

Appendix 3

Summary of New Romney Stakeholder Consultation

1. Please list any special qualities, distinctive features or areas, which you consider make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

- *New Romney Town Centre CA is very unique in that it has many old buildings of unique character and a street plan that dates from the Norman Period. The area has an open space, namely St Martin's Field, and also a Grade 1 Listed Building.*
- *The area has very many buildings of unique character including, the Norman Church, St John's Priory, the 15-16th century Town Hall and Town Hall House (once the jail), the Assembly Rooms, many shops that have their origins in the 15-18th centuries. Many fine houses once owned by merchants and Officers of the Crown, Fairfield House, Governors House, Mulberry House and Yew Tree Lodge plus other smaller ancient houses. St Martin's Field was once the site of a medieval church and burial ground and has great archaeological significance.*
- *It must be remembered that Romney is an Ancient Cinque Port, it is also an Anglo Saxon Burgh, the archaeology which abounds beneath it and around it are immense and relatively untouched. The number of listed buildings within the CA shows the historical importance that the Town still possesses. The Norman Church of St Nicholas, which is arguably the first Norman Church to be built after the Conquest, is truly unique. This is the Town which repelled William the Conqueror before his landing at Hastings. Although quiet and sleepy now the Town has been at the centre of events for centuries, be it Saxon, Norman, the Plantagenet's, Tudors, Stuarts, Georgians and Victorians. It has witnessed Great Storms, Great Kings and Queens, the Portsmen, the Marshmen, Graziers and Smugglers. It was one of the famous Rotten Boroughs returning two MPs from twelve voters, the Cistercians has a Priory here, there was a Leper Hospital, and St Martin's was the earliest church on the marsh. Fair Field was the site of the biggest livestock market on the March and prior to the Railway, sheep for the London markets were taken there by the Drovers.*
- *Lovely old buildings in the High Street.*

2. Can you identify any key features that you feel have been eroded over time?

- *The edge of the CA, by allowing buildings that are not sympathetic, subtracts from these areas by the very nature of the approach. Road improvements in the past have vastly altered the centre and approaches to the Town.*
- *Over the last century ancient houses and buildings have been lost to modern development particularly in the main High Street.*
- *The ability for property to contaminate the area with advertising signs be they lit or unlit has had a detrimental effect on the area over time and the amount of unnecessary bits of metal signs and other paraphernalia has certainly contaminated the CA.*
- *Current SPAR shop removed a medieval frontage and replaced with plate glass – out of keeping*

3. Can you identify any development that has taken place since designation, which you feel has had a negative effect on the Conservation Area?

- *The dentist surgery in George Lane and a proposed development of modern town houses in Rome Road; the building of a large Sainsbury supermarket on the end and between the two areas is totally out of keeping, ie a building suitable for an industrial estate and not a beautiful ancient town.*
- *A SPAR supermarket replaced a medieval building in the High Street and more recently modern terraced housing has been allowed in Church Road. The eastern end of the High Street has suffered as Sainsbury's Supermarket has been allowed to be built between and opposite listed buildings. Shop fronts have adopted modern facades with plate glass windows rather than using styles suitable to the buildings. 'A Touch of Spice' and 'Rolfe's Ironmongers' are good examples but there are many more.*
- *The Sainsbury's Supermarket Store situated adjacent to the area and on a road containing an number of listed buildings has placed pressure on the CA and a reasonable degree of the toning down of excessive advertising or remedial screening has not been carried out or even attempted. Several cases of illuminated signage within the CA have been allowed which has had a detrimental effect on the street scene and contaminated the CA.*
- *Mabledon House demolished – modern homes put on the site.*

4. Can you identify any areas on the attached map that you consider should be included or excluded from the Conservation Area? Please give your reasons.

