

# ELMSTONE HOLE CONSERVATION AREA

## Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

- 1.1.1. The concept of conservation areas was first brought into being by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, but the relevant legislation now is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. This act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.1.2. Designation as a conservation area makes additional controls available to the local authority. Briefly these include the control of demolition of unlisted buildings, more restricted permitted development rights for single dwelling houses and protection of trees.
- 1.1.3. In addition to these enhanced powers, the local authority is also required when dealing with applications for planning permission to have special regard to the question of whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. (Section 72.1 of the Act) There is a presumption that developments which would not preserve or enhance this special character should be refused planning permission.



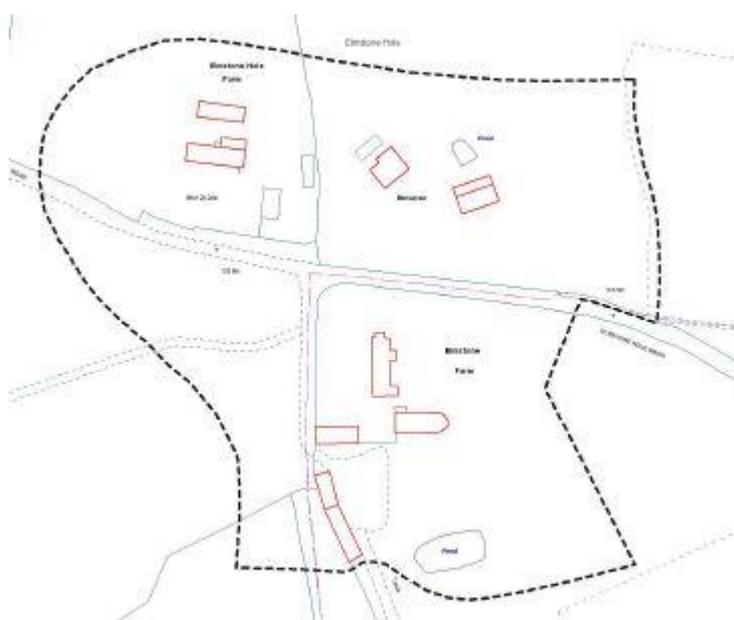
The derelict oast – part of the Elmstone property

## 1.2. Background to the Appraisal

- 1.2.1. Local authorities are required, by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to carry out reviews of conservation area boundaries (Section 69.2 of the Act). This is to consider whether the boundaries should be increased or decreased depending on the continued contribution that the area to its special character. It will also assist in the process of making informed decisions on planning applications where it is important to value and take into account the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.
- 1.2.2. The most appropriate form for fulfilling these requirements is the production of a conservation area appraisal for each individual conservation area. Historic England published an advisory booklet on the form which conservation area appraisals should take in February 2019 and this current appraisal has been prepared in accordance with these guidelines. It is intended to identify the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural character of the conservation area, to analyse how they interact and impact upon one another and to explain how the area has developed into its current form. It will also seek to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the conservation area and sites and features which detract from its character and appearance.
- 1.2.3. The clear understanding of the conservation area's qualities which the appraisal produces will provide suggestions for future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual proposals may be assessed

## 1.3. History of Designation

- 1.3.1. Elmstone Hole Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council on 18 November 1977. At the time no Appraisal was carried nor was a Management Plan prepared. The map of the conservation area has not been reviewed since 1977



Current conservation area boundary

## **2. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

- 2.1.1. Elmstone Hole is a settlement too small to be classed as a village. It is formed of three properties which form a loose and picturesque arrangement on either side of Elmstone Hole Road. The three properties are each made up of a principal house with a number of outbuildings and each addresses the road in different way. Elmstone Hole Farm faces the road but is set back from it and is discreetly behind a Ragstone wall with a formal garden to the front. Elmstone Farm is perpendicular to the road and the entrance faces onto its own access road. Elmstone is set well back within its site and set in a semi natural landscape. Each property enjoys open views to the south over the Weald.
- 2.1.2. There is no doubt that these properties combine to constitute a coherent community but it is a factor in the character of the place that the buildings are widely spaced discrete units on individual plots.
- 2.1.3. A further characteristic is the isolation of the settlement. The approach road, Elmstone Hole Road, is narrow but serves as a link road between Headcorn and Lenham Roads. It is a busy road serving local farms and for those wishing to avoid Platts Heath. It is also devoid of built development along its entire route except for the settlement itself. This sense of remoteness is particularly evident at night as there are no streetlights or even illuminated signs along the road.

