

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 10 January 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

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| 2. Notification of Substitute Members | |
| 3. Urgent Items | |
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| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying | |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information | |
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Issued on 21 December 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on 8 January 2024). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899**.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit the [Council's Website](#).

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, English, Mrs Grigg, Jones, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Paul Cooper (Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development)

84. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kimmance.

85. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Kimmance.

86. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that she had accepted an urgent update to Item 10 - Fees and Charges 2024/25, which contributed to the item's consideration.

87. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

88. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

89. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

90. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wishes to discuss Item 15 - Exempt Appendix to Item 14 - Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

91. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

92. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

93. FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report, highlighting the urgent update provided which clarified that a fee increase had been wrongly attributed to Sandling Road Car Park and updated development control fees as these had not been set when the report was published.

The Cabinet Member stated that the proposed fees and charges would increase income relating to the Committee's remit by £250,000, representing a 4.6% increase in budget figures. There were currently no changes proposed to any car parking charges, as these were set at a level reflecting demand and intended to attract visitors to the town centre. Building Control and planning fees had increased in accordance with central government changes, with the latter increasing by 35% for major applications and 25% for all others.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member stated that he was happy with the planning re-application fee set, with the pre-application increase due to the fee not having been increased in previous years. It was stated that the increase to some of the planning fees arose from being re-grouped into new charging groups, as opposed to increased fees.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET: That

1. The contents of the report, be noted;
2. The Fees & Charges policy, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, be noted; and
3. The Cabinet be recommended to approve the Fees & Charges as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

94. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and stated that Group Leaders and the Town Centre Users Group had been consulted on the developing Town Centre Strategy (the Strategy). A draft Strategy was not yet ready for public consultation, as further evidence and data was required to support the Strategy's development. The Committee was asked to consider the proposed 'Next Steps' within section 3 of the report, with the Leader stating that he thought the transport and movement review should be realistic, as opposed to a wide-ranging review of the urban traffic control system.

The Committee raised a number of points on the Strategy's aims and contents, and in response the Leader stated that:

- The Lighting and Greening Strategy reports would be presented in January 2024, and were being supported by time-limited UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Additional funding could be provided by allocating the funds

designated for Creative Maker Spaces should it not be needed after further research and/or was not ready;

- A comprehensive review of town centre parking was expected, and would include assessing the viability of building properties with and without parking facilities and the impact of future technology alongside parallel streams of work such as the Integrated Transport Strategy Review;
- The Residents Survey questions looked to increase the Council's understanding of rural residents' visits to the town centre, with the town centre needing something different to increase visitor demand to the area. As an example, the Leisure and Hospitality offering was changing, with further research required.
- The demand for retail space was reducing, with the Council to consider options in response. It was stated that sites such as Bluewater were popular as they acted to serve the demand for the wider area, with a good transport system in place to support visitors in return; and
- Actions were being taken to improve town centre safety, including through local policing and One Maidstone. As a district authority, the Council was not able to intervene in the provision of police and health services but could act on aspects such as lighting and encouraging partner organisations to improve their service provision. It was important to talk about the positive aspects of the borough.

In response to the comments made, the Chief Executive stated that:

- The car parking strategy review would require a fundamental review of how the Council manages demand and supply and would involve a range of stakeholders to include residential and business parking;
- There was demand for a Creative Maker Space, with further research required into its placement and if and how the Council would promote the activity. There was a direct line of communication between the Council and Kent County Council on the matter;
- The 'Next Steps' suggested would include obtaining contemporary data to support the Council in looking ahead as part of the Strategy, and define what success would look like. Engagement from Members was important, with Members being community leaders;
- The council had worked closely with Kent Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, having secured funding to support community safety initiatives which had led to significant improvements, although work would continue. A Crime Survey was conducted every few years, which directed the resources available to tackle the issues present;
- Members would be consulted on creating high quality town centre living, which would include discussing what they wished to achieve and what was viable, supported by case studies;
- Strategy and policy had a role in place making, with the example given of Jubilee Square whereby the Council's intervention had contributed to the site's

regeneration and resilience following Covid-19, to highlight the role the Council would have;

- Members had a role in promoting the positive aspects of Maidstone, through being Community Leaders.

During the discussion the Leader and the Chief Executive emphasised the Strategy's longevity in considering what actions to take, the level of appetite the Council should show in supporting and promoting change and the need to diversify the town centre's offering to maximise its viability into the future. The Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development confirmed that an engagement strategy would be developed, to engage with Members and the Community across different age groups to obtain as many views as possible in drafting the Strategy to 2050.

Several Committee Members expressed concerns that whilst ambitious and aspirational, the report did not outline how the Council would achieve the ambitions set out and that the Strategy may not be achievable overall. References were made to matters such as maximising the river and improving community and traffic infrastructure as examples. Overall, support was expressed for recommending that the Cabinet approve the next steps of the Strategy's development.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET: That

1. The update report be noted; and
2. The next steps set out in Section 3 of the Report for the development of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy, be approved.

Note: Councillor Grigg requested that her dissent with recommendation 1 be noted.

95. **KENT CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report and stated that Kent County Council would be adopting the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (the Plan). The Plan would be used primarily to support investment into walking and cycling across a 10-year period but would be a living document subject to regular review. The routes included in the consultation were outlined with it noted that the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum were also being consulted on the proposed response at appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed response and suggested amendments, including that; Headcorn should be included as a rural service area and that the R14-02 proposal was unfeasible due to the section's poor maintenance and existing road space available, in part due to the current parking facilities and possible disruption to residents.

It was also noted that there was poor maintenance on the Medway towpath route, with some Members highlighting that the existing cycle paths and ways should be better maintained generally and expressing concern as to the practicality of a

proposed route in the Local Plan Review between Maidstone town centre and Lidsing Garden Community.

The Cabinet Member agreed to include the points raised in the consultation response relating to the proposed consultation route but suggested that Members should contact the relevant County Member or the Environmental Agency for overgrown vegetation along the Medway towpath.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of the report be approved, including the Committee's additional comments.

96. MARDEN CONSERVATION APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report and stated that the local ward Members had been consulted on the matter, item and their comments fed back to the team to inform the report.

The Committee expressed support for the proposal.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That

1. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Marden Conservation Area, attached at appendix 1 to the report, be approved for public consultation; and
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to undertake public consultation for the Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

97. STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND - LOWER THAMES CROSSING

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report and advised that the decision was classified as urgent, with the call-in period having been waived by the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman and the Mayor to enable a response to the consultation to be submitted within the timeframe.

The Statement of Common Ground had been delayed whilst the Council waited for a response from National Highways on the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) contained within the exempt appendix. The Cabinet Member wished to submit the SoCG, as a separate SoCG had been circulated by National Highways which the Council had not subscribed to.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That the draft Statement of Common Ground on the Lower Thames Crossing between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways, attached at Exempt Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

98. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.14 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Cabinet or Cabinet Members expect to take during the next four-month period.

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

1. Results in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings, of more than £250,000; or
2. Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough

The current Cabinet Members are:

 <p> Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910 </p>	 <p> Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070 </p>	 <p> Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741 </p>
 <p> Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk </p>	 <p> Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907 </p>	 <p> Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000 </p>

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision or a Part II decision may not be taken, unless it has been published on the forward plan for 28 days or it is classified as urgent:

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key and part II decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan.

Copies of the Council's constitution, forward plan, reports and decisions may be inspected at Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on the [Council's Website](#), or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number **01622 602899** for further details.

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David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report ∞	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 8 Nov 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 14 Nov 2023</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023</p>	2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
Fees and Charges 2024/25 F&Cs for the PAC that will be used to charge for	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	Yes	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023	Fees and Charges 2024/25 CS PAC	<p>Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>services in 24/25</p> <p>6</p>						<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023</p>		
<p>Town Centre Strategy Update</p> <p>This report provides an update on the preparation of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy and sets out the proposed next steps.</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023</p>	Town Centre Strategy Update	<p>Karen Britton</p> <p>karenbritton@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>To seek approval of the Kent County Council (KCC) Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) consultation response as drafted by officers and appended to the report in Appendix 1.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Before 31 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Kent Walking Cycling Infrastructure report Appendix 1: Response to KCWIP Consultation	<p>Tom Gilbert</p> <p>tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Over-arching Conservation Management Plan</p> <p>The over-arching Conservation Area Management Plan has been drafted to address concerns that there was limited guidance on conservation areas that do not have either a conservation area appraisal or management plan.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 10 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Over-arching Conservation Management Plan	<p>Janice Gooch</p> <p>JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 10 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Janice Gooch JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk
Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme Report on the 1st round of CIL bidding and revised prospectus for the 2nd round of bidding with timetable/programme	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme	Rob Jarman, Carole Williams Head of Development Management, Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk, carolewilliams@maidstone.gov.uk
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme Detail of the 10 year capital programme for inclusion in the budget for 2024/25 onwards.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024 Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme	Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove Head of Finance paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@m

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
12						Committee 9 Jan 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 Jan 2024		aidstone.gov.uk
Maidstone Local Bus Focus Group A report on the options to for the successor to the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership.	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	30 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024	Maidstone Local Bus Focus Group	Tom Gilbert tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
13 3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024</p>	3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts</p>	Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	<p>James Wilderspin</p> <p>Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager</p> <p>jameswilderspin@m</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
14						Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024		aidstone.gov.uk
Key Performance Indicators Key performance indicators are reviewed annually. This report proposes the KPIs for the period 2024/25.	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee	Key Performance Indicators	Carly Benville, Anna Collier carlybenville@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
15						30 Jan 2024 Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024 Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024		

Agenda Item 10

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee

10 January 2024

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	10 January 2024
Cabinet	24 January 2024
Council	21 February 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25 and setting next year's Council Tax. It develops the outline of the capital programme and reconfirms the principles behind the Council's capital strategy, explains how the capital programme will be funded, and describes the individual schemes within the remit of this Committee.

The approved capital programme is not approval to spend. Prior to any capital commitment being entered into, a detailed report setting out a full project appraisal and detailed financial projections is considered by the relevant service committee.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on capital programme schemes within its remit.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee:

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that it:

1. Agrees the capital programme 2024/25 onwards as set out in Appendix B to this report;
2. Notes that agreement to recommendation 1 above will be subject to the prudential borrowing limit which will be recommended to Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. Specifically, the capital programme allows for investment in long term projects that support the strategic plan objectives.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	Set out in the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Staffing implications are taken into account when developing individual capital schemes.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including securing effective arrangements for treasury management.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to fulfilling its duties under the Act.</p> <p>Approval of the budget is a matter reserved for full Council upon recommendation by the Cabinet.</p>	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Senior Information Governance Officer
Equalities	This report sets out the overall capital programme. When an individual capital	Equalities and

	scheme is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence-based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.	Communities Officer
Public Health	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets the overall priorities for the capital programme.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets the overall priorities for the capital programme.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	Procurement of the capital schemes described in section 2 of this report will be in accordance with the procurement provisions within the Council's constitution.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Biodiversity & Climate Change	The capital programme includes provision for funding to deliver schemes which will help meet the Council's biodiversity and climate change objectives.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

- 2.1 The capital programme plays a vital part in the Council's Strategic Plan, since long term investment is required to deliver many of the objectives of the plan. The capital programme is now a rolling ten-year programme, so sets out over the medium term how the Council will invest its capital resources.
- 2.2 The current capital programme 2023/24 – 2027/28 was approved by Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023 and totals £201.9 million over five years. Details of schemes within the remit of this Committee are set out in Appendix A.
- 2.3 As part of the budget setting process the capital programme has been reviewed to ensure it is affordable and sustainable. To aid this we have increased the period of the capital programme to 10 years so we understand the longer term implications of borrowing. As part of setting the capital programme we have carried out challenge sessions to ensure projects meet the Council's defined core principles for the inclusion of schemes within the capital programme.
- 2.4 The 10 year programme totals £444.5m. Individual items within the programme will be subject to specific reports for approval to spend through relevant governance. Overall, it is considered that the expansion of the programme is affordable and sustainable and is required in order to deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

Capital Strategy

- 2.5 Under CIPFA's updated Prudential Code, the Council is required to produce a Capital Strategy, which is intended to give an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 2.6 The Capital Strategy is being considered by Audit, Governance & Standards Committee at its meeting on 15th January 2024 and will subsequently be agreed by Council at its meeting on 21st February 2024. The Strategy describes how the Capital Programme is developed and the key points are set out below.
- 2.7 The Council has defined certain core principles for the inclusion of schemes within the capital programme. Schemes may be included in the capital programme if they fall within one of the four following categories:
 - (i) Required for statutory reasons, e.g., to ensure that Council property meets health and safety requirements;
 - (ii) Self-funding schemes focused on Strategic Plan priority outcomes;

- (iii) Other schemes focused on Strategic Plan priority outcomes; and
- (iv) Other priority schemes which will attract significant external funding.