- *The area between the two CA's should be joined in order to stop unsuitable buildings being built between. The new houses recently built on the land adjacent to Sainsbury Supermarket are modern and out of keeping to the area.*
- *I believe the Old School House – recently refurbished with Lottery money should be included in the CA, plus Fairfield Road Recreation Ground, but the following should be excluded – the 2 modern houses behind the Broadacres Hotel in Sussex Road.*
- *The two CA's of New Romney should be combined so as to allow better control to be made for both of them. Just because a property is included in a CA does not mean it cannot be changed and similarly development can readily be undertaken, what it does mean is that these changes will be sympathetic to the area as a whole, and not able to destroy an area for future generations. The New Romney Main Sewer which is a boundary to the Church is the likely site of the original beach or strand which was indicated during a dig in 1948 and this waterway should be included in the area. The listed buildings in Fairfield Road should also be included within the area as should the Fair Field recreation field. (and Bowls Club)*

5. In your opinion, how effective do you consider the present controls over development to be? Please explain.

- *There appears to be limited control over development. The Planning Authority at Shepway District Council only seem to consider development from a planning law point of view; there is no consideration of the design and suitability. The High Street is a Special Area of Darkness, but Planning Officers at SDC have*

approved virtually every application for illuminated signs. This is totally against requirements for a CA.

- *Shepway District Council do not appear to be consistent in their application of the conservation rules. Many plans appear to be passed on need for dwellings alone without due regard to the character of the area.*
- *Unfortunately the present controls are not that effective. Shepway DC do not monitor the area in any effective way and with the appeal system being such that it usually tends towards the developer and not the rights of the people, then they are very prone to side with the developer purely in a cost saving exercise and not to the benefit of the area.*

6. Are there any buildings or structures that you consider are of note for their architectural or historical importance? Please list.

- *St John's Priory – Listed*
- *Town Hall (15-16th century) – Listed*
- *Town Hall House (once the Gaol) – Listed*
- *Assembly Rooms – Listed*
- *Oak Hall Surgery – Listed*
- *Rome House – Listed (stable buildings to the rear thereof)*
- *Plantation House, West Street*
- *West Court*
- *West Lawn*
- *The Old School*
- *The Norman Church*
- *many shops that have their origins in the 15-18th centuries*
- *Many fine houses once owned by merchants and Officers of the Crown*
- *Fairfield House*
- *Governors House*
- *Mulberry House*
- *The Elms*
- *Methodist Church*
- *Baptist Church*
- *Post Office Sorting Office*
- *One Stop Shop*
- *Yew Tree Lodge plus other smaller ancient houses*
- *St Martin's Field was once the site of a medieval church and burial ground and has great archaeological significance*
- *There are many houses/shops that had floor levels of pre-1287 storm; these properties have now had their floors raised.*

7. Can you identify any open spaces, significant trees or hedges that you feel make a contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area? Please list.

- *St Martin's Field*
- *The trees and hedges bordering Cannon Street and Fairfield Road*
- *The trees at the junction of Church Road, Station Road and the High Street*
- *The area off Rome Road and the High Street*
- *St Nicholas' Church and Cemetery*

- *St Martins Field, Fairfield Recreational Ground, the Bowls Club and the numerous Tree Preservation Orders which are apparently constantly ignored.*
- *St Martins field area and all the trees.*

8. What would you say were the most significant views, vistas or panoramas, either within, into or from the Conservation Area? Please specify.

- *The most significant views within New Romney are the 11th Century church and the trees bordering both St Martin's Field and those of Cannon Street / Fairfield Road.*
- *The view down Church Lane to the lower march beyond, the High Street running west to east – fine sunsets. At junction of High Street and Ashford Road across St Martin's and Fairfield fields, the approach to the Town from the west showing the Church Tower.*
- *The Avenue, the Warren, the Rhee Wall, the Greens, St Nicholas Church, the view up and down the High Street and the view of the escarpment surrounding the Marsh (everywhere).*
- *High Street, area round St Nicholas Church, St Martin's field area, The Old School area.*

