeveloped 1981), which operated from 1801 to 1968, was built on Military Road. 1992 extension to the Conservation Area*

*Hythe had some success as a seaside resort and has avoided the air of decline seen in similar places along the coast. Through earthquake, fire and plague, Hythe remains a thriving town.*

*The picturesque setting, sheltered by the North Downs, quickly rises from sea level to 50m, overlooking the English Channel. North Road follows the line of a Roman road. The Saxon church of St Leonard's, set up high and overlooking the town, dates from 1080. Around it, medieval streets and tenement plots were laid out.*

*The dominant axis of the medieval layout is east west, with north-south interconnecting passages leading to the harbour area south of the High Street. The medieval town is bounded to the south by Prospect Road, Rampart Road and the early 19th Century Royal Military Canal, and it is this layout that sets the historic pattern of development which dominates today. Most street names and many of the medieval ragstone walls survive. Streets in the medieval town are narrow with no pavements, but any conflict between cars and pedestrians is minimised by the inherent traffic calming effect.*

*The medieval stone walls are all listed with many still intact and up to three meters high. These walls form a prime characteristic of the area and act as boundaries to the town's historic tenement plot layout.*

*The former harbour is now developed and offers a mix of housing, recreation and the remains of its important military history.*

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<sup>6</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Etchinghill Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

*Hythe's military history is associated with the Royal Military Canal, now a Scheduled Monument. It was constructed between 1803 and 1809 and formed part of the Martello Tower defensive system against Napoleonic invasion. The canal is twenty-eight miles long and runs from Sandgate in the north to Pett Level, near Rye to the south west. The canal remains important in the management of irrigation and drainage of Romney Marsh and management of the outflow to the sea of the Seabrook Stream, Brockhill Stream and Mill Leese.*

*The High Street is used mainly by local traders. Ancient passages to the sea, Sun Lane, Marine Walk Street, Theatre Street and Mount Street are still used, and most building widths conform to historical plot divisions. Buildings occupying several plots are still divided into similar bay sizes, maintaining rhythm and historical reference. The High Street is narrow, with buildings on the south side receiving little sun and in turn shading ground floors on the north side.*

*Traditional walling materials are local brick, stone and some stucco facing, with slate or clay tiled roofs. There are some white painted shiplap buildings within the area. Because these characteristics linking with the medieval past are of primary significance, any future development must respect the scale, grain, ancient plot divisions and use local materials.*

*The hillside is well covered by mature indigenous trees, holm oak, yew, lime, oak, and interspersed with hawthorn hedges. The principal views of the CA are from the South Road Recreation Ground and from the top of Church Hill at the junction with North Road. These illustrate the green landscape and are dominated by St Leonard's Church."*

**13.43** The CAA describes the historic development of Hythe. The earliest focus of harbour and settlement in the area was that established by the Romans at Lympe to the west (*Portus Lemanis*). As the River Limen gradually silted the focus shifted eastward to West Hythe and eventually to Hythe. Hythe is first recorded in a charter of 1036 and by 1086 was recorded as a borough with a probable population of between 900 and 1200 people. It must have had a substantial harbour and fishing fleet at this time and was prior to the Norman invasion been providing the king with ship service to help defend the coast. The Grade 1 parish Church of St Leonards, the oldest surviving building in Hythe dates to this time. Another early building dating to 1007, St Bartholomew's Hospital survives and has been converted to houses since the war. In 1155 Henry II confirmed the borough status of Hythe with the privileges of the Cinque Ports, one of the five head members, a role that increased its importance and prosperity.

**13.44** From the great storm of 1287 the silting of the harbour hampered the port considerably and by the Tudor period, despite many attempts to clear it, the harbour could only be accessed by smaller vessels. Following a final unsuccessful attempt in 1676, an earth bank known as Sir William's Wall was constructed to keep back the sea. With the beach now more than a kilometre distant, the town continued its maritime links with ships unloading at The Stade, the principle occupation being fishing. The town's populace also suffered badly during the 14th and 15th centuries

through two large fires which destroyed many of the town's dwellings, the effects of the Black Death and the loss of 100 lives at sea.

**13.45** The town was granted a Royal Charter by Elizabeth I. From the 16th century the Deedes family became prominent in the town, they helped the rebuilding of the tower of St Leonards in 1750 and erected a manor house opposite the church. With the further demise of the town from the 16th century, smuggling and salvaging of wreck became associated activities with the town in the late 18th century and through the French wars. The threat of Napoleonic invasion gave Hythe a strategic significance that was reflected in the construction of the Royal Military Canal and the Martello Towers. The canal became an important asset to the town and its surroundings. As well as its defensive role it assisted drainage and irrigation of the nearby marshes and farmland and in 1810 was opened for general trade and navigation. Later it was used for recreation including the Venetian Fete in the late 19th century. Hythe continued to maintain a military link with the development of nearby ranges and the Military School of Musketry in 1853. In the Second World War the population of the town was evacuated, and the area bombed and shelled. Hythe also was prominent as a seaside town from the late 18th century, a role accelerated with the opening of the railway in 1874.

**13.46** The town's form developed as a grid pattern on and at the base of the scarp slope of the North Downs. Three, possibly four east to west aligned streets followed the contours and were connected by numerous passages that rose from the beach to the hillside above the town. St Leonards Church as today occupied a dominant position above the town. The market place was located in the High Street and the harbour to the south. Hythe changed little until the end of the 18th century when it became a sea-bathing resort and military town. New buildings replaced old ones and gaps filled in, barrack blocks and defences were built. Ribbon developments extended out from the core town as the population doubled. By the late 19th century the expansion was continuing in all directions. Historic maps and Historic Town Survey published by Kent County Council in 2006 document this expansion.

**13.47** Four character areas were identified and described in the CAA:

1. The medieval core
2. 18th and 19th Century development around the medieval core
3. The High Street
4. Open Spaces

**13.48** Further character areas 5 and 6 have been described to cover 20th and 21st century development that is in the CA and its setting.

**13.49** Most of Hythe's medieval buildings were destroyed by the fires in the 14th and 15th centuries so surviving structures are particularly important. Other than St Leonard's Church and the former hospital now houses known as Centuries the Conservation Area includes several Listed medieval walls who provide a character of enclosure into the historic core and provide a visible indication of the appearance of the medieval town's lost buildings. The High Street has many Listed Buildings, with in places quality shop fronts hiding older buildings. Listed buildings of post medieval date can be found throughout the character areas. The Royal Military Canal



is a key feature in the southern area of the Conservation Area and is protected has Scheduled Monument protection.

**13.50** The CAA has highlighted a number of buildings that area of local merit and contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. A number within the High Street have been judged as warranting designation in their own right. It is noted that the later buildings are generally contiguous with and help to maintain the medieval street grid and tenement pattern, adding diversity and interest in places such as the High Street. Outside of the core unlisted buildings of note include St Michael's and All Angel's Church a 'tin tabernacle' built in 1893, a bandstand and Oaklands a Georgian building.