2.8 All schemes within the capital programme are subject to appropriate option appraisal. Any appraisal must comply with the requirements of the Prudential Code and the following locally set principles:

(a) Where schemes fit within a specific strategy and resources are available within the capital programme for that strategy, such as the Asset Management Plan, the schemes are also subject to appraisal and prioritisation against the objectives of that strategy. These schemes must be individually considered and approved by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee.

b) Where schemes require the use of prudential borrowing, a business case must first be prepared setting out the viability and justification in terms of necessity or contribution to the delivery of strategic goals.

c) Schemes will be evaluated against Environmental, Social and Governance objectives, within the overall Strategic Plan priorities. Schemes where this might be relevant would include those which offer:

- Greater environmental sustainability
- Local community benefits
- Implementation of ethical sourcing practices.

2.9 Where schemes do not fit within the criteria above, but an appropriate option appraisal has been completed, they may still be included within the programme if they fall within one of the four categories set out above.

2.10 If, following all considerations, there are a number of approved schemes that cannot be accommodated within the current programme, a prioritised list of schemes that can be added to the programme as future resources permit will be created and approved by Cabinet, thus allowing officers to focus funding efforts on delivering schemes that are next in priority order.

2.11 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires the Council to identify actual funding before commencement of schemes. Accordingly, while schemes may be prioritised for the programme, ultimately commencement of any individual scheme can only occur once all the necessary resources have been identified and secured.

2.12 The MTFS principles require that the Council will maximise the resources available to finance capital expenditure, in line with the requirements of the Prudential Code, through:

- a) The use of external grants and contributions, subject to maintaining a focus on the priority outcomes of its own strategies;

b) Opportunities to obtain receipts from asset sales as identified in the asset management plan and approved for sale by Cabinet;

c) The approval of prudential borrowing when the following criteria also apply to the schemes funded by this method:

- i. financial viability of the schemes can be clearly evidenced;
- ii. the outcome returns economic value commensurate to the cost incurred by borrowing to fund the schemes;
- iii. after covering the cost of funding, a further benefit accrues to the Council that directly or indirectly supports the objectives of the strategic plan or the medium-term financial strategy.

d) The use of residual New Homes Bonus and Funding Guarantee for capital purposes in line with the Council's strategic plan priorities;

e) The implementation of a community infrastructure levy (CIL) and the management of its use, along with other developer contributions (S106), to deliver the objectives of the infrastructure delivery plan.

2.13 Service managers submit proposals to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by Corporate Finance who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). Each Policy Advisory Committee appraises the proposals based on a comparison with corporate priorities. The Cabinet then recommends the capital programme which is then presented to Council in February each year.

2.14 Prior to any capital commitment being entered into, a detailed report setting out a full project appraisal and detailed financial projections is considered by the relevant service committee.

Funding the Capital Programme

2.15 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (grant funding and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue contributions, earmarked reserves, internal borrowing and capital receipts) or debt (external borrowing and other forms of corporate finance).

2.16 The Council currently has external borrowing of £5 million, representing Public Works Loan Board borrowing plus we have also committed to borrow £80 million in advance over the period 2024 to 2026 at an affordable rate. With internal resources expected to be fully utilised in future, the Council will look to increase external borrowing to a maximum of £359.9m over the 10-year lifetime of the capital programme. Over this time the Council will seek a mixture of long term and short-term debt to minimise the risk of refinancing. The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement may look to procure forward borrowing terms ahead of requiring funding for the capital programme. This is to lock into preferential rates in case of future rate rises.

- 2.17 The Council has hitherto used the New Homes Bonus to fund capital expenditure. The allocation for 2024/25 onwards has been reduced to £1.9 million, so to ensure that there is sufficient funding to support the viability of the 1,000 New Homes programme it is envisaged that this will be topped up from the Funding Guarantee that was announced as part of the Local Government Financial Settlement in December 2023.
- 2.18 External funding is sought wherever possible. The Council has received funding from the Government via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, some of which is allocated to capital schemes, and funding will be sought in particular to support the Affordable Housing Programme.
- 2.19 Funding is also available through developer contributions (S 106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Capital Programme Proposals

- 2.20 Capital Programme proposals have been developed based on the principles set out above and reflect the strategic priorities agreed by Council when it set the current Strategic Plan.
- 2.21 Appendix B to this report sets out the recommended programme for this Committee. This includes schemes which were programmed for 2024/25 – 2028/29 within the existing capital programme together with new schemes that it is now proposed to include within the capital programme. Further details are set out below.
- 2.22 Public Realm and Greening - £13.0 million
- At this stage, the estimates in the draft capital programme are indicative. Funding from external sources, including CIL, Section 106, UK Shared Property Fund, will be sought wherever possible.
- 2.23 Medway Street Car Park - £195,000
- This budget will allow the two existing parts of this car park to be merged, which will require extensive works for ramps, new surfaces and lighting.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Recommend the capital programme proposals as presented for approval by the Cabinet and then for consideration by Council.
- 3.2 Recommend amendments or deletion to some or all of the proposals and make any new alternative projects for consideration by the Cabinet.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is that the Committee recommends the proposed capital programme (option 3.1) to the Cabinet.

5. RISKS

Funding

- 5.1 From now on, the capital programme will primarily be funded through prudential borrowing. For the capital programme as a whole, the funding risk has been mitigated by committing to borrow £80 million in advance over the period 2024 to 2026 at an affordable rate. This has given some assurance about delivery of the capital programme in the short term. The main item of expenditure during this period the Affordable Housing Programme, which will therefore benefit from these relatively low borrowing costs. However, it is difficult to predict likely interest rates over the period of peak expenditure on the new leisure centre. With interest rates at their current elevated levels, it is not worth locking in a future borrowing commitment at this stage. We will use our Treasury Management Strategy to manage the cost of subsequent borrowing but there is a risk that funding costs could remain at current levels, thus putting at risk the viability of the scheme.

Delivery

- 5.2 The scale of the capital programme, at £13.195 million for this Committee alone, will require considerable capacity for delivery and project management.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Corporate Services PAC received an initial report on the MTFs at its meeting on 12 July 2023. This Committee was then consulted on the revenue budget proposals within its remit at its meeting on 6 September 2023 and on Fees and Charges and the budget consultation at its meeting on 7 December 2023. This consultation identified that the most popular area amongst respondents for new investment was infrastructure, with flood prevention and the street scene cited as examples in the survey to illustrate what 'infrastructure' means. The other PACs are considering the budget proposals relating to capital schemes within their portfolios during January 2024.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The timetable for setting the budget for 2023/24 is set out below.

Date	Meeting	Action
24 January 2024	Cabinet	Agree Capital Programme
21 February 2024	Council	Approve Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Existing Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28
 - Appendix B: Proposed Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

Current Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2027/28

	FIVE YEAR PROGRAMME					
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total (5 years)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Bridges Gyratory Scheme	206					206
Town Centre Strategy (New scheme)	450	2,700	2,350			5,500
Total	656	2,700	2,350			5,706

**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Policy Advisory Committee
Capital Budget Proposals 2024/25 - 2033/34**

	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	5-year total	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	10-year total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Public Realm & Greening	1,000	4,000	6,000	2,000		13,000						13,000
Medway Street Car Park (New Scheme)	195					195						195
TOTAL	1,195	4,000	6,000	2,000		13,195						13,195

Agenda Item 11

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee

7 December 2023

Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
PIED PAC	7 December 2023
Decision to be made	8 December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman
Lead Officer and Report Author	Janice Gooch
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Staplehurst

Executive Summary

This item is to consider whether to approve the draft Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document for public consultation purposes. The proposed Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (known as CAAMP) recognises and summarises the significance and character of Staplehurst and provides a framework system to ensure that this character of the area is protected or enhanced.

Staplehurst was first designated in November 1987 and the boundary had not been reviewed since that time. The records relating to the designation are no longer available.

The Appraisal states that the conservation area boundary is still relevant though proposed changes were considered to include Iden Manor. However, as the site is owned by the NHS, is within the setting of the Conservation Area and has a listed building within the grounds, it was considered that including the estate would

restrict the NHS operation and it has some protection due to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

The Conservation Area is focused on the church and the large houses of Surrendon (now converted into flats), Loddenden Manor and Staplehurst Manor. In between these larger houses are smaller domestic properties, the retail core of the village, including public houses. The village has developed and altered, which is reflected in the architecture, however, much is polite and responds to a period of wealth in the late 17th and early 18th century. It is most likely that older buildings are screened by their new polite façades, with only one building, Crown Cottages, still showing the close studding of the timber frame. The appraisal provides a description of the character, including key features.

The Management Plan sets out a framework for conserving, enhancing, and managing development in the Staplehurst Conservation Area to ensure that it retains its special qualities as required by the Conservation Area designation under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A new Management Plan would fulfil the Council's duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Failure to approve the Management Plan would mean that this duty was not observed.

The Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would provide a stronger base for development management decisions in resisting inappropriate developments by providing a good understanding of the character of the area, including the architecture and material palette to enable good design for future develop or proposed changes. The creation of the Management Plan will ensure that development retains or enhances the character of the Conservation Area.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to Cabinet Member

This report asks the Committee to make the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

1. To recommend that a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Staplehurst Conservation Area be approved for public consultation
2. To recommend that Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to undertake public consultation for the Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Staplehurst Conservation Area

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>• Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to protect the historic environment.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of encouraging protection of the heritage at Staplehurst and within the borough.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Landscape Team Leader
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Head of Finance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Landscape Team Leader

Legal	<p>Pursuant to s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("1990 Act") the Council, as the local planning authority, is under a duty (from time to time) to review the conservation area.</p> <p>Pursuant to s.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council, as the local planning authority, is from time to time required:</p> <p>(1) under a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.</p> <p>(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.</p> <p>(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
Crime and Disorder	No anticipated impact	Landscape Team Leader
Procurement	None required	Landscape Team Leader
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change, but a CA can be used to offer further protection, including to trees, biodiversity and open spaces.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to review their Conservation Areas from time to time to consider whether they should be amended, are still worthy of being designated and the possibility of revising their boundaries and to identify changes and pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.
- 2.2 In order that informed decisions can be made on planning applications, it is important to identify the special character of Conservation Areas which are proposed for preservation and enhancement. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan allows for an informed decision to be made by recognising the character of the Conservation Area and providing a framework of actions.
- 2.3 The first part of the document, the Appraisal, identifies the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area and considers how they interact and impact upon one another and explains how the area has developed into their current form. It seeks to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the Conservation Area, and sites and features which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The clear understanding of the Area's qualities provided in the appraisal offers information to guide future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual planning proposals may be assessed. This is further elaborated upon, in the second part of the document: the management plan.
- 2.4 Resulting from the findings of the Appraisal, the Management Plan contains proposals to preserve or enhance Staplehurst Conservation Area. The document includes the policy background to the management plan, principles for development control, and, where appropriate, suggested boundary alterations. It also contains information on review and good practice procedures.
- 2.5 As part of the review process, the existing Conservation Area boundary was deemed to be appropriate. Consideration was undertaken to include Iden Manor (and parts of its former Estate, such as The Quarter) to the south of the existing Conservation Area but this was considered to be at low risk of development and would constrain the NHS who currently occupy/own the site. Consideration was also undertaken to extend the boundary to the north to include the Victorian Villas and terraces, but due to the piecemeal alterations and infill development, this was not considered to reach the special architectural or historic interest requirements.
- 2.6 Many Conservation Areas are subject to Article 4 Directives to protect the character of the CA. Staplehurst currently does not have any Art. 4 Directives, and as part of the review process, it is currently not recommending implementing any. This will be reviewed again following the public consultation.