## **3. LOCATION AND SETTING**

- 3.1.1. The conservation area lies within the parish of Lenham. The parish boundary encloses an area of approximately 25 square kilometres in a roughly square shape. It is approximately 10 miles southeast of Maidstone and the same distance northwest of Ashford. The parish sits on the meeting line of the exposed Greensand Ridge and lower lying area of Wealden clay so that the northern part rides up the scarp of the ridge, the middle section is sandy heathland and the southern area is largely clay over underlying Greensand. Elmstone Hole is at the southern extremity of the parish and although Ragstone, Hassock and Fuller's Earth are found in this linear geological band none has been discovered in recoverable quantities at Elmstone Hole.
- 3.1.2. The northern part of the parish, corresponding to the chalk formation, forms part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which runs east/west along the escarpment thus formed north of the A20. Elmstone is an altogether quieter landscape of rolling hills, woods and farmland which contrasts with the heathlands, which provide an easy route for the M20 and London Victoria mainline railway, and which separates Elmstone from the dramatic Greensand Ridge. There is an outcrop of Greensand around Elmstone Hole and this accounts for the hilly character of the locality. Where the local appearance of Greensand meets the clay topsoil there are several springs and these are very evident in the conservation area.
- 3.1.3. The hamlet of Elmstone Hole is set in a pocket of land where there relatively steep hills form an undulating topography. The area is heavily wooded while most of the land surrounding is used for agriculture.



View of the Weald from Elmstone Hole Road

#### **4. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **4.1. Archaeology**

- 4.1.1. There has been no recorded archaeological investigation carried in the conservation area. It is a relatively small conservation area (about 4 hectares) and is away from the main routes and obvious settlement sites and, unlike Lenham village, has not therefore so far warranted close inspection.
- 4.1.2. Some Mesolithic and Neolithic implements were found in the 1950's close to the surface in farmland. These are held by Maidstone Museum.

##### **4.2. Development History**

- 4.2.1. The history of Elmstone Hole is bound up with the appearance and growth of Lenham village. Here the first charter dated 804 records that Cenwulf and Cuthred – Kings of Mercia and Kent respectively – granted land and swine pastures in the vicinity to the abbot of St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury. The Domesday Book records that the abbot held the manor of the village then called Lertham which included arable land, meadow, woodland, forty villagers, seven smallholders, one slave and two mills.
- 4.2.2. The village has grown up close to the foot of the Greensand Ridge where there are a number of useable springs and the Pilgrims' Way passes by in close proximity. It is also at the junction of other ancient tracks. One of these tracks runs from Lenham and joins a Roman road at Benenden. It may well have passed through or close to Elmstone Hole. Another may have begun its life as a track used to transport Wealden iron.
- 4.2.3. The earliest settlement at Lenham is unknown but a number of Saxon burials of the 6<sup>th</sup> century have been discovered. Certainly by the 9<sup>th</sup> century royal grants show that

Lenham was at the centre of a royal estate which was transferred to St Augustine's, Canterbury where it remained throughout the Middle Ages.

- 4.2.4. In 1086 William 1 (the Conqueror) granted to the abbot, as lord of the manor, the right to hold a market on Tuesdays. This and an annual fair were confirmed by charter of Henry III in 1217.
- 4.2.5. The manor was retained by the abbey until 1538 the great dissolution. It is believed that the manor was run from Court Lodge in the grounds of the abbey farm - a farm which also had two great barns used for the storage of tithes collected from across the estate. The barns were burnt down, along with the abbey church at the end of the 13th century. All three buildings were replaced within a few years
- 4.2.6. During the medieval period the economy of the parish was predominantly based on agriculture but the range of activities was very mixed – the abbey farm itself had arable land, pasture, hay production, dairy cows and other stock along with three mills. Two mills are recorded in the Domesday Book but none of the locations are known. After Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries the manor and farm passed into private hands but the economy remained firmly rooted in the use of the land for agriculture. The type of farming did, however, become more focussed with a concentration on stock animals and hops. Over the last two centuries this has changed once again to a situation where the majority of the farmland is used for arable crops and fruit.
- 4.2.7. Elmstone Hole would seem to have developed from the 15<sup>th</sup> century as a farming entity and an outlying farmstead to Lenham. It was a single holding until the 20th century when the Weeks family sub divided the ownership. It does not appear to have had any supporting infrastructure and must have relied on its own devices and close by villages for support.
- 4.2.8. Historically there was a gibbet at Elmstone Hole. A path and steps run up to it at the top of the escarpment from a path leading away from Elmstone Hole Road.