**13.51** Unsurprisingly with a diverse and wide Conservation Area like Hythe, a number of negative factors have been identified in the CAA and in several cases are repeated across the Character Areas. These include:

- In the historic core of the Conservation Area a number of buildings are in poor repair. The Manor House has been identified as one building that needs active conservation to prevent further deterioration. The multiple ownership of the property may be a contributing factor. The Mackeson Cistern has been identified as needing conservation.
- Stone walls are an important characteristic of the Conservation Area and help to provide a character of enclosure. Inappropriate boundary treatments such as fencing has been identified in several places both within the CA and in its setting. Walls that have been demolished in the High Street to assist vehicle access has degraded the Conservation Area.
- The realm of the vehicle has caused an impact on the character and setting of the Conservation Area. Street parking is a widespread problem and several, often featureless, car parks within and outside the CA have had both a negative visual effect and are also incongruous with the historic grain and pattern.
- Heavy traffic and its noise is an intrusion into parts of the Conservation Area.
- In places the tarmac road surfaces and road markings are inappropriate to the historic setting. Street furniture, signage, railings and features are in places out of place or need maintenance
- In areas backlands and yards are having a negative impact within the Conservation and its setting. The storage of waste bins on the street is also recognised as a negative factor.
- Shopfronts on the High Street range between those that are of excellent quality and contributing to character to those that are not. In places shop frontages extend across historic plots and feature inappropriate materials and features such as concrete and expanses of glazing. Shopfront guidance is seen as an appropriate response.
- Buildings in places have lost architectural detail or have been inappropriately altered. UPVC windows are a problem within the Conservation Area and its setting.
- There is visual clutter in the High Street despite good attempts to upgrade features. Overhead cables and CCTV cameras make a negative contribution.
- In areas around the medieval core there are examples where development has broken the scale and grain of the medieval layout. The area of Church

heights was particularly recognised as a problem and recommended for removal from the Conservation Area.

- Modern development around the Conservation Areas has been a mix of those areas where it has responded well to others which have not. The scale and form of new buildings in some cases has not been appropriate within the setting, facades have been identified as featureless, flat-roofed buildings break the form of the roofscape which is prominent from the high hillside areas of the Conservation Area.
- Maintenance of the landscaped areas of the Conservation area is needed, for example on the banks of the Royal Military Canal.

**13.52** An issue raised during stakeholder consultation and with the Council, and highlighted in the CAA, is the significant harmful effect that unsympathetic development outside but in the setting of the Conservation Area can have on its character. It is important that in developing a Management Plan for the Conservation Area that this aspect is recognised and managed effectively.

### **Postling Conservation Area**

**13.53** Postling was designated as a Conservation Area in 1973. A Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2009.

**13.54** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>7</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

"Postling is a small, rural farming hamlet located in south east Kent set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and situated on the southern edge of the North Downs" and "enjoys a secluded setting in a wide sweep of downland ."

**13.55** The CAA describes the historic development of this small hamlet having grown on one of the minor Pilgrim's Ways. With archaeological evidence in the vicinity back to prehistoric times, Postling has grown up around the Parish Church and Manor House. It notes that the overall form of the hamlet has little changed since the mapping of the late 18th century. In the late 19th and early 20th century the village had historical literary associations with Joseph Conrad who chose its seclusion (at Pent Farm located on the outskirts of the hamlet outside the CA) to write some of his greatest novels and was visited by HG Wells and Bernard Shaw. The architecture includes the Grade 1 Listed church dedicated to St Mary and St Radegund as well as a number of buildings that were formerly part of the manorial complex but now converted. A Listed K6 telephone kiosk, a fingerpost sign and a Victorian post box also make a positive contribution to the public realm in the Conservation Area. The CAA identifies a number of notable buildings that are not Listed that make a positive contribution to the CA. Suggestions for inclusion on a Local List are made.

**13.56** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- some uninspiring conversion of the old medieval barn;
- a 1970s village hall that is incongruous with its traditional neighbours;

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<sup>7</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Postling Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

- given its small size, even small-scale development around its fringes could have an impact on the character and setting of the CA and the surrounding AONB.

## **Saltwood Conservation Area**

**13.57** The Saltwood Conservation Area which includes Saltwood Castle, Grange Farm the village Green and Rectory Lane was originally designated in 1974. A Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2008 following an earlier appraisal in 1992.

**13.58** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>8</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*" 1 The historic links between the dominant built elements of Saltwood Castle and the church of St Peter and St Paul.  
2 The landscape and farmland which covers almost two thirds of the CA, which has changed little over a millennium."*

**13.59** The CAA describes the historic development of this Conservation Area. Saltwood, so named as it was an area that supplied wood for the salt working industry on the Romney Marshes in Saxon times. Following the Norman conquest Archbishop Lanfranc took possession of the manor. By Domesday it is possible that a ringwork castle was constructed, though it is first mentioned as a ringwork and bailey castle in 1163. The castle was built to protect and exert control of the important port of Hythe. The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Henry d'Essex undertook further fortification before he fell out of favour with Henry II in 1163 and the estate confiscated. The death of Thomas Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury was plotted at Saltwood Castle. Saltwood returned to church ownership in the 14th century when Archbishop Courtney took up residence in 1382 and implemented a costly rebuilding programme. Thomas Cramer was the last ecclesiastical owner who passed it to Henry VIII. Elizabeth I gifted it to the Knatchbull family. The castle fell into disrepair. Following the Civil War the gardens were set out by a rector James Croft. The castle is in private ownership formerly owned by the Deedes family and more recently MP and diarist Alan Clark. It is occasionally opened to the public on specified events.

**13.60** The Church of St Peter and St Paul was mother church to St Leonard's in Hythe until 1844. Elements of the church date from the 12th and 13th centuries. Grange Farm forms a significant part of the Conservation Area, surrounding the church, churchyard and castle walls. It dates at least to the 18th century. Saltwood village developed around The Green, the junction of four roads. Archaeological analysis has suggested that in part the road network around Saltwood has its origins in the Iron Age. Most buildings around the green date to the late 19th and early 20th century.

**13.61** Three character areas were identified and described in the CAA:

### 1. Saltwood Castle

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<sup>8</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Saltwood Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

2. Rectory Lane and The Green
3. Grange Farm and surrounding landscape

**13.62** The Castle is the principle heritage asset, a Schedule Monument and Grade 1 Listed. The castle and its curtain walls are surrounded by a moat that is largely overgrown with trees obscuring public view. The Castle Garden is registered in the Kent Gardens Compendium as Grade 2 as mid 20th Century formal and informal gardens surrounded by parkland. The character of the Green is derived from its ancient, organic plan form. It forms a focus for village activities. Rectory Lane provides the link with the church and overlooks Grange Farm and its pastoral landscape. Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area include the Norman church, the first rectory Saltwood House and the former castle lodge. Other buildings such as the 18th and 19th domestic properties near The Green contribute to the character and quality of the Conservation Area. Grange Farm and its pastoral landscape cover around a third of the CA and is highly visible making it a significant element in the CA's setting. Undesignated built heritage in the Grange Farm Character Area include farm buildings, the Victorian farmhouse and ragstone walls bounding the fields which provide a distinctive and dominant feature.

**13.62** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- The condition of the castle as it appears from the public domain is one of a romantic ruin;
- entrance gates to the castle need upgrading;
- at the time of the appraisal the castle appeared on the Buildings at Risk Register. It has since been removed from the Register.
- maintenance of the castle fabric requires significant effort, expertise and resources.
- concrete bus shelter and traffic signage on The Green is out of keeping with character. Overhead telephone cables and some signage have a slight negative effect.
- parking on the village green obscures views and affects pedestrians;
- areas where enhancement would be beneficial have been identified;
- replacement windows in inappropriate styles and materials
- modern farm buildings at Grange Farm
- Development pressure on village open space;

### **Sandgate Esplanade and High Street Conservation Areas**

**13.63** The Sandgate High Street and Esplanade CAs were originally designated on 15th September 1972, with amendments to the High Street CA passed on 25th August 1976. A Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2009 resulting in extension eastward of both Areas. Previously a 1975 Consultative Draft Study of Sandgate had been undertaken which was wide ranging in scope but focused on development plan type analyses and proposals rather than on defining, preserving or enhancing the area's special character

**13.64** For the purposes of the CAA, the Sandgate Conservation Areas, High Street and Esplanade are referred to as west and east. The review found that a single Conservation Area cannot be justified as the intervening gap does not contain buildings of sufficient special interest individually or collectively to have been included

in the original designation. Both parts are strongly linear, generally following the historic pattern of the town located between the sea and the cliffs behind.