- 2.7 At present there is no Design Code for Staplehurst. Some guidance has been provided within the CAAMP and there is some guidance commissioned by the Parish Council. The creation of a solid Design Code should be considered within the near future to provide additional support to protect the character of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- 2.8 The Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) has been written in accordance with guidelines set down by Historic England and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). This has been drafted for Cabinet Member approval to enable a consultation process to be carried out in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 71(2). This will include the following bodies and individuals:
- a) Historic England
 - b) Kent County Council Heritage Unit
 - c) Ward Members
 - d) Staplehurst Parish Council
 - e) Any other relevant organizations with an interest in Staplehurst
- 2.9 In addition, copies will be placed on the Borough Council website and in the local library. A formal notice will be published in the London Gazette and a local newspaper (KM), as per the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 70(8) and there will also be a press release. This should ensure that the combined Appraisal and Management plan documents are brought to the attention of the local public.
-

3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 - The Committee could choose to recommend that the report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
- 3.2 Option 2 - The Committee could choose not to recommend that the report recommendations be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. If not approved there is a risk that Maidstone Borough Council are failing to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990
-

4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 3.1
- 4.2 By approving the public consultation for the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, this provides a clear steer on enabling the council to take appropriate action and engagement to protect our heritage.
-

5 RISK

5.1. There is not anticipated to be any discernible risk associated with the report and its recommendations. Any risk has been assessed with regard to the Council's risk management principles.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The combined document will be the subject of repeat consultation in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 and Historic England Guidance. This will include the following bodies and individuals:

- Historic England
- Kent County Council Heritage Unit
- Ward Members
- Staplehurst Parish Council
- Any other relevant organisations with an interest in the Staplehurst Conservation Area.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The report and guidance, if approved, will go out for public consultation. If approved by the Cabinet Member the guidance will go out for public consultation.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP)
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

STAPLEHURST CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



Draft December 2023

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CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0. INTRODUCTION

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

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 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”.

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.

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 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 designation of a Conservation Area and the protection of its significance, which includes its setting, is included within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF recognises that Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets, and therefore ‘great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’ (2023 - para 199). This document is therefore designed to provide some understanding of the significance and a management framework to help protect or enhance the significance.



Figure 1 – High Street, Staplehurst.

1.2. Background to the Appraisal

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 has 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 consider the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.

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.

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.

2.0. HISTORY OF DESIGNATION

Staplehurst Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council 26 November 1987. Despite development encroaching on the Conservation Area, the boundary remains unaltered.

The village has expanded from a linear, ribbon development along the Roman Road (now the A229), to a much wider development pattern. The historic core of the village remained relatively unaltered until the development in the mid-late 20th century.

The Conservation Area boundary is focused on the historic core of the village, incorporating Surrendon and the village centre to the north of Loddenden Manor, to the junction of Frittenden Road. To the east, the boundary follows the linear development along the High Street, to the eastern boundary of Loddenden Manor, and Chapel Lane, including the pond, along the Hodges Place, the churchyard and Staplehurst House. The south of the boundary is the northern side of the Frittenden Road and returns to the western boundary along the High Street, to include the listed buildings on the western side of the street and the new dwellings along Crowther Close which were built on the former curtilage of Surrendon, which also creates the northern boundary of the conservation area.

The Conservation Area contains a number of the listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Church of All Saints and the Grade II* listed Loddenden Hall.

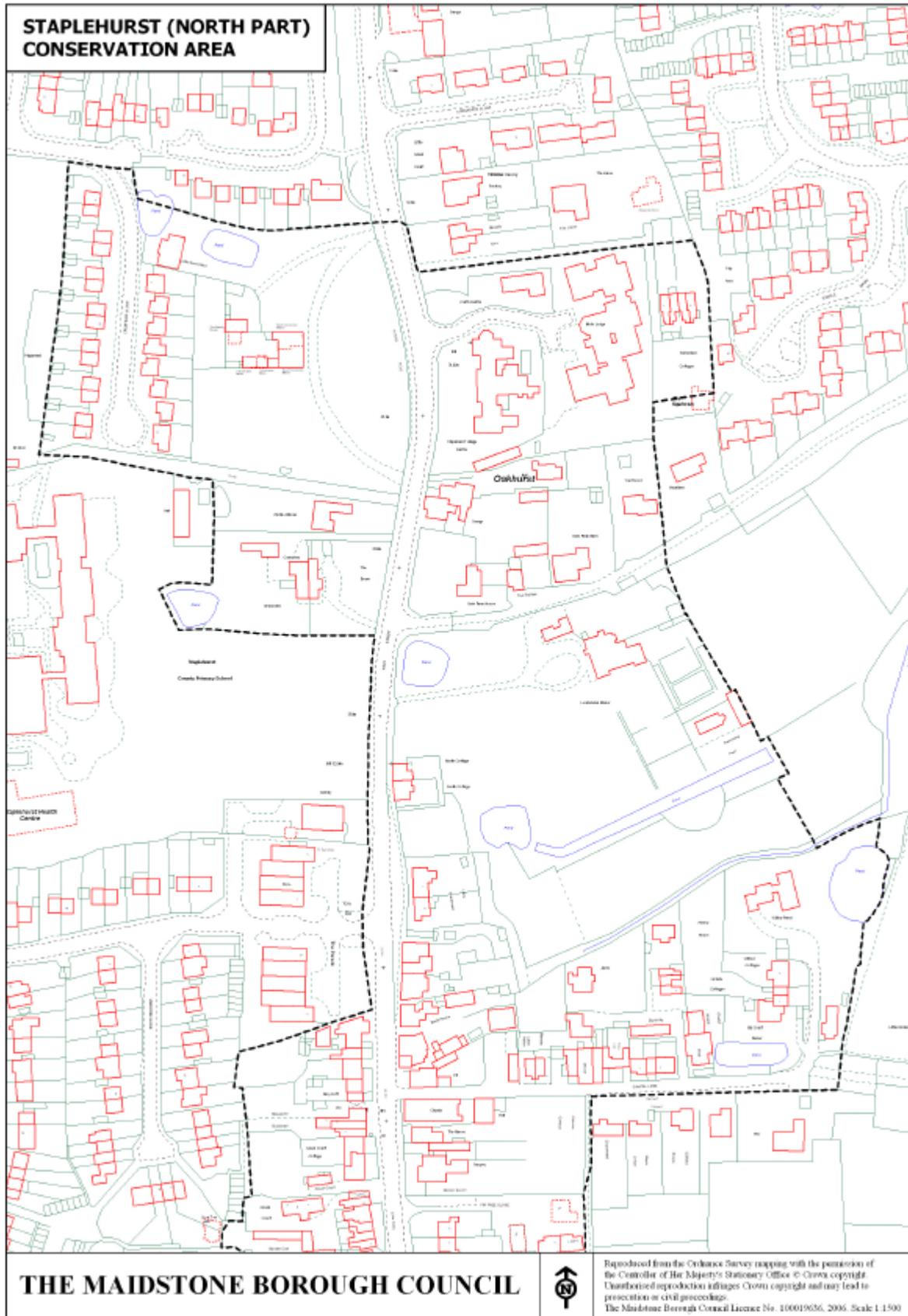


Figure 2 - Current conservation area boundary – north part

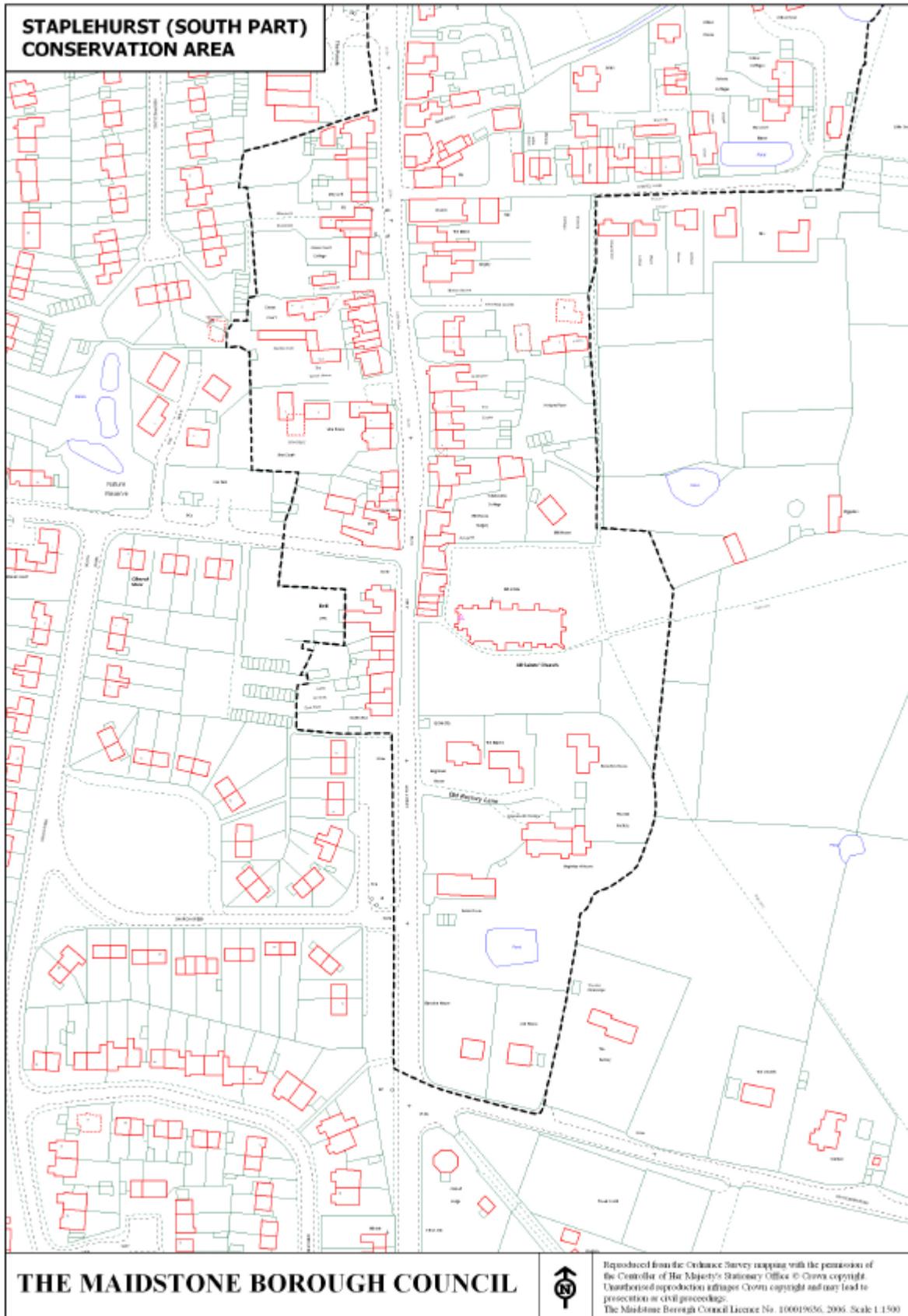


Figure 3 - Current conservation area boundary – south part

3.0. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Staplehurst has two distinct parts, with the Conservation Area focusing on the southern area which is the historic core, and the northern part, sitting outside of the Conservation Area boundary. The northern part of Staplehurst was constructed following the arrival of the railway, and is dominated by Victorian buildings, including a number of attractive detached Villas, and some smaller terraces. The northern section has had further piecemeal infill development, which has impacted the Victorian character of Station Road. Just to the north of the Conservation Area boundary is a pair of attractive Victorian villas set within their own grounds, and they provide a positive contribution to the setting and character of the Conservation Area boundary.

The historic core is focused on All Saints Church, the High Street, and the large houses of Surrendon (now converted into flats), Loddenden Manor and Staplehurst Manor. In between these larger houses are smaller domestic properties and the retail core of the village, including public houses. The village has developed and altered, which is reflected in the architecture, a combination of polite facades and vernacular cottages, which responds to a period of wealth in the late 17th and early 18th century. It is likely that older buildings are screened by their polite façades, with only one building, Crown Cottages, still showing the close studding of the timber frame.

Within the Conservation Area, the northern part is formed of the green boundary treatments and the open spaces of the Staplehurst County Primary School to the west and the gardens of Loddendam Manor to the east. This section is characterised by the large, Victorian buildings, and in particular the Staplehurst Village Centre¹, an impressive building which was built as the school.