Gibbet Steps

## 5. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 5.1.1. Elmstone Hole has a feeling of remoteness and isolation. This is part of its attraction along with a sense of stepping back into the past. It is set in a landscape of steep hills and large areas of woodland. The road which passes through the settlement is a narrow winding single track lane and the three farmsteads are somewhat set back from it. Each farmstead is a collection of buildings which suggests that many supporting domestic functions were carried out by the occupiers in the absence of supporting trades such as blacksmiths and bakers.
- 5.1.2. Elmstone Hole Farmhouse and Elmstone Farm are well preserved 15th century timber framed houses which are extremely picturesque and unspoilt. They are now private houses where they would once have been working farm buildings and are semi concealed from the lane by high walls and hedges. Elmstone Hole Farmhouse has a separately listed oast and stowage building to its rear. Elmstone Farmhouse has a number of unlisted associated buildings now all-in residential use.
- 5.1.3. Elmstone, the third property in the conservation area, is a nineteenth century house which originally had a separate oast house close by and a detached bake house (originally the first building on the site when the whole of Elmstone Hole was one farmstead) to the rear. The property now known as Elmstone was abandoned in 1966. As part of a recent and ongoing renovation of the property the farmhouse has been extended to incorporate the bake house and the intervening space. The last phase of the restoration is focussed on the oast.
- 5.1.4. There is a pond on the south side of the lane. It would have served originally as the village pond but is now largely overgrown and is not maintained. It is fed from a spring found at the base of the ridge behind Elmstone Hole Farm. The resulting stream passes through the gardens of both properties to the north of the road before being culverted under the road to reach the pond.
- 5.1.5. The lane is a narrow winding single track tarmacked road. It is in poor condition and is constantly wet and muddy due to the water running off the hills to the north. There are no footpaths and no street lighting – the only street furniture being a lone telegraph pole. Generally the boundary treatments of the adjacent properties come right up to the road but there is one area to the front of Elmstone Hole Farm where the ancient Ragstone wall which forms the boundary at this point is set well back from the road leaving a grass verge to the lane.
- 5.1.6. The conservation area is currently on the Historic England register of buildings at risk. This, it is assumed, is because of the dilapidated condition of the house known as Elmstone and its associated oast. The property has recently been bought and a process of restoration begun. The house and bake house have already been renovated and the work on oast has begun. It is hoped that that with the property being returned to active use and fully restored the conservation area can be removed from the register.



Elmstone the house and bake house now restored and linked

## 6. AUDIT OF ASSETS

- 6.1. A description of the buildings within the conservation area follows. These descriptions are based on examination from the street and historic map analysis. Buildings have not been examined internally or from non-public viewpoints.
- 6.2. All the farmsteads within the conservation area are essential to its character due to their high level of architectural or historic interest and should be retained although there are elements of the individual groups of buildings which are not providing a positive contribution to its character and whose retention is not advantageous to the character of the conservation area.
- 6.3. Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:
  - Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
  - Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily
  - Neutral - buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary.
  - Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character where re-development would be advantageous.