**13.65** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>9</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"Sandgate displays special qualities in several categories of interest: its relationship with the sea, history, architecture, layout, association with notable personalities, topography, shoreline location, the escarpment backdrop to the north with the remains of Martello Towers and the overall state of preservation. Old maps and photos show that much of the coherence and period character of past times survives intact, though sometimes degraded by incremental alteration and threatened by traffic levels and vehicle size.*

*The High Street has a very wide range of interesting building types, styles and dates, and is of a quite human scale, mainly two and three storeys. It is generously endowed with listed buildings and others of local interest. Its character varies from the tight layout and scale of buildings crowding the High Street to the grand villas of Undercliff, Radnor Cliff and the Riviera, the parkland setting of recent development north of St Paul's church and wooded landscape around Martello Tower No. 6.*

*The linear layout, derived from its coastal location, offers a succession of interesting views along its length as well as intimate lateral ones looking out towards the sea or into the hills to the north. Three concentrations of historic buildings at the east, centre and west, together with recently refurbished Coastal Gardens and Sea Walkway between Sandgate's Riviera and Folkestone, draw visitors to stop and take time to explore, thereby bringing business to the interesting proprietor-owned shops and restaurants."*

**13.66** The CAA describes the historic development of Sandgate. The name derives from the cleft in the hills through which the Enbrook flowed into the sea. The emergence of Sandgate arises from the Castle, an artillery fort erected by Henry VIII to counter French attack. The castle was left in isolation until the 18th century. The village started to evolve in the late 18th century with the introduction of shipbuilding. The castle went through several phases of defensive development up to the second world war including incorporation into the Martello system of towers that are a highly significant feature of this coastline. As well as the Castle, Martello 5 and 6 both fall within the Conservation Areas. All are designated as Scheduled Monuments.

**13.67** From the early 19th Century Sandgate flourished as a seaside resort with many notable visitors including William Wilberforce, Mary Shelley, John Ruskin and HG Wells who built and lived at Spade House and wrote many stories while there between 1898 and 1910. Through the 19th century development spread through linear extension and infill. Grander houses were also developed on the higher ground inland. The 1880 OS map shows many buildings that survive today. By the end of the century the Sandgate Hill Tram Lift was built that took passengers from the bottom of Sandgate Hill up to the Leas. The Greensand escarpment provides a dramatic backdrop to the town that constrained the majority of development to its base. due to geological conditions much of the hillside is prone to landslip. The eastern area of

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<sup>9</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2009, *Sandgate Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

Sandgate was formed from a large landslip in 1784 and in 1893 another slip resulted in loss of life and destruction of many of the town's oldest buildings. The appraisal recognised that this ground form has prompted considerable diversity of building style and material, generally maintaining strong connection with local materials.

**13.68** Five character areas were identified and described in the CAA:

1. Sandgate East Core
2. Enbrook Park
3. Undercliff
4. Sandgate West
5. Radnor Cliff and the Riviera

**13.69** Many of the Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area are individual houses dating to the late 18th Century and in generally good states of preservation. Many have group value and contribute positively to the CA's small-scale seaside character. Importantly the street pattern, with long narrow plots survives to provide the framework for these distinctive small-scale buildings. Variations in form and materials represent the historical uses such as boat building, coastal defence and security, religious and civic buildings, commerce and trade. Guest houses, small hotels and bed and breakfasts still offer accommodation in the area. Key unlisted buildings that contribute to the townscape have been identified included a number that have been recommended for designation review.

**13.70** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- vistas both into and out of the town are notable but are affected by the presence of larger and bulkier recent buildings;
- recently developed apartment blocks that tend to be inferior architecturally and incongruous in terms of scale, form and bulk;
- road surfacing is generally of tarmac, footways of tarmac or concrete paving and street furniture such as lighting and signage and markings is generally standard highway type. This tends to create discord with traditional buildings on account of design, materials and scale.
- the Hillside public car park was found to be unattractive and poorly maintained;
- heavy through traffic and parking pressure are two particularly degrading factors;
- limited capacity for infilling or redevelopment without harm to the character of the area.
- alterations falling under permitted development pose a threat to the character of the area;
- shop unit vacancy or secondary use;

## **Etchinghill Conservation Area - Draft CAA**

**13.71** The village of Etchinghill, lying at the head of the Elham Valley within the AONB was designated in 1973. A Conservation Area Appraisal was written in 2006 and consulted on. The CAA has been published on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website in its draft form while amendments are considered.

**13.72** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>10</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*"The hamlet of Etchinghill is a very ancient settlement, and exemplifies the scattered, informal layout of smaller rural communities which have grown up from a group of adjacent farmsteads into the semblance of a village. At its heart is a cluster of C16th and C17th buildings, originally farmhouses and cottages; since the mid C20th this historic nucleus has been infilled and largely encircled with modern dwellings, typical of the suburbanising impact of the motor car on rural life in south-eastern England. Despite this, the old core of the settlement preserves an integrity and, thanks to its situation in a hollow of the North Downs, a connection to the landscape that accounts for its designation as a CA."*

**13.73** The CAA describes the historic development of the village. It is considered to have its origins in the Saxon period. It was dominated by its neighbour Lyminge which was the site of an early Christian monastery and later the parish church. It never developed a coherent centre and though a distinct settlement was not mentioned in Domesday. There is reference in the 15th and 18th centuries to the village. Three farms once formed the core of the village, Spicers Farm which is possibly mentioned in a will of the 15th century, Ridgehill Farm and Watercross Farm. Most of the older buildings date to the 17th and early 18th century, built in response to the need to house a rise in farm workers. This expansion can be clearly seen around Ridgehill Farm. In 1835 a two acre site to the south of the village was developed with the Elham Union Workhouse. The 1887 Elham Valley railway bypassed the village in a substantial cutting and without a station, Etchinghill did not experience the expansion seen in other villages in the valley. Etchinghill did not expand in any great sense until after the Second World War.

**13.74** The architecture of the old village is mainly local vernacular. Listed Buildings include the 17th Century Spicers Farm, and former barns at Ridgehill Farm now converted for residential use. Others include the 19th century New Inn and a Grade II K-6 telephone box dated to the 1930s. Less than half of the pre 20th Century buildings are Listed. Of the unlisted buildings the complex around Ridgehill Farm, illustrating the former farmstead cluster make the most significant contribution to the Conservation Area.

**13.75** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- views are marred by new housing estate;
- the decline of agriculture and transformation of farmhouses into domestic properties has eroded the cluster of buildings around Spicers Farm, leaving the house isolated.
- Speculative building in the last 50 years has had an adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and diminished the legibility of the early settlement. The small core area and its setting is highly vulnerable to further engulfing.
- UPVC double glazing and unsympathetic alteration and extension has had a detrimental effect on some buildings. .

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<sup>10</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Draft Etchinghill Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

## **Lympne Conservation Area - Draft CAA**

**13.76** The Lympne Conservation Area was designated in 1971. A Conservation Area Appraisal was written in 2007 and consulted on. The CAA has been published on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website in its draft form while amendments are considered.

**13.77** The Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>11</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

**13.78** The Conservation Area is set in the historic core of the small village set on the escarpment cliff overlooking the Romney Marsh. The cliff is formed of Weald Clay overlain by limestone. Landslides have been a frequent occurrence since at least Roman times, the result of which is evident in the surrounding landscape.

**13.79** Historically Lympne was the important Roman entry port *Portus Lemanis* and later the location of a 3rd / 4th Century Fort of the Saxon Shore, known as Stutfall Castle, the remains of which are visible, damaged by landslip below the cliff edges to the south. The port was accessible from the sea via a now vanished arm of the Rother. Roman archaeology is prevalent in the surroundings, A major road, Stone Street extends northward from the Roman port to the civitas at Canterbury. The port is thought to have an association with the Wealden iron industry. The Court of Folkestone & Hythe District was established in the 12th century to handle disputes amongst the Cinque Ports and held in the open on Lympne Hill where a war memorial to the men of the Cinque Ports has since been erected. Lympne has historical association with the smuggling prevalent through the Romney Marshes from the 17th to 19th centuries; later the Royal Military Canal, built to counter Napoleonic invasion was built in the marshland below. 20th Century conflicts have also left their mark with defences along the canal and the presence of an RAF airfield, now closed and being developed in part as an industrial estate.