The character has changes slightly as you move south, changing from the larger front gardens to the green verges, and smaller front gardens of the smaller cottages which introduces a more built form. The southern part of the Conservation Area is more focused, with uses dominated by shops and other facilities. Excluded from the Conservation Area is the vibrant and busy modern retail block, The Parade, and the carpark, which help keep the historic core active. The Parade has been excluded due to the architectural style being out of character for the historic core, but its function provides a positive contribution to the setting and character of Staplehurst.

The open space of the modern shops is partially screened by trees which line the main road before the loss of the verges with buildings either built on their front boundary line or with limited front gardens. The church yard brings back open green space, partially screened with trees, that then become dense screening the buildings on Old Rectory Lane. This dense tree and hedge growth continues to the east side of the road until the end of the Conservation Area, and up until the petrol station. To the West, past the historic buildings on the hill, the estate of houses (Church Green) is set back, which protects the longer views from the High Street.

To the south of the Conservation Area boundary is the Cricket Lodge, and whilst this has been extended and screened from the road by a fence and hedge, it continues to provide a positive

¹ Designed by London Architect T. Hayter Lewis, the ground was bought by the community in 1872 for £220. The construction of the school was over £4,000 and consisted of a Girls and Boys School, Headmasters house and a Head Mistresses house in the centre. The school could accommodate 320 pupils. In 1989 it was purchased by the community and converted into the Community Centre. Within the grounds is a substantial Air Raid Shelter, which was recognised as a NDHA in 2023.

contribution to the village. Opposite the Lodge is a small terrace of late 1800s, red brick cottages which provide a contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area.

The village, despite its growth and development, has retained a rural atmosphere, with views into and out of the Conservation Area retaining the agricultural connection to the wider environment. These views contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area by providing a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.



Figure 4 – view of All Saints Church from the High Street. The church is set back from the main road, and partially screened by the Grade II listed houses. There were buildings in front of the church with access via the existing path.

Much of the 19th century development was due to Henry Hoare and his son, William Hoare, following the purchase of Iden Manor in the 1840s. Henry Hoare was a wealthy Fleet Street Banker, and it was noted that ‘his overpowering benevolence remoulded the village’. Development did not stop with Henry, as his son built the model cottages at the Quarter, currently outside of the Conservation Area. The Quarter is a group of one and a half storey & two storey, red brick dwellings, and form an attractive group, complimenting Iden Manor opposite. At the end of this group is the Grade II Fuller House, a house noted as having a ‘special function’ within the listing description and the core dates from the 16th century, with early 17th extension and late 19th century alterations.

The earlier wealth of the village in the early modern period due to woollen industry, which collapsed in c.1650 and the Victorian development form two key periods that reflect the houses and buildings within Staplehurst.



Figure 5 – The church tower peeps out from behind the terrace of mixed buildings (all Grade II listed). The architectural styles showing the development and wealth of the village.



Figure 6 – view of Cricket Lodge and view down Fritterden Road, retaining a rural feel to the approach.



Figure 7 – late 1800's cottages outside the conservation but provide a positive contribution to the wider setting.

4.0. LOCATION AND SETTING

Staplehurst is a village located 9 miles (14 km) south of the town of Maidstone. The village lies on the route of a Roman road, which is now incorporated into the A229.

The village is located on a geological area known as the Low Weald, with the geology formed of Weald Clay Formation – Limestone. The local environment was previously dominated by swamps, estuaries, and deltas.

The area was originally cleared for the feeding of swine (on acorns from the Wealden Forest). It has subsequently proved to be valuable agricultural land, and this has been the basis of the economy ever since.



Figure 8 – view looking south along the High Street.

5.0. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Archaeology

There has been very little archaeological investigation carried out either within the conservation area or to the wider area. There has been a settlement near the All Saints Church since about 1000AD, and records show that taxes were being paid in 1232.

The main road through the settlement is a Roman road, though at present no evidence of Roman settlement has been found. Like many small settlements in the area, Staplehurst is not mentioned within the Domesday Book, though the church dates from the 12th century (with later additions), and the earliest dated dwelling dates from c.1390.

5.2. Development History

The name Staplehurst comes from the Old English 'stapol' meaning a 'post, pillar' and 'hyrst', as a 'wooded hill'; therefore, 'wooded-hill at a post', a possible reference to a boundary marker at the position of All Saints' church on top of the hill along the road from Maidstone to Cranbrook. The parish includes the hamlet of Hawkenbury. Many of the houses surrounding the church are believed to date from the 16th and 17th century and have been gentrified during the 18th and 19th century with new facades and windows.

The Victorian County History, written in 1798, provides the following, rather unflattering summary:

THE PARISH of Staplehurst, though healthy like its neighbourhood, is, excepting the village of it, an unpleasant situation, having a gloomy and dreary appearance; the country is low, flat,

and miry; the houses dispersed at distances from each other, and along the broad green swards, and small forstals in it.

The village, or street of Staplehurst, is built on each side of the great road, at the 47th milestone from London, being the only part of this parish which can be called tolerably pleasant and dry, being situated on the side of a hill, from the knoll of which it continues to the bottom of it, having the church at the south end of it, and the parsonage-house just below it. The houses are mostly old-fashioned and large timbered; most of them shops, but there are three or four good modern built houses interspersed among them, which stand pleasantly on the hill, having a fine view over the Weald southward,

The parish contains about eighty-eight houses, and not quite a thousand inhabitants. The rents of it are about 3000l. per annum. There are two meeting houses; one for the Baptists, the other for the Presbyterians.

At the entrance of the village, on the hill, at a small distance from the high road, on the east side of it, is a large antient manor-house, called Loddenden, situated within the borough of its own name. It was lately the property of Mr. Edward Usborne, deceased, and now of his widow, who lives in it.

[\(Parishes: Staplehurst | British History Online \(british-history.ac.uk\)\)](#)

The Kelly's Directory's (1882) notes that Staplehurst was 'a parish and village and station on the South Eastern Railway... 5 miles from Cranbrook, 42 miles from London by rail' and provides details of the church and its restoration at the expense of Rev. Thomas Crick and H. Hoare Esq. Within the village there were numerous charities 'derived from land and stocks', together with an endowed charity from Messer's. Gibbons and Bathurst.

Iden, the seat of William Hoare, is mentioned, noting the house as 'a spacious mansion in the Italian style, standing in a park of 150 acres. The manorial rights are divided between Sir Edmund Filmer bart M.P. and St Bartholomew's hospital'. It was quite common for land to be owned by hospitals or colleges as land was donated or bequeathed as a sign of good cause.

bursar of that college. There are Congregational and Baptist chapels. There are charities amounting to about £19 a year, derived from land and stocks and distributed at Christmas and Michaelmas, in bread, coals and clothing; there is also an endowed charity of fluctuating value, given by Messrs. Gibbons & Bathurst, for the education and apprenticing of poor children, this is also derived from land and money in the funds. Iden, the seat of William Hoare esq. is a spacious mansion in the Italian style, standing in a park of 150 acres. The manorial rights are divided between Sir Edmund Filmer bart. M.P. and St. Bartholomews hospital. Viscount Holmesdale, Mrs. Briant, Henry, Charles and William Hoare esqrs. are the chief landowners. The soil is gravel and clay; subsoil the same. The chief crops are wheat, oats, beans and hops. The area is 5,855 acres; rateable value, £13,631; and the population in 1881 was 1637.

Parish Clerk, Thomas Bewley.

Figure 9 – extract of Kelly's Directory highlighting the charities and ownership of the land, 1882.

The directory also shows how many businesses were established within the village, including farmers, hop growers, laundress, boot & shoemaker, and hatter. Among the list are Smith Brothers & Sisters, makers of red kiln and clamp bricks, Alfred Wood, surgeon, and John Jull, who had a variety of services including tea dealer and undertaker.

<p>PRIVATE RESIDENTS. Chapman Thomas, North lodge Clifford Mrs Dickson Capt. Edward, The Bower Gibbons Mrs. South villa Hoare William, Iden; & University club, St James' street, London s.w Lewis Rev. Isaac [Baptist] McGill Rev. John Henry M.A. [curate], Loddenden cottage Manning Robert Willsher, Slaney pl Oyler Henry, The Limes Reeves Thomas Reeves William Edward, Ely court Reyner Rev. Geo. Fearn's D.D. Rectory Thatcher Rev. Thomas [Congregational] Tomsett Mrs Usborne Major Thomas Starling, Loddenden Walter William Hammond, Sussex villa Wildish Ranger, Sorrento Wood Alfred Stephen</p> <p>COMMERCIAL. Allingham William, <i>South Eastern hotel, family & commercial posting house</i> (the night mails stop at this station & letters can be posted till 10.15 p.m.), Railway station Austen John, farm bailiff to Henry Hoare esq. Pagehurst farm Barling Robert, coal merchant & farmer, Fishers Barnes William, farmer & hop grower, Mapleturst Beeching William, beer retailer Bixley Frederic, confectioner Bolding David, farmer & hop grower Broad John, farm bailiff to Mrs. Butcher, Clappers Brooker Mary (Mrs.), laundress, The Quarter Burr Robert, farmer Burr William, beer retailer, Marden rd Buss Horace, boot & shoe maker Chambers John, farmer, Monks farm Chantler J. E. & D. frms. Bounds end Chantler Jesse, farmer & hop grower, Mathurst green Chapman Thomas, farmer, North lodge Chittenden Emily (Mrs.), blacksmith Colgate Thomas, farmer & hop grower, Sweetlands farm</p>	<p>Collison Stephen Loudwell & Philip, farmers & hop growers, Cross at Hand Collison Samuel, farmer, The Plain Cox John, farmer, Chickenden Dorman William, saddler, harness & collar maker Ely William, grocer, baker, provision & corn merchant, The Station Fuller Alfred, farmer, Milking Pail farm Gas Co. (James Walter, sec.) George Elizabeth (Miss), farmer, Little Slaney farm Grant Henry, watch & clock maker Hardes Thomas, gardener Greenfield James Wm. com. traveller Harris Edwin John, seedsman Harris John, coach builder, wheelwright, smith & edge tool maker & steam saw mills, Victoria works Hayward Thomas, beer retailer Joy Alb. frmr. & hop grwr. Great Wadd Jull John, general draper, grocer, tea dealer, clothier, hatter, undertaker, insurance agent, stores for glass, china & earthenware & agent for Peak, Frean & Co.'s biscuits Jull John, guano & nitrate of soda mer. & agent for Lawes manures Large James, miller (steam & water), & frmr. & hop grower, Lovehurst mill Law Albert, farmer & hop grower Link & Harris, traction engine & threshing machine proprietors; orders punctually attended to Lodder Henry Roberts, confectioner Manktelow Caleb, farm bailiff to Wm. Hoare esq. Iden farm Manning Robert Willsher, farmer, landowner & hop grower, Slaney pl Milstead Alfred, blacksmith Moss George, farmer, Little Newstead Newington Jas. Baldwin, grocer, cheese-monger & provision dealer, Station Norris Jesse, farm bailiff to Charles Hoare, esq. Sayenden farm Nunn John, tailor, hatter, bookseller & stationer Nunn Martha (Mrs.), grocer Orpin George Robert, corn & seed mer. miller (wind) & farmer; & at Frittenden Pope George Henry, smith, wheelwright & mineral water maker, Crown works</p>	<p>Pearson Joseph, shopkeeper Reeves Ellen (Miss), preparatory school, Mill house Reeves Thomas, assistant overseer & clerk to the school board Reeves Thomas, builder & contractor, coal & timber merchant, & farmer & hop grower Roberts James, farmer, Turley farm Roberts John, haulier Rofe George Vigor, <i>Crown inn</i> Rose Fredk. Chas. farmer, Clapper farm Samson Rebecca (Mrs.), frmr. Moat frm Samson Stephen, farmer, Dorn farm Samson William, farmer, Lit. Pagehurst Sharp Edward, farmer Shoobridge James, builder, contractor & carpenter, Bly court Shoobridge James, grocer Shoobridge Robert, builder Shoobridge William, farmer & hop grower, Chittenden Sisley George, carrier Small Alfred, beer retailer Smith Brothers & Sisters, makers of red kiln & clamp bricks, all kinds of tiles, agricultural drain & socket pipes, & farmers, South Eastern brick & tile works Symonds John, farmer & hop grower, Lovehurst farm Tipples James, farmer & hop grower, Duckpit Tipples William, farmer, Hartsheath Tomlyn John L. timber merchant Tomsett Charles Ingram, <i>King's Head</i> Tomsett John, butcher Walter Charles, farmer & hop grower, Henhurst Walter James, butcher Walter William Hammond, corn & seed factor, cake, manure & hay merchant & agent for T. Chapman & Sons, brewers, Ashford Watson Frederick, photographer Watts Edward, farmer & hop grower, West end farm Weston Nathan, grocer Whitwick Edwin, boot & shoe maker Wickings William, builder Wilson Stephen, beer retailer Wood Alfred Stephen, surgeon</p>
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Figure 10 – Kelly's Directory, 1882, listing the commercial services offered at Staplehurst, including farmers, hop growers, laundress, boot & shoemaker, and hatter.

