

37 The primary influences on plan form and building types are the natural landscape and the unusual development history, in which there was neither organised settlement planning nor patronage in the usual sense of the word. The Estate, in succession to British Rail, simply allowed individual self-building on very short leases, now replaced by long leases, though it is not known how many residents have taken up the offer. Before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, there appears to have been little de facto control over development in the area, the forms and materials conforming more or less by tradition to the lightweight, semi-transient beach house types. After the Act came into force permission for any new buildings or major extensions would have been required. However it is likely that some unauthorised development took place, eventually acquiring lawful status on account of the 'four year rule.'

38 Local feedback, via the local community website, observes:

'Usually settlements have a framework from their inception which includes a main street and other track ways, with boundaries delineated in some way or another. All these rules were broken at Dungeness as the inhabitants made their own tracks...moving from place to place at will. The dwellings had no boundaries as the beach was valueless regarding crops etc. so the whole hamlet was [theoretically] mobile. When the permanent road was in place movement forward [i.e. towards the sea] with the houses halted so what can be seen now is a "frozen" mobile settlement.'

Architectural and historic qualities and contribution to special interest.

39 Gabbé (op cit) has written extensively on the architectural qualities of the buildings and how they contribute to the character of the area:

40 'The fishermen's bungalows at Dungeness were, however of the form of construction advocated for removal and re-erection although whether this was seen as a likelihood by them is improbable. It was however a cheap and lightweight form of construction. Ocean View was built for the local postman in 1915-16 for £175.

41 In the late 1920s further development took place at Dungeness when about thirty dwellings were established using redundant railway carriages...They were established for the most part as holiday homes although some became permanent homes for the growing number of fishermen and, in a few cases, for railway workers...'

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Railway carriage converted into what have now become permanent homes



Ocean View, built for the local postman in 1916 for £175

42 The establishment of railway carriage and other lightweight bungalow housing forms followed a national trend which began in the late C19. It reached its peak in the interwar years with nearly a quarter of all the land in England changing hands. Farmers would sell land to speculators, who in turn sold plots (hence the term 'plotlands') to working class Londoners and others, who began to build their weekend or holiday shanties.

43 Gradually, the primitive settlements, typically on poor, low lying coastal land, became cohesive communities, growing stronger during and after the Second World War, when many people moved there permanently.



"The Haven" Plotland Museum, Langdon, Essex

44 Meanwhile, the self builders had been making aesthetic decisions. Every detail was available for satisfyingly detailed consideration and invention, with recycled materials for this most basic need.

45 However, the incipient self-help, self-build activity was to come to an abrupt end. The self-built shacks, chalets and shanties were considered by the powers-that-be a 'blot on the landscape' and the Second World War gave the authorities opportunity to destroy many of the coastal shacks as part of the Home Army's 'defence strategies'. With the 1947 Town & Country Planning Act, having brought such development under control, local policies soon echoed the sentiments of Patrick (later Sir Patrick) Abercrombie of 1926:

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- 46 “... innumerable wooden shanties have sprung up - better sociologically but artistically deplorable. Many of these are on wheels (although unmoved for years) in order to avoid rates; and whole fields have become so packed with them that they are extremely unsanitary ... the preserver of rural amenities cannot allow any sort of old junk cabin to deform the choicest spots” (Abercrombie, 1926)
- 47 Thus, in a manner of speaking, the postwar planning system itself, having stopped the course that evolution of plotland development might have taken, can be held responsible for the creation of a romanticised architectural martyrdom, leading in turn to the designation of some of these settlements as CA’s. A contrary view may be seen in the following:
- 48 ...Development at these plotland sites would, if permitted, represent sporadic piecemeal development outside defined settlements...Any spread of permanent housing in such locations would be in direct conflict with Structure and Local Plan policies...as well as the Government’s approach to sustainable development. This means that planning permission will not be granted for new dwellings on undeveloped plotland sites...As well as being poorly located for local services and other infrastructure requirements, it is recognised that many of these plotland dwellings, whether used as permanent or holiday accommodation, offer substandard living accommodation. Lawful dwellings will have “permitted development rights” to build extensions and it is considered that this will be sufficient to enable provision of all essential facilities. In a number of cases, due to the very small size of some chalets, their curtilages, and the space between chalets, even “permitted development” allowances can result in cramped development. The purpose of these restrictions is therefore to ensure that the impact on the landscape and the open character of the countryside is minimised and to protect residential amenity. Also, limiting the size will help control the demand on local services and infrastructure in generally unsustainable locations...[Tendring District Council Adopted Local Plan 2005]
- 49 Gabbé (op cit) goes on to characterise the houses at Dungeness as falling into three main categories:
- 1 Those based on railway carriages
 - 2 Timber framed dwellings
 - 3 A small number of conventional houses, mainly in the north of the area.
- 50 The railway carriage houses have all evolved, and some would not be recognisable as such today. Those that are can be identified from the curve of the carriage parts of their roofs. In some cases, lean-to verandas have been added, while in others, enclosed lean-tos have been erected both sides of the original carriage.