**13.80** Over the centuries a small agricultural hamlet grew up around a fortified manor and church. Lympne Castle was once the home of the Archdeacon of Canterbury. It was fortified to defend against French raids through the Hundred Years war (137 - 1435) and again during the Civil War (1642). The castle was subsequently managed as a farm and left the ownership of the Archdeacon in 1860.

**13.81** The overall form of Lympne as seen on early maps has changed very little. A cluster of buildings close to the start of The Street and a long avenue leading to a hamlet around the Castle and Church. There was a small increase in density through the 19th century but it was not until the interwar years that expansion is seen particularly around Stone Street. This was possibly due to the construction of a station at Westenhanger and Lympne Airfield. The CAA states that post war development in the Conservation Area has been relatively unobtrusive despite a number of modern additions and that the area around the castle retains character and a timeless quality.

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<sup>11</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2007, *Draft Lympne Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)



**13.82** Lympne's location on the top of the escarpment provides spectacular and commanding views over the marshes. Notable views are evident both within and to the Conservation Area.

**13.83** The architecture contributes strongly to the character of the CA. The oldest building is the Grade I Listed St Stephens Church dating from Norman times with later additions and 19th Century restoration. Next door is the Castle which is also Grade I which was built with wide ranging views including overlooking the remains of Stutfall Castle which was a source of stone for its construction. The earliest surviving element of Lympne Castle is a square tower dating to the 13th century. Other notable buildings include 16th Century Lympne Hall, a Grade II Listed Pump House on the escarpment. The CAA also identified a number of unlisted buildings, Smugglers End, The Vicarage and The Sanctuary that make a contribution to the CA and recommends should be considered for inclusion on a Local List.

**13.84** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- many buildings have accumulated scale changes over time which has caused significant harm;
- recent development has resulted in non-descript additions with little reference to local vernacular;
- areas of the village require maintenance for example the signage and lamp posts.
- signage and railings would benefit from more conservation led design;
- landscaping on The Street has become overgrown and would benefit from maintenance and clearing;
- a number of properties include UPVC replacements, additions that disfigure and use of inappropriate materials.

### **New Romney High Street and Cannon Street Conservation Areas - Draft CAA**

**13.85** New Romney, the largest settlement in the Romney Marshes includes two Conservation Areas, the main one being the High Street Conservation Area with a secondary one to the north east on Cannon Street. Both were originally designated in 1971 with the High Street amended in 1991. A Conservation Area Appraisal covering both areas was written in 2007 and consulted on. The CAA has been published on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website in its draft form while amendments are considered.

**13.86** The Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>12</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*" New Romney is the largest settlement in, and the honorary capital of, the low-lying Kentish coastal region known as the Romney Marsh. Its early life was as an important seaport, chief among the 'Cinque Ports' that formed Plantagenet England's front line of defence against Continental invaders. It declined through the Middle Ages as its harbour silted up, leaving it to reinvent itself as a small but prosperous farming and market town.*

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<sup>12</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Draft New Romney Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

*The main CA, straddling the High Street, comprises the town's historic core, whilst Cannon Street takes in a small cluster of historic buildings on the fringe. Together, they contain some 50 Listed Buildings plus one Scheduled Ancient Monument. The principal buildings – the magnificent Norman church of St Nicholas, the medieval remains of St John's Priory, the C17th Assembly Rooms and Georgian Town Hall, plus numerous inns of all periods – testify to the town's continuing prosperity and civic pride, whilst the area's topography and street plan retain traces both of its maritime past and of later medieval attempts at town planning."*

**13.87** New Romney lies in the heart of the Romney Marsh, now a broad and flat area of agricultural land drained from the former marshes. At the time of the Romans, the area was an expanse of estuarine mud flats and regularly flooded salt marsh interspersed with islands of habitable drier land. New Romney sat on one of these, a three mile sand spit at the point where the Rother entered the sea. The former shoreline being just north of the town centre. The town's elongated shape and alignment reflect the sandbank.

**13.88** A detailed account of the rich history and development of New Romney is provided in the CAA and only very briefly summarised here. The settlement known as Romney on the sandbank appears to date back to at least the 8th century. For five hundred years it lay on both the shore and river estuary, fishing was prominent and it became an important trading port with a mint established in the 10th Century. The Normans established a church, St Nicholas, patron of mariners by the harbour side. Two further parish churches, St Martin's (now beneath the Recreation Ground) and St Lawrence's on the High Street were added. In the 13th century these were joined by St John's Priory and by a leper hospital.

**13.89** By the 13th century the town had gained special status as one of the five members of the Confederacy of the Cinque Ports which brought considerable prestige. Being an estuarine port, the town suffered problems with silting of its harbour. This became acute in the early 13th century and a series of storms accentuated the problem. In 1278 a severe storm destroyed much of the town and shifted the course of the Rother to bypass Romney and Lydd.

**13.90** Increasingly cut off from maritime trade, the town looked inland to the rich pasturelands created by the drainage of the former marshes by the great monasteries at Canterbury. The Marsh became a nationally important centre of sheep-farming, the wool trade flourished and with a famous annual livestock fair on St Martin's Field, town transformed into a profitable market town 'New Romney'. The distinctive grid-plan of the town, more extensive even than seen today, probably developed as the town was rebuilt following the great storm. The surviving houses of this date are probably those of the merchant elite of the town. The town went through periods of social and economic cycles over the forthcoming centuries. Agriculture remained important but diverse trades and industries developed and can be seen in the fabric of the town which became incorporated in 1834-5. A modest fishing industry remained on the nearby shoreline and smuggling became a feature of the town and surrounding marshland in the 17th to 19th centuries. The railway arrived in 1884 opening the nearby coast to seaside visitors. Tourism took off with the arrival of the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on 1927 with visitors to experience the

charm of the unspoilt 'Ancient Cinque Port' . Although elements of the medieval timber framed buildings in the town were lost after the Second World War, the listing of most of the pre-Victorian building stock in the 1950s and the designation of the Conservation Areas in 1971 helped to restrain further loss.

**13.91** Although New Romney has been both a major seaport and a market town it does not have the distinctive features, a visible harbour or a recognisable market place. The character is one of a tight grid pattern focused on the linear island in the marshland, visible and continuously repeated since the earliest detailed map of 1611 to the early 20th century. Only from the OS map of 1938 do we see intensive suburban expansion from this historic core. The character of the High Street is exceptionally linear, flanked by two storey buildings fronting onto the pavement line contrasting with roads either side with areas of open space. The formality of the High Street Conservation Area contrasts with the smaller informal historical enclave at Cannon Street.

**13.92** Of the numerous Listed Buildings in the Conservation Areas, the Grade 1 Norman Church of St Nicholas is the most prominent and a dominant landmark. Other early buildings include the remains of St John's Priory (II\*) and a number of small hall houses of the 14th to 15th Centuries probably the former residences of the town's merchants and governing classes. Post medieval houses in the town are more difficult to date mainly due to an extensive programme of re-fronting in the 18th and 19th centuries. The CAA has identified that amongst the many unlisted buildings in the historic town centre a number are of Listing quality including the Blue Dolphin Hotel in the Cannon Street CA, the former abattoirs known as Magpies and 1-2 Lydd Road. A group of 19th Century unlisted buildings on North Street is also highlighted. Other unlisted buildings have been recognised for their contribution to the character of the place.