5.3. Map Regression

Map regression is the process of working backwards from later maps to earlier maps of the same area to determine how a place has developed over time. The earliest map of Staplehurst, depicted by the church, and the wider area, dates from 1569.

The early maps from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, while not overly detailed, provide a useful insight into the town's position in relation to the wider area. Later maps, including OS maps from the 19th century, offer a much more detailed view of the town.

Conservation Ares Appraisal
Staplehurst, Maidstone

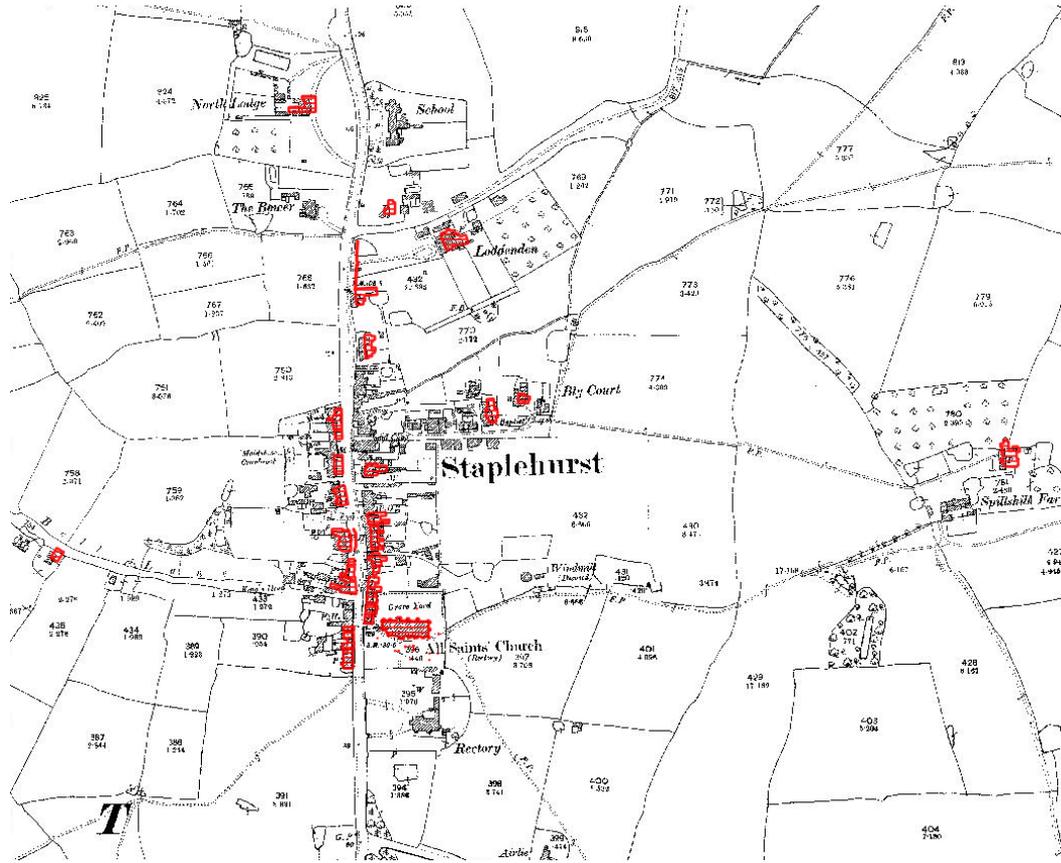


Figure 12 – 1896-1898 map.

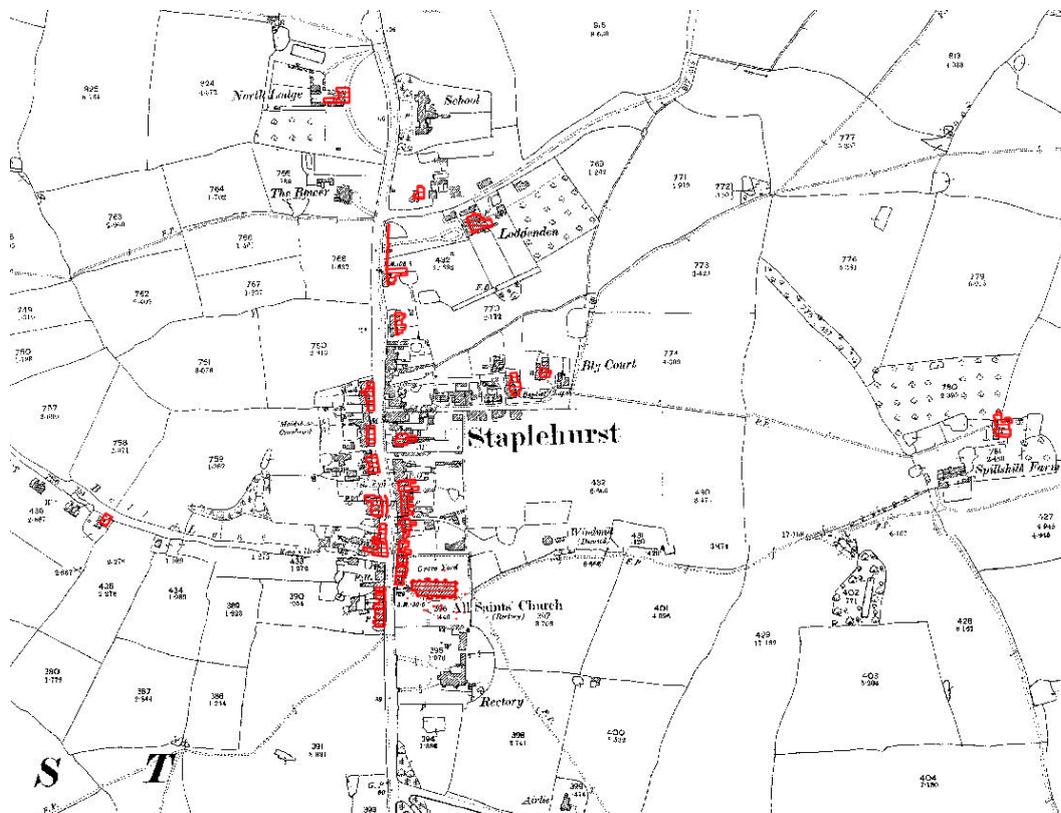


Figure 13 – 1908 map.

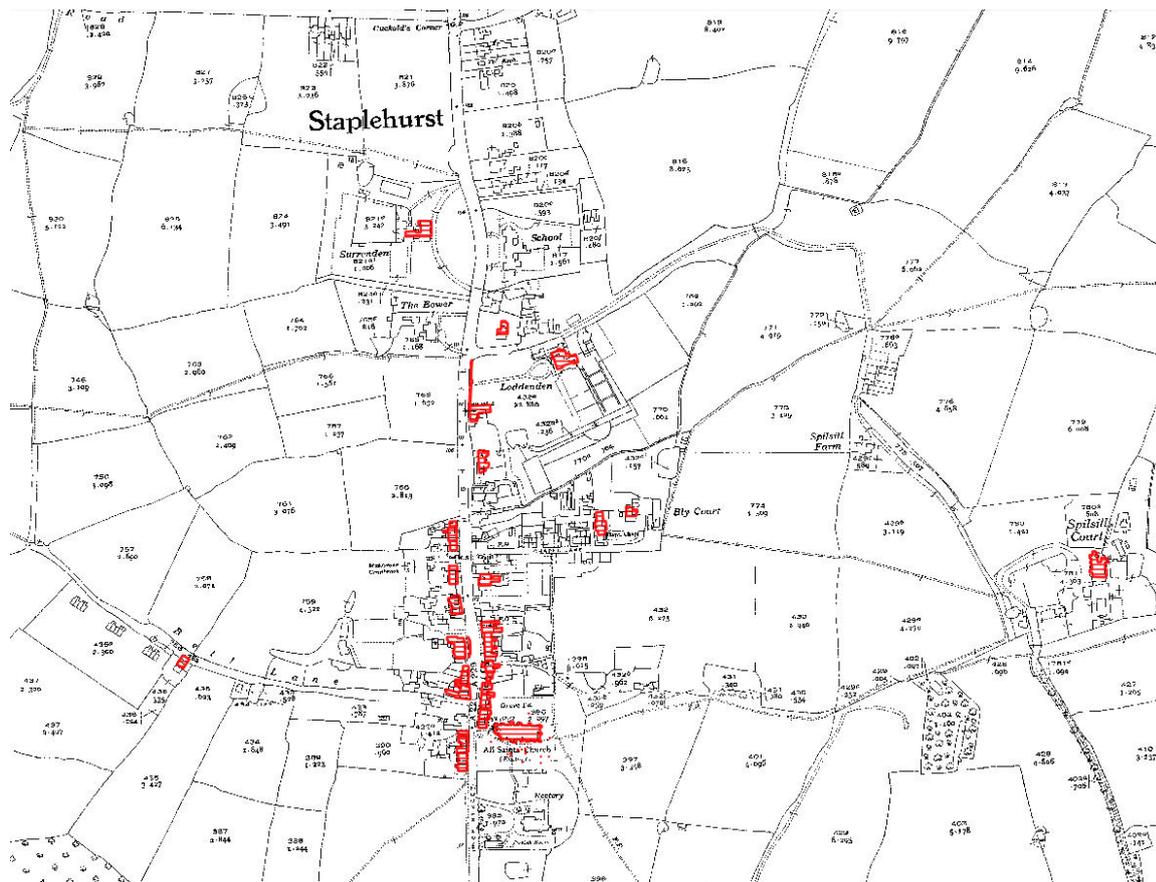


Figure 14 – 1936-1946.

5.3.3. Mid - Late 1900s

The 1960s and 70s saw much development within Staplehurst, with developments occurring off the main road through the village, including infill development between the station and Staplehurst Village Centre.

The development pattern focused on Cuckold's Corner, the junction between the A229 and the road that crosses the A229 which links Marden and Headcorn. However, the historic core remained the focus of the village services and facilities, such as the Post Office, health centre, library, parade of shops and public house.

Industrial and employment opportunities replaced the agriculturally based employment with the industrial site to the north of the station and the large supermarket (Sainsbury). The High Street retains several local and independent shops, including a butcher.

The High Street remains the main road through the settlement, with the new development occurring off this road. Some of the large houses have been converted into self-contained flats, and this has had an impact on the gardens and the setting of these assets. Iden Manor (not listed) is now under the ownership of the NHS Trust, with Iden Grange (not listed) and the Lake House (Grade II listed) under separate ownership.



Figure 15 – 2022 Google Earth Maps showing the development of Staplehurst and the rural setting. Taken from [Staplehurst - Google Maps](#)

5.3.4. Grain Map

A grain map is a good way to show the density of the properties and the built form, together with the open countryside to the east of the core. Loddenden Manor and its grounds can be seen to the north-east, with the Community Centre further north, and the open church yard to the south.