The current farmstead grouping of Elmstone Farm

| Name                        | Grade  | Description   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Elmstone Farm</b></p> | <p>Grade II<br/> <a href="#">1336296</a></p>   | <p>Main Building – farmhouse C15. Broad spaced 4 bay timber frame rendered to ground floor and plaster infill above. Steeply pitched peg tile roof hipped with gablets. <b>Essential</b></p> <p>Subsidiary buildings</p> <p>1 Modern poss. C20. 2 storey house at right angle to farm house. Brick and Ragstone ground floor with regular weather boarding to upper storey under plain tiled roof. <b>Positive</b></p> <p>2 Brick and weatherboard clad outbuildings under a plain tiled roof. <b>Positive</b></p> <p>3 Single storey C20 building running adjacent to access road and foot path. Concrete block construction clad with white painted weatherboarding. <b>Neutral</b></p> |
|                             |  |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Elmstone Hole Farm</b></p>   | <p>Grade II<br/><a href="#">1336334</a></p> | <p>This is a C15 farmhouse and a typical Wealden form with 2 bay hall and a 2 storey extension at the service end. Broadly spaced timber frame with plaster infill and a peg tile hipped roof. Added brick stack to hall side of crossing and separate stack to extension. <b>Essential</b></p> |
|   |   |   |
| <p><b>Oast House to Elmstone Hole Farm</b></p>                                       | <p>Grade II<br/><a href="#">1186150</a></p> | <p>Much more modern than the farmhouse – poss C19. Square oast with attached stowage. Uncoursed Ragstone with brick dressings and peg tile roof. Converted to residential use.</p>  |
|  |   |   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Elmstone</b></p>  | <p>Grade II Oast only <a href="#">1086110</a></p> | <p>House C19 timber framed with Flemish bond brick cladding to ground floor and tile hanging above. Gabled peg tile roof with small central stack either end. <b>Essential</b><br/>         Bake house formerly detached single storey uncoursed Ragstone building with clay tile roof. <b>Essential</b><br/>         Oast is round brick form rising from within a timber framed stowage on Ragstone plinth. Timber frame and entire roof of oast is lost – currently awaiting restoration. <b>Essential</b></p> |
|  |   |   |

## 7. APPROACHES AND VIEWS

- 7.1. The approach from the northwest is along Elmstone Hole Road – a narrow track which joins with Lenham Road at an easily missed entirely understated junction. The road winds gently downhill lined with trees or hedges close to the roadside with farmland beyond. There is a complete absence of built development. There are occasional views north to the Greensand ridge and very fleeting glimpses south to the Weald that is until close to the settlement the banks rise up and enclose the view completely. Once in Elmstone Hole the banks lining the road drop away and the views open up once more but here they are to the south and the Weald.
- 7.2. It is a similar experience leaving Headcorn Road and heading northwest towards Elmstone Hole. The route is generally a gentler slope but where the trees lining the road allow there are good views southward to the Weald. There is some advance notice of the approaching settlement when the rear of Elmstone Farm comes into view and then as Elmstone Hole is reached the vista opens up to the north with Elmstone Hole Farm in the foreground and the wooded hills beyond
- 7.3. The downside to the journey in either direction on Elmstone Hole Road is the quality of the road surface and the amount of mud that accumulates on it. The road is not adequately maintained and is frequently wet due to the springs to the immediate north which both bring the mud with them and wash away the road surface.



**Approaching Elmstone Hole from the southeast**

## **8. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS**

- 8.1. The character of conservation areas can suffer significantly from the cumulative impact of 'minor alterations' which can be carried out to single dwelling houses as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order without the need for planning permission. Such alterations can include replacement windows and doors and re-roofing using inappropriate non-traditional materials.
- 8.2. The local authority can seek to bring such minor alterations under planning control by the use of directions under article 4 of the general permitted development order. article 4 directions can increase the public protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings.
- 8.3. As most of the principle buildings in Elmstone Hole are on the National Heritage List for England (the oast at Elmstone is but not the house nor bakehouse) they already have the protection that an article 4 would bring but that does not rule out something arising in the future, for example about boundary issues, where an Article 4 may be helpful.