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Examples of some of the more conventional style houses to the north of the area



The evolution from railway carriage to a more permanent dwelling is still evident

- 51 Gabbé considers that the most aesthetically pleasing conversions follow a simple pattern in which one can see their evolution, generally producing a more controlled external appearance. He cites two good examples: ‘Stonihoe’ and ‘Openshore.’ He also acknowledges that part of their overall appeal is their variety. As these single carriage adaptations would serve as holiday or weekend homes but not as family dwellings, larger, permanent homes have evolved, created from two or more carriages with further extensions.
- 52 The timber framed houses, generally of fishing origin, vary from about 35 to 120 square metres. The eaves lines of some of these pitched roof, single storey houses are higher, to provide space for drying lofts, which are approached by open staircases at the gable ends. A small number of these houses do appear to have loft accommodation. Where present, their weatherboard cladding seems a more appropriate finish to the seaside locations.
- 53 A wide variety of external colour (painting is not subject to Article 4 control) and handling of “garden” areas adds to the eccentric tone. Lately, black seems to be increasingly fashionable, having been used purposefully by architect Simon Conder in his studied remodelling of the “black rubber” house, clad entirely in black “rubber” sheet, with a large section of wall composed of full height glazed doors. This house more than others signals the advent of a more sophisticated ‘designer hut’ demand.

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'Black Rubber' House designed by Architect Simon Conder (above) and the late Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage demonstrate the increasing demand for sophisticated design



54 Perhaps the best known black house is Prospect Cottage, the fisherman's cottage of the late film maker Derek Jarman. Jarman used Dungeness as the setting for his film *The Last of England*, an allegory on the social and sexual inequalities in England under Thatcherism. Before his death, he created a garden at Prospect Cottage which featured in his 1989 film *War Requiem*, and in the following year was the focal point of *The Garden*, 'a parable about the

cruel and unnecessary perversion of innocence' where it figured both as the Garden of Eden and the garden at Gethsemane. This particular house attracts considerable interest from visitors.

The contribution made by key unlisted buildings

55 Despite their varying condition, finish, detail and state of tidiness, virtually all the unlisted buildings contribute to the character of the area. The ensemble would be diminished if any were lost or altered to obscure their origins, i.e. where elements of the railway carriage or fisherman's cottage forms are still visible. Strangely, it is the more conventionally suburban building types that seem alien in this place. Prospect Cottage perhaps merits special note on account of its association with a well known artistic figure.

56 The local website lists the following:

- a Properties constructed around the old railway carriages for private use.
- b The old lighthouse (listed)
- c Round House (listed)
- d The Sanctuary



- e RH&D railway & café (*above*)
- f Restored old tanning copper (listed)
- g RNLI Coastguard Cottages
- h Watering House
- i The Britannia

Prevalent local and traditional building materials and the public realm

- 57 The basic building materials of the area have been described above. Variations in external walling which appear in harmony with the location include weather boarding, board and batten and shingle. Roofing is often bitumen felt, although other sheet materials, corrugated steel or asbestos, asbestos slates and slate do not seem out of place. Tiled roofs however do appear heavy and alien. Traditional fenestration is primarily painted softwood or metal, in a wide variety of patterns, giving the often genuine appearance of having been recycled from elsewhere, although 'alien' (by comparison with earlier types) UPVC windows are increasingly evident. Recently however, more sophisticated forms of fenestration have started to appear, as in the 'black rubber' house.
- 58 Apart from the small areas of informally colonised ground around houses and a few more formal boundaries (e.g. the C18 lighthouse base and its cottages) the public realm occupies everything else. Brick chimneys, often painted to suit the colour of the house, have been added to virtually all houses. The pubs and café are of slightly larger scale but not unduly so. The flat roofed render finished Britannia Inn (believed to be a converted PLUTO building [WW2 Pipe line under the Ocean project]) with its hard surfaced car park in the foreground is perhaps less successful, though not so much as to detract from the ensemble.