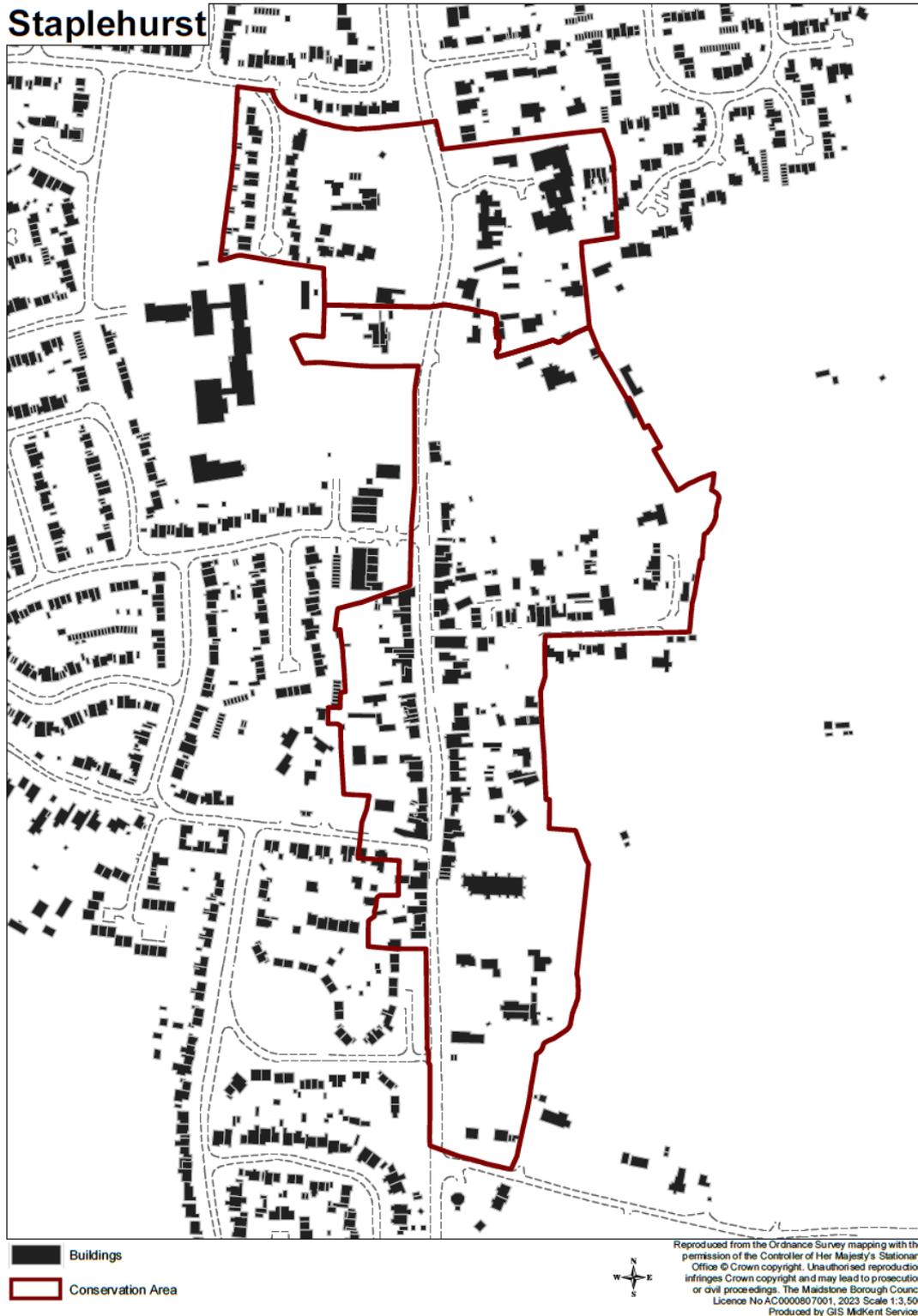


Figure 16 - grain map of Staplehurst

5.3.5. Neighbourhood Plan Character Areas

The Neighbourhood Plan provides a good map highlighting the different development period of the houses outside of the conservation area.

CHARACTER AREAS

The different land uses and building layouts

4.10 The historic heart of the village is located between the crossroads and the All Saints Church on top of the hill. To the north, lies the Station Road character area of brick villas fronting the road. These two areas contain most of the village's essential services and facilities and can be described as the "spine of Staplehurst", providing a distinctive character, structure and definition to the village.

4.11 Attached to this spine, are various areas of predominantly residential development. These are the neighbourhoods that provide good homes for the residents of Staplehurst. New developments need to be of a high quality design that will also add new residential and mixed-use areas of distinctive character for the future.

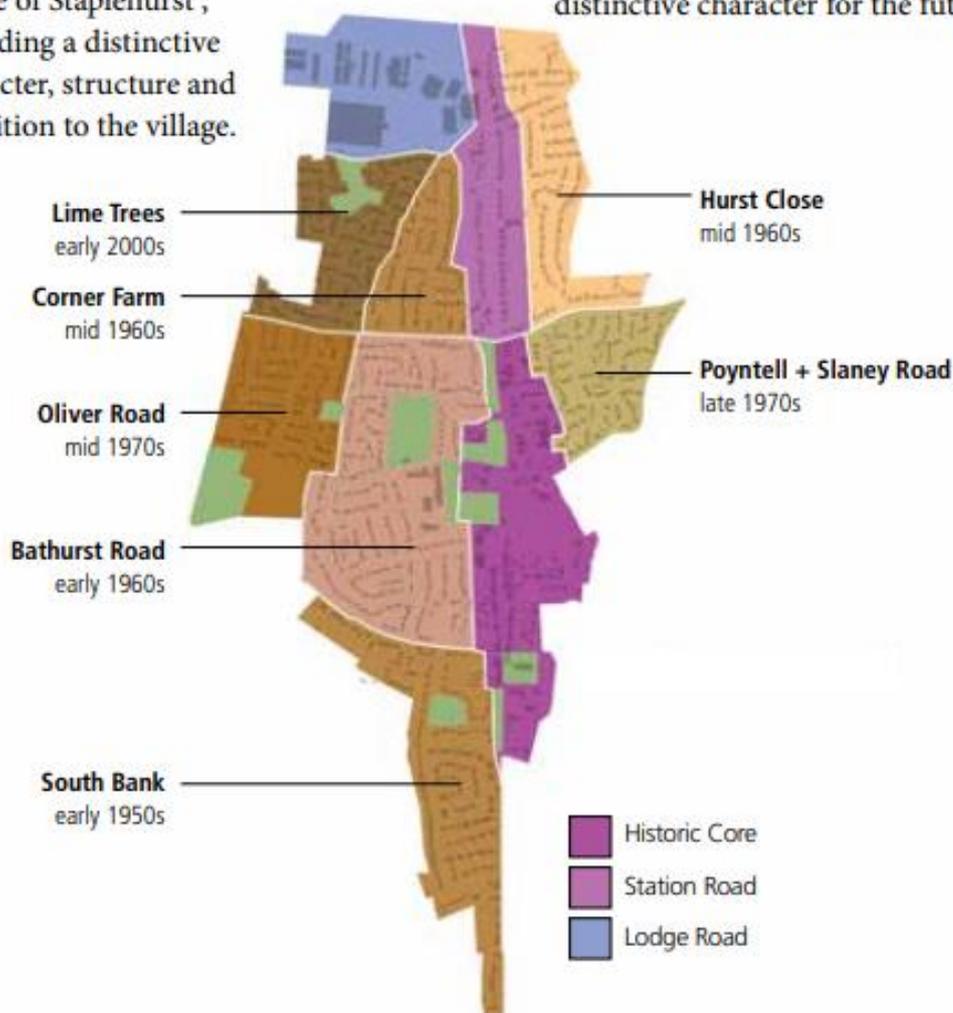


Figure 17 - [Staplehurst-Final-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf \(maidstone.gov.uk\)](#)

5.4. Now & then photographs



Figure 18 – Loddenden, Staplehurst (undated postcard)



Figure 19 – gates to Loddenden, Staplehurst



Figure 20 – The Limes, along High Street.



Figure 21 – The Limes, along High Street. The level of the road has been raised, street lighting removed and a change of end of terrace. Bomb damage has resulted in some new development.



Figure 22 - The Limes, along High Street.

[picture required]



Figure 23 – High Street.



Figure 24 – High Street.



Figure 25 – High Street.



Figure 26 – Station Road.



Figure 27 - Victorian Coach Works, Chapel Lane.



Figure 28 - Victorian Coach Works, Chapel Lane.

5.5. Outside of the Conservation Area, but making a positive contribution to the setting



Figure 29 – The Quarter, and Fuller House, the timber framed house opposite Iden Manor.



Figure 30 – Lodge to Iden Manor (at the time of the research was empty).



Figure 31 – Iden Manor.



Figure 32 – Frittenden House.

6.0. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1. High Street Character Area

This area is focused on the High Street, a linear road that follows the undulating landscape. When approaching from the south, along Cranbrook Road, the historic core of the village is screened by the topology, with the Quarter, to the west, though this is mostly screened by trees and the Lodge to Iden Manor introducing the built environment. Much of this is softened with established trees and hedges before the infill dwellings and the new development (Pinnock Lane) showing more substantial development. The main road continues with hedges and trees, but with more urban features as road markings and bus shelters, and then the Petrol Station. Past the petrol station, the more urban influence is replaced with the attractive Parkview and Hillside, the red brick Victorian dwellings, and the established trees and hedges up to the turning of Frittenden Road and the Cricket Lodge.

The boundary line to the conservation area starts on the north side of Frittenden Road and includes the first two properties, which are modern, Georgian inspired detached houses set within their own grounds and partially screened from the public realm by high, established hedges.



Figure 33 – view looking north towards the Conservation Area boundary along Cranbrook Road.



Figure 34 - view looking north towards the Conservation Area boundary along Cranbrook Road.

Cranbrook Road turns into the High Street. To the east is the former Parish Readings Room, a small, simple structure, set within its own grounds, which provides a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Continuing along the High Street there are views into the main core of the historic village, with the All-Saints Church to the east and terraces of two storey buildings to the west. The raised pavements to this section have handrails, which creates a linear vision along the road.



Figure 35 – the first of the historic buildings and the crown of the High Street.



Figure 36 – The Parish Reading Rooms, and home to the Learning Tree Nursery.

The Conservation Area boundary continues along the High Street with Kent Cottage forming the end of the terrace with the exposed timber frame gable facing the street. Adjacent to these is the Old Bell Inn, a Grade II listed (former?) public house. The area widens to the west to include Chapel Lane, with the former Coachworks which can be seen on the 1876-95 OS map and the Grade II listed buildings of Providence Strict Baptist Chapel and Bly Court Manor (16th century).

The terraces continue to the north of Bell Lane and the Conservation Area boundaries dissect part of the rear garden (formed into a car park) to the Grade II listed The Kings Head. The group of buildings continue, many of which are Grade II listed, apart from the modern, single storey unit (containing a Chiropractor). Within this group is the distinctive The Vines, a three storey, buff brick, five bay dwelling, and dates from the late 1700s or early 1800s, with later 1800s alterations. Since its construction, it has been converted into three properties.

The simplicity of the more vernacular appearance of the buildings have had minimal gentrification during the Georgian period, which contributes to the character with their mix of chimneys and roofs and fenestration details.

The pre-1896 building line is only broken when it approaches the modern (c.1960s) retail development, The Parade, with the parking in front. Whilst this is excluded from the conservation area, the complex should be recognised of development of its time and enables the village to remain a busy, active place.



Figure 37 – Bell Inn. Taken from [*Bell Hotel, Staplehurst \(closedpubs.co.uk\)*](http://BellHotel,Staplehurst(closedpubs.co.uk))



Figure 38 – Limes Terrace, with brick to the ground floor and hanging tiles to the first floor.

The east side of the High Street is relatively screened with boundary hedges until it opens with All Saints Church and its church yard, both of which are set back from the main building line. The Old Rectory is accessed via a single-track lane to the south of church. Old Rectory Lane has two new, detached houses on the north side, with the Old Rectory shown on the first OS map.

To the north of the church, and providing some screening, is a row of simple, two-storey cottages, whose back gardens are within the church yard. The first group of three is formed of red, handmade brick to the ground floor, with painted timber weatherboarding to the first floor. The side elevation to No 1. overhangs the footpath to the church. The pedestrian footpath along these cottages is raised from the road, and continues to Hill House, a two storey, red brick dwelling of 5 bays plus one recess bay with large overhanding eaves. This Grade II listed dwelling was formerly a house and post-office, and dates with the early/mid 1700s, though possibly with earlier core.

The properties to the north of Hill House are set back from the main road and have small front gardens with hedges forming the boundary treatments. These two properties have large central chimney stacks, indicating that they may be lobby entrance houses, older than the front elevation indicates. Tanyard House (GII) has been extended to form the Butchers shop. Linked to these buildings is a row of exposed timber framed, mid 1500s houses, with close studding and painted infill panels. Referred to Crown Cottages, they were possibly formerly an inn.

The next group of buildings return to sitting on the front boundary line, with a simple shop, with attractive shop front and an attached house.