## **9. PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE**

- 9.1. The Elmstone Hole conservation area is an interesting example of a Kentish rural settlement that has survived without significant change since the nineteenth century. It is now an important heritage asset and that has been recognised by the listing of a high proportion of its buildings and designation as a conservation area. It is given its particular character by the dominant presence of its two late Mediaeval houses which although of significantly different styles provide a kind of unity through their exposed timber frames and white infill panels. Also its very sense of remoteness and the surprise of coming across this little cluster of properties with its tenuous link to the rest of this part of Kent and surrounded by open countryside is key to an understanding of its character.
- 9.2. Modern developments which are all additions to the existing properties have not taken away from the character of the conservation area. They are generally modest and considerate and built from appropriate materials and with detailing which reflects the qualities of the listed buildings. The listed buildings too have remained generally free of alterations which have impacted negatively on so many historic areas – inappropriate replacement doors and windows, eye catching boundary treatments and the like.
- 9.3. Elmstone Hole is a well cared for hamlet and that definition now happily extends to Elmstone which is being carefully and intelligently restored having spent several decades without a roof (to any of its collection of buildings) and suffering terrible decay. The remaining task is the reworking of the derelict oast house as a discrete dwelling which is planned to begin in 2021.
- 9.4. Given its cohesive and distinct character there seems to be little opportunity for development in the conservation area. Those buildings or sites which are assessed as ‘essential’ or ‘positive’ will not normally be considered appropriate for demolition or redevelopment. Proposals for the redevelopment of ‘neutral’ sites will be required to match or to enhance the existing condition. No sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are none where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There is little scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of, and view lines across, the conservation area.
- 9.5. The element where improvement could happen is in the public realm and would be the upgrading of the road surface and possibly the installation of some positive drainage. The rumble strips installed to direct the water have been less than successful.
- 9.6. The present conservation area boundary was drawn up it would seem with little reference to property boundaries or geographical features. It would be a worthwhile exercise to make the boundary more relevant to what exists on the ground without disturbing any more than is necessary its general area.
- 9.7. Once the work to restore the oast at Elmstone is under way there can be an application to remove the conservation area from the register of buildings at risk.



Boundary of Conservation area – current shown dotted and proposed shown red

# CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

## 10. INTRODUCTION

- 10.1.1. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69 of the 1990 Act also imposes the duty on the local authority to determine from time to time whether any further parts of the borough should be included within a conservation area.
- 10.1.2. Recent guidance from Historic England (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2019) suggests that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas should take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy setting objectives for addressing issues and recommendations for action arising from a previously published conservation area appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for their implementation. Such a strategy is generally given the title of a conservation area management plan.
- 10.1.3. It is important to note that a conservation area management plan cannot introduce entirely new planning objectives. Instead it will need to refer to the original legislation; to government guidance (mainly National Planning Policy Framework for heritage assets); to the adopted local plan policies; and to the emerging Local Development Framework. It can interpret established legislative provisions and planning policies and explain how they will be applied within the conservation area to ensure its preservation and/or enhancement. If any particular issues are identified which do require new policies to be drawn up, the management plan can indicate these and set a programme for their development as part of the Local Development Framework process.
- 10.1.4. This Management Plan for the Elmstone Hole conservation area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 9.0 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal and outlines any proposals for boundary changes as also suggested by the Appraisal.

## 11. POLICY CONTEXT

### 11.1. National Policy

- 11.1.1. National policy and advice regarding conservation area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is available to at the link given below ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)).
- 11.1.2. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF points out that the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas . Paragraph 185 sets out the benefits that accrue from preserving the historic environment whether it be the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental advantages, the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution or the opportunities arising from an understanding of the intrinsic character of a place.



The restored bake house at Elmstone

11.1.3. The Historic England guidance document ([Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016](#)) refers to the importance of keeping the boundaries of existing conservation areas under periodic review to ascertain whether any changes are required.

11.1.4. The document suggests that designation of a conservation area in itself is unlikely to be effective without the formulation of specific policy guidance and reminds local planning authorities of the duty imposed on them by Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and for these to be submitted to a ‘public meeting’ in the area. Paragraph 4.16 points out that such proposals cannot realistically seek to prevent all new development and should instead concentrate on the controlled and positive management of change; indeed, it is suggested that there may be instances where redevelopment will be a means of enhancing character.

## 11.2. Local Policy

11.2.1. Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2017. (<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/local-plan-information>) A supplementary planning document on conservation areas has not yet been produced. There will be specific reference to heritage assets in the Local Plan due to be published in 2022. While this Management Plan indicates how national and local policies will be applied in the on-going management of the conservation area, it is not in itself a planning policy document but Local Plan policy DM4 refers to conservation area appraisals and management plans as supporting documents so they are material to planning considerations.

11.2.2. The Lenham Neighbourhood plan now forms part of the statutory development plan for Maidstone Borough following the successful referendum result on the 6th of May 2021.