9. In your opinion, what impact does road traffic have upon the Conservation Area?

- *The volume of traffic is causing damage to the historic buildings; traffic improvements by the Highways Authority have also had a negative impact and have not worked.*
- *Parking on the streets and roads within the CA (Area Map 1) leads to congestion and restricted vehicle movement from through traffic and residents trying to enter their properties.*
- *Due to the increase in population within the catchment area of New Romney, combined with tourists and the still high level of through traffic, the existing parking facilities are insufficient and provision of additional long stay parking within the CA (Area Map 1), via echelon parking around carefully defined areas should be seriously considered.*
- *Very considerable impact as the main road is not wide enough and congestion occurs with vehicles unloading. Coupled with this is the narrow pavement (only 3-4 feet in places) that is uneven and not maintained properly, or in character for the Town's status as a Cinque Port.*
- *Road traffic through the centre of New Romney down the High Street has a devastating effect on the CA. It makes it noisy, dangerous, dirty, a damaging effect on old buildings and a place to travel through and not visit. There have always been plans for a by pass and they are always a long way in the future.*
- *A huge detrimental impact. A259 – busy de-trunked high Street. Very heavy traffic 24/7, 6am-9pm – HGV's, motorbikes, cars.*

10. Do you think that there are any areas that would benefit from being 'car-free'? If so, please describe.

- *See Councillor Joynes' report*
- *Not very desirable*
- *The car parks are poorly designed, very badly maintained, prone to flooding but reasonable assessable.*
- *West Street and Church Lane – reasonably accessible. No crossing point adjacent to West Street / High Street. Car parks in poor state and not well maintained by Shepway DC.*

11. How well designed and accessible do you find the car parking areas? Please comment.

- *Within the CA (Area Map 1) there is public parking for vehicles in the West Street and Church Road short stay car parks. These are owned and managed by Shepway DC who impose a charge for parking. Church Road Car Park, the largest and most central, has public conveniences which are the only toilets within New Romney town area. The car park has bottle, cans, shoes and clothing banks within its boundary and on Sundays is used for household refuse collection. The waste collection lorries have taken a toll on the car park surface which has broken up, drains have been damaged and/or blocked and markings worn away. The car park is in dire need of repair; consideration should also be given to having a separate entry and exit to this car park to ease traffic movement.*

West Street Car Park surface is in fair condition but needs to be re-marked; it would greatly benefit the area if there were additional public conveniences located within this car park.

- *The CA (Area Map 2) is purely a residential area. There are no existing car parks or allocated parking areas for vehicles and it is not intended to provide any. Allocated parking is available nearby to this CA in Fairfield Road (not shown on map) where parking is available alongside St Nicholas C of E Primary School playing field. This parking is not signposted and would not be known to casual visitors or through traffic. There is no charge or specified time limit for parking in this location.*
- *Not sufficient guidance and more aims and objectives from the authorities should be given. Design should be scrutinised more thoroughly by SDC to see whether it confirms or if changes could be made.*
- *There is definitely insufficient guidance, and what does exist is not adhered to, a comprehensive set of guidance notes which clearly identify a set of rules which will not be ignored by the servants of the council and is available to all.*
- *I don't know what the guidance is.*

12. Are the streets and public areas generally appealing and easy to use? Please comment.

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13. Do you consider that street furniture complements the Conservation Area or if not, what improvements would you suggest?

- *Signage and street furniture should be tidied up – there are too many with different styles – all should comply to an agreed design.*

14. Do you feel that sufficient Conservation Area guidance exists to guide development proposals (however small or large)? If not, what would you like to see?

- *To our knowledge Shepway District Council do not have a sufficiently robust policy for CA's. There is an absence of design detail for development within a CA so developers are not encouraged to design sympathetic buildings. The Planning Authority appear to be allowing just about anything (Daily Mail Book of Plans). Shepway District Council, as the local Planning Authority, should provide a design statement that incorporates a typical design that would be acceptable for development within a CA.*

Included within a design statement should be guidance for decorating the outside of buildings – area can be enhanced by sympathetic decorating.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *The flint and /or brick walls within the CA, some of which are Listed Buildings, contribute to the street scene. Repairs should be sympathetic to the original build.*
- *It would be lovely if we could enforce retrospective planning (see SPAR sop). We must conserve and protect our heritage so thanks for giving me the opportunity to comment.*