To the north of these, the character changes again, with modern dwellings, Fir Tree Close, set back within their own plot. The front boundary is formed of a hedge and low-level brick wall, which protect the view of the hardstanding/ parking.

Opposite these, are a row of four, two-storey dwellings with brick to the ground floor and hanging tiles to the first floor. Adjoining these is a three storey, Victorian red brick house, an access to the rear. The ground floor is currently used as a hairdresser.

The style changes here from the small red brick and timber framed buildings to the painted render dwellings. The west side is lower, with external chimney stacks, indicating that there is an older building within the core, which contrasts with the two-storey, three bay house with pilasters, set within its own grounds.

6.1.2. General character

There has historically been two key periods of development within Staplehurst. The first during the Early Modern period through the wool trade, which saw a number of important buildings constructed, not only along Cranbrook Road/ High Street, but within the wider area. Many of these have been subject to Gentrification, with the re-fronting of the façades and the insertion of the timber sash windows.

The second period was after the purchase of Iden Manor by Henry Hoare, where his anthropological works continued under his son, William. This development introduced a number of Victorian buildings, including the community buildings, such as the Reading Rooms and the domestic terraces.

From the mid-20th century, more extensive development has been undertaken, with the development of the surrounding housing, and the conversion of the larger houses either into flats, or finding an alternative use, such as Care Home or use by the NHS. This combination has created a mix of housing types and architectural styles, contrasting with the small vernacular and the larger polite houses.

The width of the main road forms an important role within the character of the area, allowing the heavy traffic to coexist with locals and visitors going about their business on foot without a feeling of congestion. The road is extremely busy and used by large lorries. However, due to the sections of hedges and the established trees within sections of the High Street it prevents the character feeling like an urban development.

The views through the Conservation Area are linear due to the development and the topology, but where seen, the longer views south are of open landscape and the fields that allowed for the initial growth and wealth of the settlement. The views north show the mid-1800s development, with the former school (Community Centre) and the Victorian Villas.

6.1.3. Materials

The typical external materials used throughout the Conservation Area are generally a mix of red brick (sometimes chequered or painted), render, weatherboarding, with limited tile hanging.

Kentish Ragstone is common for boundary walls, and low-level plinths to dwellings and other buildings, such as the Kings Head and the Community Centre.

Roofs are almost universally red plain tiles, though with some of the later buildings, slate has been introduced. Chimney stacks are generally fairly modest features in red brick. The roof forms are generally simple pitched roofs, and it is the exception that gables face the road. Dormer windows to the front elevation are confined to a few properties, and these are small, generally pitched dormers, with either a lead or render sides. All have casement windows, showing that they were lower status spaces.

The materials show a distinctive divide between the social hierarchy of the buildings, and their placement along the main road. The small cottages are predominantly painted timber weatherboarding. The slightly larger cottages are a soft red brick or painted render. The Victorian development is a of a slightly larger scale, in a darker red brick.



Figure 39 – examples of tiles, bricks, chimney stacks and weatherboarding.

Windows vary greatly in size and proportions, but the pervading styles are Georgian multi pane or Victorian sash frames. It is impossible to identify a style of entrance doors as there is a huge variation in appearance of mostly modern replacements. A number of properties have small projecting bay windows to the ground floor, some built under the jetties of the timber framed buildings, such as Lambs Inn Cottage. Within this older row opposite the church are a collection of oriel windows to the ground and first floor.

There is a very consistent building height throughout the village. Two storeys are the norm sometimes with attics. Single storey is rare. Unlike many of the rural villages, there are a number of landmark buildings within Staplehurst, with the church having a more discreet role when compared with others. The key buildings are The Limes, Hill House, Loddenden Manor, and the Community Centre.

The parish council has been very careful to ensure that the streets are not cluttered with signage, lighting, and street furniture. The result is successful as this element, so often intrusive, is very much in the background here.



Figure 40 – hedges and boundary treatments

6.1.4. Hedges and Fences

There is a combination of large, established gardens and smaller front gardens, with verges and boundary hedges providing some protection between the High Street and the smaller cottages and footpath. These are important and a positive feature within the Conservation Area and its setting.

Ragstone walls also contribute to the character of the area, particularly to the Loddenden Manor (which are Grade II listed) and the retaining walls for the footpaths, such as by the church. Low level brick walls and metal railings have also been used.

6.1.5. Footpaths and Roads

The footpaths are mainly laid to tarmac, with some areas retaining a stone paving slabs which have worn and weathered to give a softer appearance. The footpaths make an important contribution to the character of the area as they follow the linear views.

6.2. Church Character Area

Set back from the High Street, the churchyard and church form a small private area of open space, away from the busy road and the domestic built form. Set on slightly higher ground, the church yard contains 14 Grade II listed monuments, one to the north of the church, and the remaining to the south.

Within the ground are a few mature trees, but perhaps most unusual is that the rear of Church Gate Cottages back directly onto the church yard, with the part of the church yard forming the back garden for these cottages.



Figure 41 – Church



Figure 42 – notice on the side of Church Gate Cottages to prevent obstruction on the pavement leading to the church.

6.3. Characteristic features of the Conservation Area

Boundary Treatment	Area
Picket fences	<i>Generally limited to side roads</i>
Brick walls	<i>Low-level walls common for smaller cottages</i>
Ragstone walls	<i>Common along High Street and Church yard</i>
Hedges	<i>Common along High Street</i>
Iron railings	<i>Limited in sections, such as raised paths and some dwellings</i>

Materials	Area
Red brick	<i>All</i>
Ragstone	<i>Walls and low-level plinths Higher status buildings</i>
Timber	<i>Exposed timber in some places, most has been covered</i>
Slate tiles	<i>Rear construction</i>
Clay tiles	<i>Much of the CA</i>
Plain tiles	<i>Much of the CA</i>
Weatherboarding	<i>Cottages</i>
Tile hung cladding	<i>Limited feature, Lime Terrace and some side elevations</i>

Architectural features	Area
Sash windows	<i>All</i>
Casement windows	<i>All</i>
Close studding	<i>High Street</i>
Venetian windows	<i>None</i>

Bay windows	<i>High Street</i>
Dormer windows	<i>High Street</i>
Leaded light windows	<i>High Street</i>

<i>Public Realm and Street Furniture</i>	<i>Area</i>
Asphalt	<i>Paths</i>
Planters	<i>High Street</i>

<i>Built Form</i>	<i>Area</i>
Detached properties	<i>All</i>
Terraced properties	<i>All</i>
Semi-detached properties	<i>All</i>

6.4. Setting of the Conservation Area

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023), the setting of a heritage asset can form part of the significance of a heritage asset.

The views into and out of the Conservation Area are discussed in Section 8, and these should be considered with any proposed future development to ensure that they protected.

The use of materials and design form can impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, and this is discussed further in Section 14.

7.0. AUDIT OF ASSETS

A detailed description of the significant buildings and sites 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.

Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value, historically or architecturally, 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. Replacement developments should be designed to enhance the conservation area
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area’s character where re-development would be advantageous.

Asset	Status	Description	Value
Staplehurst Village Centre	NDHA	Originally built as the village school, it was purchased by the village to become the village community centre. Strong architectural style.	Positive
Air Raid Shelter		Within the grounds is an Air Raid Shelter, and this has been recognised as a NDHA	Positive
Oaks Farmhouse	Grade II 1372044	Farmhouse, now house. C17 or earlier, with mid C19 addition and facade.	Essential
Oaks Farm barn	NDHA		Positive
The Stables (Oaks Farm)			Positive
Loddenden Manor	Grade II* 1040054	House. Built, probably in several stages, during mid-to-late C16 and early C17. Restored circa 1912.	Essential
Railing & Gates to Loddenden Manor	Grade II 1344401		Essential

North & South Cottages	Grade II 1060722	House or house row. C17.	Essential
Little Loddenham (1 & 2 High Street)	Grade II 1040049	House pair. C17, with late C18 or early C19 addition and facade.	Essential
Sycamore Cottage	NDHA	Simple, linear, weatherboarded cottage	Positive
Parade of 2 Shops (Little Loddington House)	NDHA	Simple, vernacular, two storey building, with painted render front, possible timber framed.	Positive
Chapel House and Providence Street Baptist Chapel, Chapel Lane	Grade II 1049056	House and Baptist chapel. House C17 or early C18, chapel C19.	Essential
			
Bly Court Manor, Chapel Lane	Grade II 1060739	House. Later C16.	Essential
URC Church	NDHA		Positive
Manse	--	Two-storey Victorian villa, typical of its period, provides a positive contribution to the character of the area.	Positive
Minton House (Surgery)	Grade II 1060721	House. Early-to-mid C19	Essential



Crampton	Grade II 1240415	House and shop. C16 or earlier timber framed building refronted in late C19.	Essential
1, 2, 3 Crown Cottages	Grade II 1372026	House row, possibly formerly an inn. Mid C16, restored early C20.	Essential
Butcher	Grade II 1344400	House and shop. C17 or earlier, possibly of 2 periods, with mid-to- late C19 facade.	Essential



Wimborne House	Grade II 1060720	House, formerly house and shop, now house. C16 or earlier, with C17, C19 and C20 alterations.	Essential
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Hill House, steps and railings	Grade II 1187162	House, formerly house and post-office. Early/mid C18, possibly with earlier core, and with C19 alterations.	Essential
AYSGARTH DIXON'S STORES	Grade II 1344399	House and shop. C16 or early C17, with later alterations.	Essential
NO 4, PETER JONES OPTICIANS, AND PREMISES TO REAR	Grade II 1187139	House, with shop and offices. Late C16 or early C17, with C18 wing, mid C19 facade, and later alterations.	Essential
1, 2, 3 High Street	Grade II 1060719	House or special-purpose building, formerly house and shops, now house row. Early C17 or earlier, with late C18 or early C19 facade, and later alterations.	Essential
All Saints Church	Grade I 1060713	Parish church. Late C12, C13, C14 and C15, with alterations of 1853 and 1876.	Essential
			
Staplehurst House & The Old Rectory	NDHA		Positive
Parish Rooms	NDHA		Positive



South View, East View, and Redbar Electrical Ltd.	Grade II 1060723	House pair and shop, probably formerly an inn. C16, with later alterations.	Essential
Rosemary, Hill Crest, Craybrook Studios, and Kent Cottage (formerly separately listed as Two Cottages adjoining to the north of South Stores, and as Hilltop)	Grade II 1372033	House row with shop. Late C16 or early C17, with probably later single-bay addition (Rosemary) to left, and with C19 alterations	Essential
Bell Cottage, steps and handrail (Bell Inn)	Grade II 1060724	Part of public house, now house. Late C16 or early C17.	Essential
The King's Head Hotel (formerly listed as The King's Head Inn)	Grade II 1060725	Public house. C16, with alterations of 1671, C18 and C19.	Essential
No. 7 and former shop and house adjoining to south (formerly listed as premises occupied by Mather and premises occupied by E.G. Wood and house attached)	Grade II 1369992	House row with shop. C17 or early C18, with mid-to-late C19 alterations.	Essential

<p>Page and Wells Estate Agents. (Formerly listed as premises occupied by C.E. Goodsell and house attached</p>	<p>Grade II 1060726</p>	<p>House and shop. C18 or early C19, with C19 and C20 alterations.</p>	<p>Essential</p>
			
<p>Vine House</p>	<p>Grade II 1045895</p>	<p>House. Late C18 or early C19, with later C19 alterations. Now three dwellings.</p>	<p>Essential</p>
<p>Railings about 3 metres east of Vine House</p>	<p>Grade II 1060727</p>	<p>Railings. Late C18 or early C19</p>	<p>Essential</p>
<p>Nos 1-3 Limes Terrace and Dr. Davies Surgery</p>	<p>Grade II 1045873</p>	<p>House row. C17 or earlier, possibly with later additions to right, and with C19 facade. Ground floor red and grey brick, banded plain and fishscale tiles to first floor.</p>	<p>Essential</p>
<p>Green Court and Green Court Cottage (formerly listed as Green Court House and Green Court Cottage)</p>	<p>Grade II 1060728</p>	<p>House or house row, now house row. C17 or earlier, with C18 and C19 alterations.</p>	<p>Essential</p>

Drey Cottages	Grade II	House pair, C18 or earlier.	Essential
			
Saddlery Stores and Little London Cottage	Grade II 1060729	House pair and shop. C18, with C19 alterations.	Essential
Chestnut Cottage and Kingswood Chemists	Grade II 1045826	House pair, now house and shop. Late C18 or early C19.	Essential
The Bower	NDHA		Positive
Surrenden	Grade II 1344402	House, formerly house pair, now apartments. Early-to-mid C19.	Essential

8.0. APPROACHES AND VIEWS

The area around Staplehurst, known as the Low Weald, is an area of long gently undulating slopes with few significant hills in the distance. However, the views into the built form are limited due to the placement of the village and the surrounding topology. The open, agricultural nature of the wider setting and the contrasting landscape of Iden Manor to the south, forms a key part of the character of this lively, busy village. The wider setting to north of the village is formed with the twisting country lane, spotted with small groups of dwellings, farmhouses and the large 'The Towers'. Once in the village boundary, the northern part outside of the Conservation Area has been previously discussed, with the linear Roman road forming the link through from the station to the historic core and beyond.