## 12. PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

### 12.1. Planning Considerations

- 12.1.1. Sensitive and responsive management of development pressure is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas. To this end, the Council will adopt the following principles when dealing with planning applications within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.
- 12.1.2. The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the further guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and any subsequent revisions, additions or replacement government guidance.
- 12.1.3. The Council will apply the relevant policies from the Maidstone Local Plan 2017 until such time as these policies are replaced by a future Local Plan or by policies in the emerging Local Development Framework.
- 12.1.4. The Council will require all planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough document setting out the reasons for the development, explaining how the design has been evolved and showing how it will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area; it should also cover any access issues which exist. There is guidance on preparing a Design and Access Statement produced by CABE (CABE was merged with the Design Council in 2011) (<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-and-access-statements-how-write-read-and-use-them> ). In some cases a separate Heritage Statement will also be required. Historic England have published guidance on this aspect in 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>). The Maidstone web site gives advice on the content of a planning application – see [validations checklist](#).
- 12.1.5. Applications must be accompanied by clear and accurate drawings showing the proposed development in detail and illustrating how it fits in to its context. Drawings should clearly indicate materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of proposed buildings. Site plans should accurately depict the positions of trees on or adjacent to the site and show clearly those which will need to be removed and those which will be retained. Where trees are affected by the proposals the application should include a survey by a professional arboriculturist to comply with current British Standard BS5837, 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations'. It should also include details of any proposed works to, and methods for protecting, any retained tree. Photographs and other illustrative media are encouraged. Any applications which fail to provide adequate detail will not be registered.
- 12.1.6. Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.

- 12.1.7. The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications within the conservation area or affecting its setting.
- 12.1.8. The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether or not it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused. The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high quality contemporary design, subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail and materials of local tradition. The council encourages the use of the pre-application process which ensures that planning officers are aware of a proposal at an early stage and can give advice to ensure the appropriateness and quality of any design. See [pre application guidance](#).



**The oast at Elmstone Hole Farm**

- 12.1.9. In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and in this Management Plan. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being ‘essential’ to the character of the conservation area, and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as ‘positive’; buildings cited as ‘neutral’ may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstances; the redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be ‘negative’ will usually be encouraged so long as any

scheme is appropriate to its context. Conservation Area Consent will not normally be granted to demolish buildings in the absence of an approved scheme of redevelopment.

- 12.1.10. Development should respect the differing spatial forms of parts of the street in the conservation area. Space between buildings as well as the character of the buildings themselves and the streetscape and views contribute to the overall character of the conservation area and the setting of its buildings.
- 12.1.11. New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the conservation area and which can be demonstrated as being used widely in the locality.
- 12.1.12. Buildings should respect the predominant scale, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 2 storeys in height (although attic accommodation may be acceptable).
- 12.1.13. Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, whether or not they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. All trees within the conservation area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size.
- 12.1.14. The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the conservation area.
- 12.1.15. In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:-
- 12.1.16. Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).
- 12.1.17. Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale and design. No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Depending on circumstances, dormers should either be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof or, in the case of smaller or shallower roofs, a flat lead roof above a traditionally detailed cornice. They should not appear crowded together or be located too close to hip or gable lines. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.
- 12.1.18. Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same provisos as dormers in relation to numbers, position and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used.
- 12.1.19. Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- 12.1.20. Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be Ragstone walls, hedging, low

brick walls or metal railings. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

## **12.2. Enforcement Strategy**

12.2.1. Unauthorised development may seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area as well as causing other problems. The Council is therefore fully committed to using its powers under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to serve enforcement notices, where expedient, to allay breaches of planning control. [Section 9](#) of the Act sets out the relevant offences. Parallel powers to serve listed building enforcement notices regarding unauthorised works to listed buildings also exist by virtue of Section 38 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and these too will be used to their full. In suitable cases the Council may also exercise the legal provision to seek a prosecution for unauthorised works to a listed building or the unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building.



Accommodation building as outbuilding to Elmstone Farm – classed as neutral

## **13. ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **13.1. Buildings in Disrepair**

13.1.1. This is currently an issue in the Conservation Area but one which is being actively addressed. There are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to significantly adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area or to endanger the future of a listed building. These powers are:

13.1.2. Urgent Works Notices (Section 54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such notices can be served in respect of any vacant

building or, with the prior approval of the Secretary of State, a vacant unlisted building whose preservation is considered important to the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Works specified can only be the minimum necessary to make the building wind and weathertight and are thus essentially temporary in nature. The owner must be given at least seven day's notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

- 13.1.3. Listed Building Repairs Notices (Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). These can only be served in respect of listed buildings. Full and permanent repairs can be specified. If an owner fails to commence work on the specified works within 2 months of the service of a Repairs Notice, the Council may start compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to the building; no other recourse is made available by the legislation.
- 13.1.4. 'Untidy Site' Notices (Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such a notice can be served in respect of any land (including a building) which the Council considers to adversely affect the amenity of the surroundings. The necessary steps to remedy the condition of the land and building need to be set out in the Notice and at least 28 days given for compliance. Failure to comply is deemed an offence and is punishable by a fine.