**13.93** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- much damage done to the fabric of the town through demolition and insensitive 20th century development
- replacements of historic buildings demolished in the 20th century are not of sufficient quality for the Conservation Area. Several are identified in the CAA.
- the petrol station next to the Ship Hotel is highlighted as a particularly negative feature.
- gap sites colonised by car parking has undermined building lines and eroded the boundary between public and private space.
- car parks have had a damaging effect on the tight spatial character of the High Street.
- development around the boundaries of the CAs has undermined their character.
- While the frontage of the Sainsbury's towards the High Street has been given thought, the remainder to the rear has a more detrimental effect especially on the character of St George's Lane.
- Churchlands Estate has impacted on a historically important view of St Nicholas's Church.
- ribbon development of bungalows has blurred the once distinctive urban boundary and the gateway junction to the town is uninviting;
- insensitive alterations to older buildings have been damaging and in particular the shop frontages in the High Street have been highlighted;

- UPVC windows, mainly amongst the unlisted building stock have affected character.

## **Newington Conservation Area - Draft CAA**

**13.94** Newington is a small village close to the North Downs and in an AONB. Newington was originally designated in 1974 and reviewed and extended in 1995. A Conservation Area Appraisal was written in 2007 and consulted on. The CAA has been published on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website in its draft form while amendments are considered.

**13.95** The draft Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>13</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*" Newington is an ancient settlement and typical of the scattered, informal layout of smaller rural communities which have grown up from a group of farmsteads into a village. At its heart is a small cluster of C16th-C19th buildings, originally farmhouses and cottages. Since the mid C20th this historic core has been infilled and partly ringed with modern dwellings. Despite this, the settlement preserves an integrity and a connection to the landscape that accounts for its designation as a CA. "*

**13.96** The CAA describes the historic development of this village. It is mentioned in Domesday and once sat in a large parish named in its own right that extended from the sea shore northward. St Nicholas Church dates at least to Norman times. Newington once lay on the historical route between Ashford and Folkestone. It had road links to the market town at Elham and the ports of Hythe and West Hythe. The arrival of the railway in 1847 saw the onset of a process that would have tremendous impact on the landscape around Newington. The construction of the Channel Tunnel and its infrastructure in the 1980s brought massive change in the area.

**13.97** Early maps show the church and a small cluster of houses around the main Ashford to Folkestone Road. Gradual growth is seen over the 19th century. The massive infrastructure development of the 1980s took away large parts of the village's surroundings. The subsequent infill and backland development almost doubled the dwellings in the village.

**13.98** The village has grown from a cluster of small farmsteads and vestiges of that remain around the prominent church at its core. The village pound, designed to hold stray animals, is still in existence. Many of the farming houses have been converted into domestic properties.

**13.99** The seven listed buildings include the Grade II\* church of St Nicholas which has 12th century fabric. The old Pound is Listed and dates at least to the 19th century. The former workhouse survives as Church Cottages. One of the Oldest dwellings is Old Pound farm House dating to the 13th Century. Others include the Old Vicarage and a former public house Barley Mow. The CAA also identified a number of unlisted buildings, 10-11 The Street, Home Farm and The Old School that

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<sup>13</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2007, *Draft Newington Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

make a contribution to the CA and recommends should be considered for inclusion on a Local List.

**13.100** Negative factors identified in the CAA include:

- southern and easterly views are dominated by Channel Tunnel infrastructure in contrast to rural outlook north and west.
- noise pollution from the Channel Tunnel Terminal and M20;
- unsympathetic alteration especially to unlisted buildings;
- poor quality new development
- UPVC replacements and additions that disfigure.

### **Conservation Areas without Conservation Area Appraisals in adopted or draft form**

**13.101** Eight other Conservation Areas have not been covered by full appraisal in the form described above and it is beyond the scope of this study they include:

**13.102 Folkestone Conservation Area** which has in part an appraisal of its Character Area 4 Old Town. This Conservation Area, designated in 1972 and reviewed and extended a number of times since, includes the historic port and fashionable leisure town that developed mainly in the 19th century from a small fishing village following the arrival of the railway in 1843. Earlier aspects include Iron Age occupation and an important Roman villa on East Cliff, the site of a Saxon nunnery and fortress, possibly at the Bayle and later a small Abbey that survived to the dissolution. The development of the town and harbour following the introduction of the railway is complex and not described here. The reader is directed to the Old Town Character Appraisal and the Kent Historic Towns Survey for more information.

**13.103** The Conservation Appraisal<sup>14</sup> describes the Special Interest of the area as:

*" Folkestone is an ancient town in origin, which expanded over many centuries, eventually developing into a fashionable resort, with grand houses and facilities, and later a popular seaside resort. It was greatly helped in the 19th century by the building of a direct rail link to the harbour, pleasure seekers and serving cross- Channel demand, now greatly declined as a result of the Channel Tunnel terminal outside the town. The major engineering achievements of the viaduct, Harbour Bridge, inner harbour and other structures are important both historically and technologically.*

*The historic pattern and growth of development is evident in its layout and surviving buildings, many of which are listed or of special local interest. These include a collection of large stucco villas stretching westwards from the old core along the famed Leas promenade, a feature in its own right. The seafront location and dramatic topography of cliffs and hills, together with designed and managed natural landscapes greatly increases attractiveness and interest."*

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<sup>14</sup> Conservation , Architecture & Planning 2006, *Folkestone Old Town Conservation Area Appraisal* (Shepway District Council)

**13.104** A number of negative factors are highlighted in the appraisal although it is recognised that there has been considerable and continuing change and investment in Folkestone since the writing of the character area appraisal. In particular the harbour and ferry port areas are being developed/redeveloped and the Old Town has been subject to the Town heritage Initiative and Cultural Quarter programmes described elsewhere in the Heritage Strategy. For reference and to illustrate issues generally, factors identified in Folkestone Old Town when appraised included:

- buildings that have a negative impact on the character of the area;
- cutting of Forresters Way through the old street pattern has produced a negative and alien effect in terms of spatial quality, scale and pedestrian circulation
- disrepair, vacancy and stripping of ornament of buildings and groups in Tontine Street;
- traffic conditions in Tontine Street and in other areas there is pedestrian, vehicle conflict; traffic priorities at interfaces within and on the edge of the CA visually degrades the character and restricts the recognition of positive aspects.
- shop fronts do not accord with the character of the buildings and are of poor quality;
- building fronts are often altered;
- signage is excessively large and aggressive;

**13.105 Dymchurch Church Area Conservation Area and Dymchurch High Street Conservation Area**, both designated in 1971 and situated in the popular seaside resort of Dymchurch. The origins of the village extend back into medieval times, it incorporates Napoleonic defences and includes the medieval church of St Peter and St Paul and the former residence of the governors of the Marsh. The name of the village derives from *Deme* meaning judge or arbiter in old English.

**13.106 Littlestone Conservation Area** lies within the planned seaside resort for the gentry developed on the what was once the shingle northern headland of Romney Bay. In the 1880s Sir Robert Tubbs built the Grand Hotel (one of the largest in the area), a terrace of houses, a Methodist church and a residence for himself close to an existing lifeboat station. Later Henry Tubbs, an entrepreneur who built the nearby goal club embarked on an ambitious building programme including Marine Parade and the now Listed 120ft water tower. Plans for a pier were never realised.

**13.107 Old Romney Conservation Area** is focused on what is the little understood historic core of the former port of Old Romney. The port a former limb to the Cinque Port of New Romney sat on an island on the River Rother. By the 12th century silting had sealed its demise. What remains is the church of St Clement, the site of Old Romney Manor and surrounding land and cottages. It is hoped that archaeological analysis intended as part of the Fifth Continent Landscape Partnership project will shed more light on this enigmatic former port.

**13.108 Brookland Conservation Area** designated in 1973 focuses on the cluster of Listed Buildings along the High Street, St Augustine's Church and the rural setting of this small village on the Romney Marsh. The 13th century church is unusual in that it has a separate wooden spire. The village is known as the scene of the 1821 'Battle of

Brookland' a fight between a band of smugglers known as the Aldington Gang and Customs and Excise men.