Greenery, green spaces and ecology/biodiversity value

- 59 This unique open space, over which people are free to roam, although discouraged by signs and recently installed boardwalks is the foremost characteristic of the area, taking precedence over buildings. The semi-wild character, materials, wild flora, bird and sea life are a highly valued asset. The Dungeness Bird observatory has reported a total of 23 nationally scarce plant species, very high for such a small and heavily disturbed area, as well as 65 locally scarce species. As they are carefully monitored and protected, there is little pressure upon them at present. Local comment, via the community website, alleges that:
- 60 "...There was, apart from Sea Kale, no plant life here in the late '40's and what growth has taken place has been largely due to the influx of new owners...The nuclear power stations built from the mid sixties formed an effective windbreak which assisted in the growth of plant life...
- 61 ...the plant life came from in the last 50 to 60 years...came from families creating little gardens, bringing soil from Ashford with all the suburban plants. The soil then spread, birds dropped seed, the wind blew seed but

without the soil brought to the barren beach very little plant life would have been given the chance to survive.

- 62 ...some of the erupted areas came about when 2nd world war shelters were blown up and in any event hundreds of thousands of tons of beach are extracted each year and transported to an area beyond the power stations...”

Negative and neutral factors

- 63 In this context the normal criteria for assessing negative factors within the CA are not applicable. One could perhaps cite the rusting vehicles marking the unkempt surroundings of some buildings, the alien forest of posts and web of overhead cables serving them, but others might simply see these as inalienable to the kind of place it is, although offensive to conventional sensibilities.
- 64 The few buildings that can be identified as negative or neutral are those which, in context are of alien form or material; two storey brick houses, a poor quality industrial element (recently granted Planning Permission for a replacement building) or a rendered utilitarian building. These are shown on the map.

General condition, problems, pressures and capacity for change

- 65 General condition of built fabric is variable, probably tending to improve spontaneously with increased property values generally, desirability of this location in prices for these dwellings, and corresponding rise in affluence of new owners. However, there are signs that this may be creating a new distinction between the expensive, carefully crafted (or adapted) “designer” cottage and the more casually evolving examples using whatever materials come to hand.
- 66 Pressure for further enlargement of what for the most part are still very small houses is likely to increase. Considerations will no doubt include whether the smallest houses are justified in upgrading in order to transform themselves from holiday to permanent homes, or to provide more up to date amenities. There may be a need to develop varied guidelines which take account of whether, for example, a particular dwelling lies within a coherent group or is isolated.

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- 67 The character of the CA is essentially that of scattered, unplanned development. The vast majority of the space is, and must remain unbuilt if its character in all its aspects is to be preserved. Yet, it is an acknowledged settlement, with, in theory, space for some further, characteristic, very small scale building, in very limited numbers, which could still preserve character. However, with the exception of a few dwellings at the northern end of the CA the remainder of the CA is outside the settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map of the District Plan Review. Therefore application of the statutory District Plan policies C01, C02, C04 and C06 and policy HP5 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan is likely to preclude any further development in this area.
- 68 It could be (and is by some locals) considered a glaring irony that the nuclear power stations' unmitigated domination of this landscape of acknowledged natural beauty can be overlooked, while comparatively minute change in the domestic landscape is thoroughly scrutinised and severely restricted.
- 69 Stakeholder feedback cites Building Regulations requirements as leading to undesirable conformity in appearance, though this is unsupported by evidence.
- 70 The current Article 4 direction, in place for the past 20 years has been demonstrably effective in controlling householder development. This is considered to have contributed to the preservation of the CA's character.

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

- 71 In accordance with English Heritage advice, the Council's brief included a requirement to involve key stakeholders in the appraisal process. The principal means was by a questionnaire, the content of which was agreed with the Client, requiring careful consideration and in some instances detailed responses. Careful regard to the questionnaire responses has been paid in this text.
- 72 The questionnaire was sent to 7 groups and individuals as advised by the Client. Of these, 4 responses were received. These are reported upon at Appendix 3. The most significant positive themes expressed were:
- 1 Low density, human scale, well ordered, pleasant place to live.
 - 2 Consciousness and pride in Dungeness' historic importance.
 - 3 Spatial and architectural values, complexity and variation.

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73 Critical comments raised by stakeholders, with our responses are set out in the table below.

Summary of issues raised by stakeholders

Comment	Response
<i>Erosion of shoreline through gravel extraction and natural forces.</i>	Consider long term conservation measures.
<i>Negative impact of nuclear power station.</i>	Agree, However, power station precedes CA designation. National interest seen to outweigh environmental/nature/conservation concerns at the time of construction. Same issues remain to be considered as part of long term energy and sustainability strategy. Decommissioning of Dungeness A is due to start soon
<i>The Pilot and RNSS terrace should be included in CA.</i>	Both sites do not physically or geographically lend themselves to inclusion: The Pilot appears more associated with Lydd and has recently been rebuilt. The RNSS terrace would require an excessively large area of open marsh to be included.
<i>Decking extensions and erection of boundaries should be more tightly controlled.</i>	We are not aware of excessively intrusive decking. Boundary enclosures should be controlled. Consider inclusion of existing or strengthened design guidelines within Management Plan phase.
<i>Potholes in road due to power station and visitor traffic</i>	Maintenance of this private road is outside LPA responsibility.
<i>Dungeness cannot be treated as other CA's.</i>	Agree, special guidance is required to measure against future proposals.
<i>Any new building in the CA, or extensions of current buildings beyond their existing footprint, will damage the shingle habitat of the SAC and SSSI.</i>	Reassessment of reasonable balance between the need to keep the community alive and requirements of nature conservation is needed. Any application must be considered by English Nature where it may affect the habitat.