## **13.2. Trees**

- 13.2.1. Trees are identified as important contributors to the character of the Conservation Area. All trees in a Conservation Area with a stem diameter generally above 75mm at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and six weeks formal prior notice to the Council is required for any proposal to cut down or carry out other work to such trees (a Section 211 Notice). Anyone who carries out unauthorised work to protected trees is likely to be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine. There may also be a duty to plant a replacement tree of appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as can reasonably be done. This duty may also apply if the tree has been removed because it was dead or dangerous.

## **13.3. Traffic Management**

- 13.3.1. There is very little traffic on Elmstone Road which is just as well as it would not be possible to deal even a modest amount of traffic. It is a single track lane with no passing places that winds along its route sometimes with blind bends. It is not suitable for heavy or wide lorries but there is no signage to restrict what kind of vehicle can use the road. This should be addressed as a matter of priority.
- 13.3.2. The road surface is in poor condition and deteriorating and is constantly covered in mud caused by run off from the surrounding fields.

## **13.4. Public Realm Improvements**

- 13.4.1. The public realm comprises Elmstone Hole Road only and the issues which affect it are outlined above. The rectification is self evident

13.4.2. There is no street lighting in the settlement and it may be appropriate to install some low level non intrusive bollard or wall mounted lighting locally

#### 14. PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

14.1.1. The Appraisal above records that the conservation area boundary is still largely relevant in the most part as it draws a line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. However, the boundary in parts bears no relationship with geographical features on the ground nor with plot boundaries. The plan on page 14 suggests a minor adjustment of the conservation area boundary to recognise these features and to make it a more logical arrangement.

#### 15. REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES

15.1.1. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed after an appropriate period of not less than five years and any required amendments will be incorporated.

#### 16. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

| ISSUE                                     | ACTION  | RESPONSIBILITY                                |
|---|---|---|
| Heritage at Risk Register                 | Apply for removal during 2021                         | Maidstone Borough Council<br>Historic England |
| Control vehicles using Elmstone Hole Road | Signage at junctions either end of Elmstone Hole Road | KCC Highways                                  |
| Condition of road                         | Resurface critical areas of Elmstone Hole Road        |   |
| Mud and water on road                     | Install positive drainage to north side of road       | KCC Highways                                  |

## Elmstone Hole CAA Bibliography 2020

| Author                          | Publication Date | Title   | Volume No | Edit or |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------|---------|
| Newman, John                    | 2012             | The Buildings of England Kent: West and the Weald   | -         | -       |
| Hasted, Edward                  | 1798             | The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent  | V5        |         |
| VillageNet                      | 1998             | Lenham in Kent  | -         | -       |
| KCC                             |                  | Kent Historic Environment Record<br><a href="https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx">https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx</a> |           |         |
| KCC Heritage Conservation Group | 2004             | Kent Historic Towns Survey<br>Lenham – Kent Archaeological Assessment Document  | -         | -       |
| Dr Harris                       | 1724             | A History of Kent   | -         | -       |

### USEFUL CONTACTS

Historic England Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA  
[customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Kent County Council (Heritage Conservation Group) Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14

Email: [heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk)

Maidstone Borough Council (Heritage, Landscape & Design), Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ.

Email: [PSTechnical@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:PSTechnical@maidstone.gov.uk)

### Professional Bodies

The Arboricultural Association, The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3DL T: +44(0)1242 522152 Email: [admin@trees.org.uk](mailto:admin@trees.org.uk)

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Email: <mailto:contactrics@rics.org>

The Institution of Structural Engineers, International HQ, 47-58 Bastwick Street, London, EC1V 3PS,  
United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)20 7235 4535

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) South East branch [SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)

Sutton Valence Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Parish Office, Sutton Valence Village Hall, North  
Street Sutton Valence ME17 3HS [steeringgroup@suttonvalenceplan.org](mailto:steeringgroup@suttonvalenceplan.org)

Design and Access Statements

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101121172431/http://cabe.org.uk/>

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