**13.109 Newchurch Conservation Area** also designated in 1973 is similarly focused on a small village in the Romney Marsh. The conservation area takes in the main street, the 13th century parish church of St Peter and St Paul, the Old Rectory, The Black Bull inn and a number fo Listed and unlisted properties. The history of the village is linked to that of agriculture on the Romney marsh but also has its share of smuggling history and saw the establishment of a nearby RAF station in the Second World War.

**13.110 Lydd Conservation Area**, designated in 1973 focuses on the historic core of the second largest settlement on the Romney Marsh. The focus of the town is around the imposing All Saints Church also known as The Cathedral of the Marsh. The church includes fabric considered to be part of a Roman basilica although most ft he church is of medieval date. Lydd developed as a settlement during the Romano-British period sited on a shingle island on the edge of what became the Rother. It reached its height of prosperity in the 13th century when a limb of the Cinque port of New Romney. The town was a smuggling centre in the 18th and 19th centuries and became a garrison town in the later 19th century. Ranges outside the town are still used today.

## **Statement of Significance**

**13.111** The Conservation Areas of Folkestone & Hythe District, include the historically important former Cinque Ports of Hythe and New Romney and their limbs of Lydd and Old Romney; the important former channel port and fashionable seaside town of Folkestone and its neighbour Sandgate; coastal settlements, villages of the Romney Marshes and the North Downs; as well as the unique and nationally significant coastal landscape and settlement at Dungeness. Together these Conservation Areas provide an asset of **outstanding significance**.

### ***Evidential Value***

**13.112** The archaeology of Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation provides considerable potential evidence of the founding and development of the District's towns and villages. Amongst them is the evidence of the early life of the settlements that grew into the important and flourishing Cinque Ports of the 12th and 13th century, Hythe and New Romney and their limbs. The early form and aspects of both Hythe and New Romney is little understood, both towns having been badly affected by storm or fire and losing much of their original pattern and buildings.

**13.113** The archaeological evidence within the town's and village's Conservation Areas can contribute to a better understanding of a number of the themes covered in the Heritage Strategy: the settlements of the early fishermen, coastal trade and maritime activity, smuggling, the farming of the marshes and downlands, the development of seaside resorts and the defence of the coastline against invasion. As well as the archaeology associated with the settlements, most include potential remains associated with earlier prehistoric and Roman activity. A number of the Conservation Areas include evidence that helps to explain the nature of landscape change in Folkestone & Hythe District, in particular the shifting coastline and the development of agriculture from the former salt marsh.

**13.114** Further evidence is present in the fabric of the Listed and un-Listed historic buildings and structures in the Conservation Areas to further explain those buildings and the motives for their construction and evolution. This can contribute to a better understanding of the special interest of those areas and how their appearance and character has evolved to what it is today.

### ***Historical Illustrative Value***

**13.115** Many of the buildings and structures within the Conservation Areas fall within the Themes described elsewhere in this Strategy and can contribute significantly to illustrating those themes and their historical development. They are able to illustrate the development of early ports and their demise and transformation into market towns and villages associated with the nationally significant sheep farming on the marshes. The rise of smuggling in the 18th and 19th centuries can be seen in the settlements of the Romney Marshes.



The Conservation Areas include nationally significant features associated with Napoleonic defence and the Church. The emergence of seaside leisure can also be seen in a number of the Conservation Areas. The Conservation Areas also help to illustrate the changing nature of the coastal landscape and man's response to and management of it.

**13.116** In addition the Conservation Areas illustrate in themselves the history of the location and its development to what we value and seek to preserve today.

### ***Historical Associative Value***

**13.117** Many of the Conservation Areas have associations with famous events and individuals. For example Saltwood Castle is notoriously connected with the death of Thomas Beckett, Folkestone has connections with events in the Great War and New Romney and Hythe with the formation of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports. The seclusion of areas and the fashionable seaside resorts have attracted a number of famous visitors and residents. The writer Joseph Conrad lived in Postling, HG Wells lived in Sandgate and film maker Derek Jarman is associated with Dungeness and the garden at Prospect Cottage. Other famous literary visitors included Bernard Shaw, Mary Shelley and John Ruskin.

### ***Aesthetic Value***

**13.118** The Conservation Areas are so designated to a greater part because they provide, through their appearance a strong aesthetic value to their locale. This aesthetic value ranges from attractive and visually interesting historic streetscapes, attractive and imposing buildings and architectural detail to remote coastal landscapes such as can be seen at Dungeness. The backdrop of the cliffs and Downs, an Area of Outstanding natural beauty or views out to sea and across the Channel to France add to the aesthetic values of the Conservation Areas.

### ***Communal Value***

**13.119** The Conservation Areas provide a strong sense of place and identity to their communities. In several places conservation and preservation societies have developed that act as a focus for local pride and interest in the protection and enhancement of these areas. Many of the Conservation Areas are the focus for heritage led activities and projects that seek to promote and celebrate the places.

**13.120** Well preserved historic towns such as New Romney and Hythe draw in visitors and increase the economic wealth of their communities. Dungeness is a very significant visitor attraction with more than a million visiting each year.

## Vulnerabilities

**13.121** Conservation areas are by their nature relatively large and complex heritage assets vulnerable to a multitude of actions from a variety of individuals or organisations – all of whom can adversely affect the Conservation Area's special interest. It is by and large gradual and cumulative changes that erode the special interest of a Conservation Area and it is for this reason that regular surveying, monitoring and dissemination of guidance is so essential to preserving and enhancing the special interest of Conservation Areas.

**13.122** In compiling this theme paper we have looked at the published appraisals and noted the issues in those areas. It should be noted that these were issues at the time of appraisal around a decade ago. A review of the Conservation Areas is needed to document any change since that baseline was established. It is likely that the adoption of the appraisals was a catalyst for addressing some of the issues that were described however even where addressed they are a useful example of the ways in which Folkestone & Hythe District's Conservation Areas are vulnerable. Table 13.3 below correlates the issues highlighted in each of the Conservation Area Appraisals and are discussed.

Conservation Area Appraisal	Alterations & Loss of	Repair & Maintenance	Boundary Treatment	Unsympathetic Development	Shopfronts	Public Realm, Street Furniture	Parking Pressure	Traffic Noise & Infrastructure	Relationship with	Visitor Pressure
Dungeness	■									■
Elham	■			■			■		■	■
Frogholt								■		
Hythe	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Postling	■			■						
Saltwood	■	■		■		■	■			
Sandgate	■			■	■	■		■	■	
Etchinghill	■			■					■	
Lympne	■			■		■				
New Romney	■			■	■		■		■	
Newington	■			■				■	■	
Folkestone Old Town	■	■		■	■	■		■		

Table 13.3: negative factors highlighted as issues in published Conservation Area Appraisals

## Alterations & Loss of Materials

**13.123** The character of a Conservation Area is derived from the sum of many things both small and large. It is particularly fragile and vulnerable even to small and incremental change which over time accumulate to a significant loss of the special interest of the area. The appraisals of the CAs has highlighted that unsympathetic alteration is a significant negative factor in all but one of the Conservation Areas and it would be surprising if this was not case to some degree there as well. The issues identified in the appraisals include:

- **Refenestration** and alteration of building fronts can have a substantial impact on the character of a Conservation Area. This was particularly highlighted around the square in Elham and as an issue in Folkestone Old Town.
- **Loss of original materials and features** to buildings such as windows, doors, roof coverings, chimney stacks, ornamentation and architectural detail can have a stark effect not just on the character of the building itself but can be generally incongruous and harm the character of the Conservation Area. UVPC replacement windows have had a particularly common effect, disfigured buildings and being out of place have harmed the character of a number of the Areas.
- **Unsympathetic alteration and extension** of buildings is a significant factor mentioned in a number of Conservation Areas. Permitted development, particularly on unlisted buildings both within and in the setting of Conservation Areas is seen as a particular vulnerability.
- **Change of use** of properties, such as the conversion of farm buildings into residential dwellings can erode the general character of an area, transforming its purpose and leaving buildings in isolation. An example has been described at Spicer's farm in Etchinghill where the farm house is now isolated from its former cluster of farm buildings.
- **Modernisation and design improvements** are a threat to the character of the Dungeness huts where a balance of the needs of the residents and that of the special interest has been highlighted.