SUGGESTED BOUNDARY REVISIONS

- 74 Inspection of the area reveals a number of buildings which are clearly products of the same historical process as that which led to the present CA designation. One of these is within the loop of the RH&D Railway, others scattered to the west of the main line. The Station Café is also included in this group. A boundary extension is therefore recommended to take in these buildings. At the same time, it is also recommended that the boundary should be adjusted so as to clearly include the whole width of the railway and a small area of its setting to the west (see Appendix 2).



The Station Café, recommended for inclusion within the CA

- 75 At the north end of the CA two small exclusions are recommended. Firstly, an open area to the north of the group of terraced cottages, which is not considered to warrant CA status as it is protected by other means. Secondly, the sites of the two westernmost modern suburban brick built bungalows of a line which appears to belong more to Lydd than to Dungeness, all behind a discordant brick wall.

LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

- 76 Guidance is required that will assist building owners to maintain and enhance their properties, whilst avoiding general suburban creep. However, the individuality of buildings demands sufficient care so as not to stifle creativity in how they continue to evolve.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 77 Issues which could be given more detailed consideration include:

- 78 Is there capacity for new development or enlargement of existing buildings?

Whilst CA criteria might admit some capacity, other existing Local Plan policies do not permit new development outside present settlement boundaries.

- 79 How, if at all should any intensification be allowed?

It is recommended that consideration is given to defining a maximum total floor area and/or volume for new or extended houses.

- 80 Should any development rise above single storey? What about rooms in roof spaces? Will this lead to pressure for dormers, and so on?

It is recommended that new developments should not exceed a single storey and that roof pitches should not exceed 45 degrees or the existing pitch, whichever is lower. Dormers should not be permitted.

- 81 Is there a limit to the 'natural' evolution of the area? If so what?

As an historic area, preservation of character depends to a great extent upon intelligent management of its evolution. Existing residents should be closely involved in setting the direction and extent of evolution through the future Management Plan process.

- 82 What is the balance between preservation, enhancement and mitigation?

The emphasis should be on preservation of character. Enhancement should largely comprise measures to ensure that the settings of buildings are kept as free of debris as possible and that services are organised in a more unobtrusive manner. As the Power Station is likely

to remain for the foreseeable future, measures to mitigate its impact, including on the microclimate, should be considered.

- 83 What are the characteristic building forms and are they finite? Characteristic forms have been described in the Architectural Qualities section above.

Whilst clearly not 'set pieces' in any sense, setting limits to size, (overall floor area and volume), height, and form are appropriate to ensure that dwellings remain relatively modest and that, as with any CA, extensions or new elements do not dominate parent buildings.

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS/STRATEGY

- 84 Threats to the character of the CA by way of area analyses and stakeholder comment have been noted above. The most common appear to be concerns about extensions or any form of new development. At the same time, the unconventional attraction of this previously uncontrolled, evolved settlement is acknowledged, alongside a somewhat grudging acceptance of the arrested development brought about by the planning system. There is as yet no clear formula for reconciling these two forces. Normal definitions of inappropriate alteration or extension do not apply here. Yet, guidance providing topic-based detailed advice on process, acceptable and unacceptable design and other relevant matters is needed.

- 85 The main problems and pressures identified should be addressed in the guide. Topics could include:

- 1 Description of principal features
- 2 Extensions
- 3 Building materials and details
- 4 Roof forms and expression of historic origins
- 5 Rain and foul water systems
- 6 Chimneys
- 7 Porches
- 8 Windows and doors
- 9 Parking arrangements
- 10 Outbuildings
- 11 Boundary definition
- 12 Plant species
- 13 Communication aerials
- 14 Reinstating lost features
- 15 How to make an application

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- 86 Issues concerning works within the public realm, which are within the control of the Council, should be grouped together for inclusion in a policy document for implementation. Co-ordination of services and signage so as to minimise their obtrusiveness is an obvious area for consideration. Sensitive layouts and surfaces for car parking is another.
- 87 Consideration should be given in the Management Plan Stage to the development of a detailed local evaluation tool which would be more objective in measuring development proposals, whether alterations or new build, against the key characteristics of the CA, or its character areas, as appropriate.



USEFUL INFORMATION

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