## Repair and Maintenance

**13.124** Buildings, structures and features are all vulnerable to decay and deterioration either through natural processes which can be gradual over time or through deliberate action. Maintenance and repair is an essential part of the everyday treatment of built heritage assets and needs to be done in a way that is sympathetic to their significance. Often it is the replacement of deteriorated features that provides the impetus for unsympathetic alterations as described above. Buildings that are left vacant are particularly vulnerable, they deteriorate through neglect and as well as causing harm to their own character they can blight neighbouring areas and cause a domino effect of deterioration and decline in the area.

**13.125** In many of the Conservation Areas, the Listed Building stock will be generally well maintained however there are cases highlighted in the CAAs

where this is not the case and in particular the Hythe CAA identifies the Manor House as a particular building that is deteriorating perhaps as result of its multiple ownership. Vacancy of properties in Tontine Street, Folkestone was also identified. It is not just the buildings in urban Conservation Areas that can suffer, Saltwood Castle was at one stage on the national Buildings at Risk Register due to its condition. Maintenance of such an asset requires considerable effort, expertise and resources.

### **Boundary Treatment**

**13.126** Boundaries both within and in the setting of Conservation Areas make a significant contribution to its quality and character, especially where this is visible from the public realm. This can be easily eroded through poorly considered forecourt parking or inappropriate fencing, the loss of walls, railings and hedges which cumulatively can detract from the special interest of the area.

**13.127** This has been particularly emphasised in the Hythe Conservation Area Appraisal where the stone boundary walls, and in particular the medieval stone walls are an important feature that provide a feel of enclosure to the town's historic character. In several places both within and just outside the CA boarded fencing has been introduced that has a negative effect on character. In the High Street walls have been demolished or breached to facilitate vehicle access leading to a degrading of the Conservation Area.

### **Unsympathetic Development**

**13.128** The impact of unsympathetic development is a major issue that has been identified for all of Shewpay's appraised Conservation Areas bar Dungeness and Frogholt. Even for those the presence of the nuclear power stations and the Channel Tunnel infrastructure plays its part. A number of ways in which development has negatively affected the Conservation Areas has been described. These include:

- Poor quality new development sits incongruously amongst better quality traditional buildings in the Conservation Areas. The infilling of gaps on street frontages is a particular issue that has been raised for example at Elham.
- The historic grain and pattern is an important part of the special interest and character of a place. Buildings that do not follow the historic lines of the properties or cross the historic pattern of a towns tenements plots can appear out of place. In places the road infrastructure like that of Forresters Way in Folkestone can cut through the street pattern causing an alien effect.
- In towns such as New Romney there are clear examples where the demolition of traditional buildings in the second half of the 20th century saw their replacement with buildings that are not of sufficient quality for the Conservation Area.

- In places recent development has been lacking in architectural quality and has little reference to the local vernacular. In some instances there have been poor attempts to recreate the local vernacular.
- extension of buildings has had an impact on back lands areas in Conservation Areas such as Hythe.
- In some instances, modern functional buildings are out of place with their surroundings and other traditional buildings. An example provided is the modern farm buildings at Grange Farm in Saltwood.

**13.129** An issue raised during stakeholder consultation and with the Council, and highlighted in the CAAs, is the significant harmful effect that unsympathetic development outside but in the setting of a Conservation Area can have on its character. It is important that in developing a Management Plan for the Conservation Area that this aspect is recognised and managed effectively. While there are good examples of new development in the setting of Conservation Areas that has responded well, there are examples where it has not. The issues highlighted include:

- New development around the historic core that is incongruous in scale, form and with the grain of the Conservation Area and harmed its setting. This was particularly seen at Hythe where the medieval layout was not referenced and areas of the Conservation Area have been proposed for removal from designation.
- The facades of buildings in the setting have in cases been considered featureless. In places such as the supermarket development at New Romney, while the frontage has seen good consideration and response to the Conservation Area, the areas behind it have less so.
- Flat roofed buildings can break the pattern of the roofscape, a particularly important aspect where the topography of the CA and its surroundings means that the roofscape plays a prominent role in views into and out of the area.
- An important aspect of the Conservation Areas is the way in which one arrives into it. Well designed gateways into the villages and towns leave a strong impression with the visitor. In New Romney the CAA considered that the ribbon development of bungalows extending out of the town had blurred the once distinctive urban boundary.

**13.130** Open spaces both within and outside Conservation Areas will come under increasing development pressure. Many of the Conservation Areas have very limited capacity for infilling.

### **Shopfronts**

**13.131** In those Conservation Areas where retail shop frontage is present, the contribution of good shop front design and signage makes a significant contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area. In all of the main town Conservation Areas, the appraisals have identified this as an issue. In many places such as the High street's of both Hythe and New Romney there is a mix between shop fronts that are well designed, in scale with their plots and of a quality that contribute to character of the streetscape and the

buildings themselves. There are equally examples that area not. In places shop fronts extend across historic plots without reference to the individual buildings and feature inappropriate materials such as concrete and expansive glazing. Signage can be dominant and glaringly at odds with the character of the area. The need for shop front design guidance has been highlighted in several places. An additional issue arises from vacancy and deterioration of shops which has a resulting impact on the visible character of the shopping streets.

## **Public Realm, Streets and Furniture**

**13.132** The public realm, its pavements, and road surfaces, its features such as signage and street lighting and its landscaping all play an important part in reinforcing the special interest of a Conservation Area. This aspect is vulnerable to the special interest of a conservation Area not being taken into account in the design of road improvements and the choice and quality of materials that are used in the public realm. Detracting issues that were raised in the CAAs include:

- In several places tarmac road surfaces and road markings have been highlighted as inappropriate to the historic streetscape. Footways of tarmac or concrete paving and street furniture can be of standard highway type which can tend to create discord with traditional buildings on account of their design, materials and scale.
- Street furniture, signage, railings and features are in places out of place or need maintenance. While recognising that signage is in many places a needed asset, consideration of its need, scale and placing along with more conservation led design would be benefit many of the Conservation Areas.
- Visual clutter in the district's High Streets can be a problem. This has been recognised at Hythe in the CAA.
- Overhead cabling and features such as CCTV cameras also make a negative contribution.
- Detracting features in the public realm are not confined to the town CAs. Features such as the concrete bus shelter and traffic signage on the green at Saltwood can be negative.
- The storage of waste bins on the street or in visible backland areas of the Conservation Areas is a problem that has been recognised and is highlighted in Hythe.
- Maintenance of landscaping is important, whether it be in the private gardens visible from the public realm or in publically accessible areas such as the banks of the Royal Military Canal in Hythe.

## **Parking Pressure**

**13.133** The realm of the vehicle has caused an impact on the character and setting of a number of the Conservation Areas both town and village. As dependency on car use rises, street parking in Conservation Areas has become a widespread problem. Car parking introduces detracting clutter to streetscapes, as has been described at Elham dominates its open spaces and

squares at busy times and as at Saltwood village green, parking obstructs views to its heritage assets and impedes pedestrians.

**13.134** The provision of car parks can also have a detrimental effect, often featureless and of a design and materials that is incongruous with the historic areas within which they lie or their setting. car parks are often at odds with the grain and spatial pattern of the Conservation Area especially in the tight arrangements seen in towns such as Hythe and New Romney. In New Romney it has also been recognised that the colonisation of gap sites by car parking has undermined building lines and eroded the boundary between public and private space.

### **Traffic, Noise and Infrastructure**

**13.135** Traffic and its resulting noise has a detrimental effect on a number of the Districts' Conservation Areas. This is evident in Folkestone & Hythe District's major towns where through routes in particular introduce heavy traffic and resulting noise pollution in an immediate sense to parts of the CAs. The conflict with pedestrian movements and the resulting detraction away from recognising the positive aspects of the Conservation Area on its edges is another outcome.

**13.136** In the wider district the infrastructure development of the Channel Tunnel and the M20 has introduced noise pollution into the village conservation areas at Frogholt and Newington.

### **Relationship with the surroundings**

**13.137** Views both from within Conservation Area and from its surroundings are an important part of its character and special interest. In many places the historic relationship of the towns and villages in which the Conservation areas sit has been eroded by the expansion of the settlement and new development. For example, views of the aesthetically pleasing North Downs backdrop to villages have been affected by new estates or engulfing by infrastructure such as the Channel Tunnel terminal. In some cases, the expansion of settlement has diminished the legibility of the historic core as described at Etchinghill. Vistas for example both into and out from the town at Sandgate have been affected by the development of large and bulkier recent buildings. In New Romney the historically important view of St Nicholas has lost its marshland backdrop since the building of the Churchlands Estate.

### **Visitor Pressure**

**13.138** The District's Conservation Areas are by their nature places that will attract visitors for their special qualities. The pressure that this brings can have a negative effect on the special interest of the area. Dungeness is a very clear example of this where the draw of a million visitors each year can harm the special characteristic of remoteness as well as cause littering and damage and nuisance to the residents of the area. In other areas we can see the

impact that visitor brings in the additional parking pressure, for example as already described above at Elham.

## **Guidance & Management**

**13.39** Written guidance on and promotion of the special interest of a Conservation Area is a vital part of ensuring that all those who have a role there can make informed decisions that help to look after the special characteristics of the place. This applies as much to those who live and own property in the Conservation areas as to those who are promoting or managing change and development or conservation there.

**13.140** The District has done relatively well in achieving written appraisals for two thirds of its Conservation Areas, a favourable situation compared to a number of other local authorities. There remain however a number of Conservation areas that are not covered to date, Fokestone and Lydd being perhaps the two largest and most vulnerable areas with the remainder being less complex.

**13.141** For a Conservation Area Appraisal to remain effective it needs to be reviewed on a regular basis and where necessary updated. There is little doubt that in some areas the Conservation Area Appraisals while only a decade old do not reflect the present situation. they do however form an excellent baseline against which change can be measured.

**13.142** The CAA appraisals each describe the ways in which planning powers and in particular Article 4 direction can be applied to help preserve the special interest of the Conservation Area. They explain how local design guidance is desirable and, in several places, how shop front guidance is particularly needed. Comprehensive audits of street furniture are also recommended to assist in de-cluttering the public realm. Following on from appraisals Management Plans are needed that set out clear objectives and actions to conserve, enhance and manage change in these special areas of the District.



## Opportunities and Recommendations

**13.143** The challenges of preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas cannot fall to one individual or body but must be sustained through a united consensus of stakeholders, whether local resident, business, or statutory authority. To achieve this requires co-ordination and focus from the Local Planning Authority, which must have the capacity and resources – a long term vision - to achieve the objective of preservation and enhancement of one of its most visible and accessible heritage assets.

**13.144** Clearly one of the priorities must be to complete the programme of Conservation Area Appraisal for the remaining Conservation Areas that are yet to be covered and to review those that have been published in adopted or draft form.

**13.145** There is considerable opportunity to involve the community in understanding the special interest and significance of their local Conservation Areas. Toolkits have been designed elsewhere (for example at Oxford where the City Council have developed guidance<sup>15</sup> for local communities to assess the character of their area that will enable local people to assess their area and provide a basis for more detailed and formalised appraisals in line with Historic England guidance. This has been recently developed further in neighbouring Dover District where local groups have embarked on a programme of compiling and publishing Conservation Area Appraisals, a number of which have been subsequently adopted. A particular strength of Folkestone & Hythe District that has been highlighted in the Heritage Strategy are the considerable number of enthusiastic groups and individuals participating in heritage related activity and projects. There is a particular opportunity to draw upon this strength to help assess and monitor the Conservation Areas.

**13.146** While such a programme of engagement and involvement is difficult with present conservation resources in Folkestone & Hythe District, there may be an opportunity to develop a project with support from a body such as the Heritage Lottery Fund that supports assessment of the District's Conservation Areas and meets the key objectives of the lottery fund through participation, education and conservation. Such a project would require the appointment of an appropriate professional to coordinate and guide the assessment process and could link in with other potential studies and surveys identified in this heritage strategy. Certainly, there is opportunity to draw upon further help and support from Historic England and potentially working with Dover to develop a common system of community led appraisal.

**13.147** Following on from appraisal there is a need to develop **management plans** for each of the Conservation Areas. These should include guidance that explains how the special interest of the area can be best conserved and enhanced. The guidance should help to explain to property owners what is best practice with respect to maintenance, repair and reinstatement and to

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/CharacterAppraisalToolkit.htm>

explain what may be acceptable in terms of sympathetic change and development.

**13.148** Generic guidance should be developed to achieve better outcomes for some of the recurring issues that have been described above. In particular shopfront guidance has been highlighted as a particular need.

**13.149** Information and guidance for those involved in the Conservation Areas should be made accessible and readily available for those who need it.

**13.150** Processes need to be put in place to help monitor the condition of Conservation Areas. This should be developed in Management Plans and perhaps implemented with the help from local communities especially supported with the development of toolkits.

**13.151** It is recognised that the unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas are particularly vulnerable to deterioration and unsympathetic change. The identification of key buildings, structures and other features and their inclusion on Local List of Heritage Assets and where necessary a Local Heritage Assets at Risk Register supported by community monitoring would to manage this aspect.

**13.152** Permitted development in Conservation Areas can also be a particular issue, incrementally degrading the special interest. Consideration should be given to extending Article 4 direction that removes specific permitted rights where specific issues are identified.

**13.153** Where assessment has identified buildings of merit that meet Listing criteria the Council should put them forward to be considered for designation. The completed CAAs have identified a number that can be considered (where not already done so).

**13.154** There is significant potential to better understand the history and development of the District's Conservation Areas. Projects that include archaeological and built heritage analysis should be supported. Although five of Folkestone & Hythe District's towns have been covered in the historic town survey published by Kent County council in 2006, these studies lacked detail and were based on a rapid review of available desk-based resources. More detailed studies that involve a combined approach of archaeology, building survey and documentary research have helped provide a more detailed understanding of other towns in Kent for example in Queenborough and Sandwich. In Folkestone & Hythe District a more detailed understanding of the two Cinque Ports of Hythe and New Romney would be particularly useful. For New Romney the recent archaeological programme undertaken for the First Time Sewerage Scheme provides a resource for better understanding the development of the town.

**13.155** Street surfaces, markings, signage and other furniture has been highlighted as a particular issue that in places degrades the special interest of the District's Conservation Areas. The Council should work with the highways

authorities to ensure that there is conservation led approach to design of surfaces, markings and features with Conservation Areas and in their setting. The CAAs suggest that a comprehensive audit of street furniture and signs would be an essential first step in de-cluttering the public realm.

**13.156** Special regard should be given to understanding the settings of the District's Conservation Areas and how they may be affected by development and other change outside the Conservation Areas. The Council should resist proposals that are of poor quality and will result in a negative impact on the Conservation Area or its setting.

**13.157** Support should be given to proposals that enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area through reinstatement of original materials and details to buildings; reinstatement of original boundary treatments; appropriate use of sympathetic materials and design in public realm for street surfaces, lighting, street furniture, and signage.