Within the Conservation Area, the views are dictated by the linear road, with either the built form or the established trees and gardens. The subtle variety of the ridge and eaves heights add visual interest, where the built form is visible. Where the road offers gentle bends, the views are generally of natural form of the trees and hedges. The creation of some boundary treatments, such as solid timber fences, have had a negative impact and lower the impact (and its associated social status) of the boundary wall of ragstone and railings to Loddenham Manor.



Figure 43 – view looking south from the High Street, the linear road very clear.



Figure 44 – view looking from entrance to Iden Manor towards the village.



Figure 45 – from the modern retail space looking north. The width of the road provides some indication of the wealth of the village.

Heading from the south, the open agricultural land and the grounds of Iden Manor form a positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area. The Lodge and the Quarter form part of an important estate, though the cohesion and uniformity that these would have once had are now lost due to be under separate ownership.

Approaching from the south, the petrol station provides a negative impact, but responds to the changing needs of the occupants, as does the Sainsburys to the north of the Conservation Area. Past the petrol station, the rural nature returns.

Views that include the views towards the Church, around and from the Church, and to Iden Manor are considered exceptionally, as these remain relatively unaltered since the major Victorian building works. These are long views due to the topology or the open countryside.

Within the Conservation Area, it is the mix of tree and hedges and the sections of built form that create the views which contribute to the character.

9.0. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

The character of a Conservation Area 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.



Figure 46 - UPVC double glazed windows change the character of the building, and cause harm to the Conservation Area.

The Local Planning 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. They are not necessary for works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments as listed

building consent and scheduled monument consent would cover all potentially harmful works that would otherwise be permitted development under the planning regime. However, Article 4 Directions might assist in the protection of all other heritage assets (particularly conservation areas) and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets, including listed buildings.

At present there is no Article 4 Directive in place for the Conservation Area. This will be reviewed separately to consider whether there is a need for an Article 4 Directive to prevent the increased use of:

- UPVc double glazed windows
- Alterations to roof forms
- Creation of porches
- Gates and fence enclosures treatment
- Creation of hardstanding to the front elevation for parking.

9.1. Green Spaces and Tree Preservation Orders

At present, a number of green spaces and trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them to protect some of the open space and established trees. This includes the verge to the northern approach to the conservation area, with the established trees, and this provides a separation between the newer development and the historic core. At the time of the survey, the garden to the front of Surrendon where overgrown and unkempt, and this gives the impression of rural space, rather than the grounds of a large house (though now flats, with the rear part of the former curtilage built upon – Crowther Close).

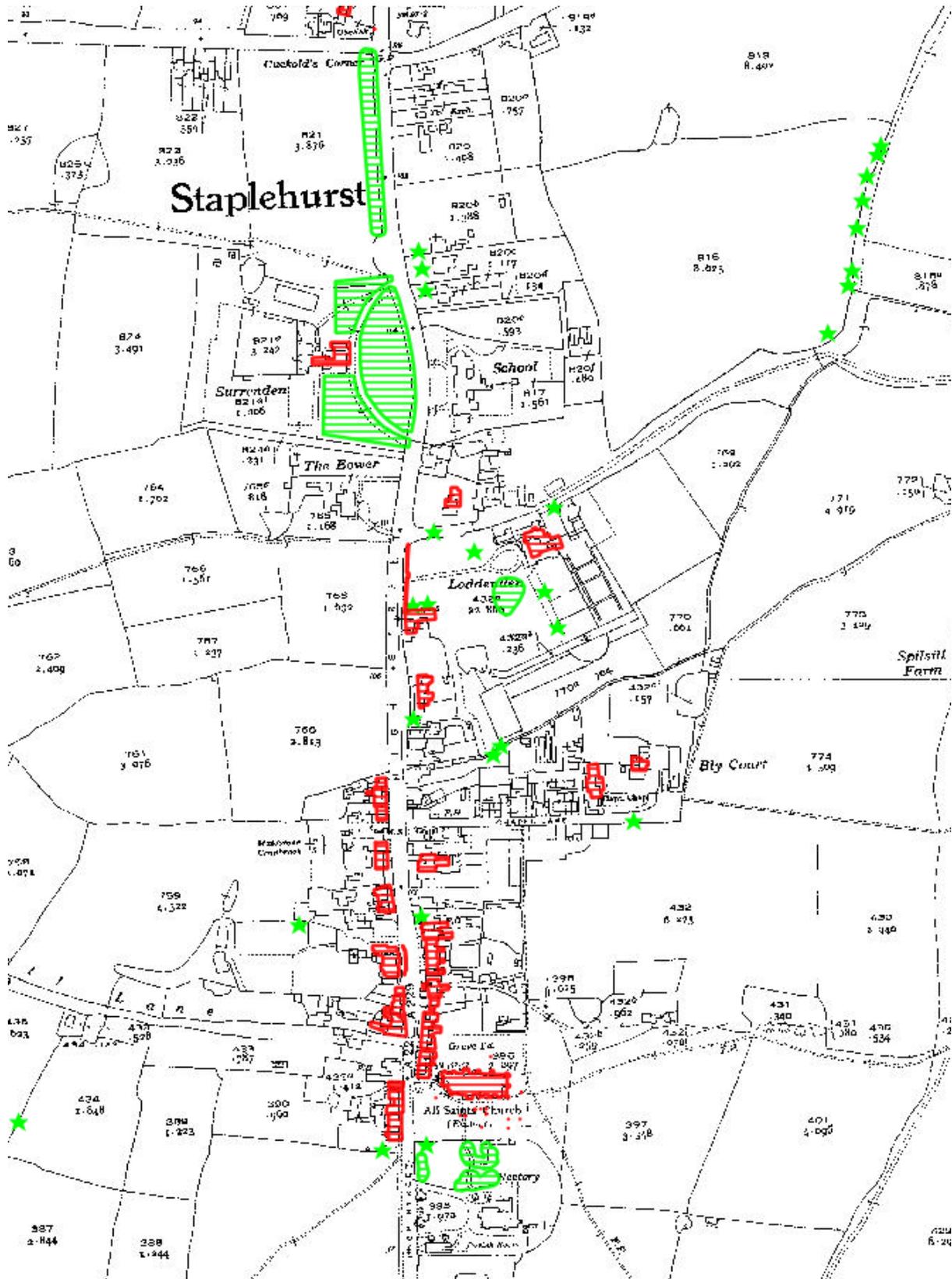


Figure 47 – TPO's within the core of the village.

10.0. PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE

The Staplehurst Conservation Area is of considerable historic and cultural interest. It has many listed buildings and many properties that have maintained a continuing use for a significant amount of time. Despite its historic importance it has not become fossilised and remains a vibrant and viable local centre. The Parish Council have recognised that to maintain its relevance there has to be development. It is also recognised that this development must be controlled to protect the nature of the historic core and the contact with open countryside. Listed and unlisted buildings make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation area and in many cases are essential to it.

Within the Conservation Area modern developments and redevelopments have not resulted in any serious loss of character, most being discretely sited or of inoffensive design and largely built of appropriate materials. In fact, the major agent of character loss has not been redevelopment but the cumulative impact of individual relatively minor alterations such as inappropriate siting of external electrical equipment and wiring, replacement windows and doors and works carried out to the boundary treatments with little strategic focus and a lack of awareness of heritage integrity and value. The loss of traditional shop fronts, and the shops themselves, will have an impact on the vibrancy of the historic core.



Figure 48 – UPVc door (now replaced and blanked window to a traditional building and poor shop front which forms part of a listed building.

Staplehurst is generally a well-cared for village and problems of dereliction; dilapidation and disuse are rare. The detailed analysis carried out in this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for works and development for which the scope appears to be very limited.

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 within the Conservation Area have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are no areas that 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 the Conservation Area. The design style

of any replacement building is not predetermined. In this Conservation Area the focus will be on a high-quality response to the existing context rather than there being a requirement for a particular appearance.

The character of Staplehurst, seen today, is at least in part set by the consistent use of a generally limited range of materials used on mostly small-scale buildings. It is important that any future proposals for development or works should respect this. There are a few single storey buildings – most being two or three storeys and accordingly developments of less or more than two storeys will generally be inappropriate while there will be a base line of high quality and contextually positive design. Conversion/extension of single storey ancillary buildings may be considered acceptable.

The loss of character is likely to come about through lack of maintenance or inappropriate repairs, replaced components or the loss of hedges and trees, rather than through any larger scale of intervention for which there is little scope. It is in the public domain that attention is most needed since so many agencies have a call on this resource and the actions of just a few of the many property owners can subvert an otherwise consistent and reasonable policy. Further erosion of the quality of the streetscape needs to be avoided and opportunities taken to reverse some of the harmful practices that have taken place in the past. The focus needs to be on the use of appropriate shop fronts, signage, and the loss of timber windows for UPVc double glazing.



Figure 49 – hedges and boundary treatments form a key part of the character of the area, separating domestic and commercial uses apart.

Trees and landscape are significant contributors to the feel of Staplehurst and the quality of the environment. There are many well established specimens including some on the High Street. Trees play an important part in the visual quality of the village as it is approached from any direction and are a key feature throughout the village.

10.1. Setting of the Conservation Area

There is also a high risk that the setting of the Conservation Area and views into and out of it will be adversely affected by ill-judged or inconsiderate changes to facades, boundary treatments and signage. Of particular concern are the number of fine and established hedges that line the approach roads and give a strong character to these routes into the Conservation Area. They are comparatively high maintenance but their contribution to the setting of the core of Staplehurst is fundamental.

Development of the Iden Manor site (in its historical context) would be considered harmful if not carefully designed and impact on open space. Further research into the estate, including the gardens and wider grounds should be undertaken prior to any development proposals to gain a better understanding of this under-researched estate.

10.2. Existing Conservation Area Boundary

The current boundary of the conservation area is still considered valid in terms of the area and assets it encompasses. The retention of Crowther Close within the conservation area is considered acceptable, as this protects the historic boundary of the former gardens of Surrenden, and the ponds and some trees, but it should be recognised that the houses offer little contribution to the character or significance of the conservation area.

There are a couple of adjustments that could be made to the boundary to form a more understandable, visual boundary, for example where it cuts through a boundary. This would not impact the character or planning considerations.

Consideration for the inclusion of Iden Manor, and its associated curtilage could be undertaken to protect this important former manor/ estate (but exclude the Petrol Station). This is discussed further in Section 12.

11.0. CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

11.1. INTRODUCTION

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.

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.



Figure 50 – glimpse views through to rear of historic buildings.

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.

This Management Plan for the Staplehurst conservation area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 10.0 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal and outlines any proposals for boundary changes as also may be suggested by the Appraisal.

11.01. POLICY CONTEXT

11.01.01. National Policy

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://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>).

Paragraph 191 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 190 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.



Figure 51 -painted render to timber framed properties.

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.

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.

11.01.02. Local Policy

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 to cover conservation areas has not yet been produced but there will be specific reference to heritage assets in the reviewed Local Plan, currently under review at the time of writing this appraisal. 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.



Figure 52

12.0. PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

The appraisal above records that the Conservation Area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is deemed to be of special architectural or historic interest. At present, it is not proposed to amend or alter the proposed boundary, apart from adjusting the line to follow a land boundary, rather than cut through the grounds of the Kings Head.

Consideration was undertaken to include Iden Manor, and its former estate, as seen within the 1897 OS map in Fig. 53. However, this was considered to be constrictive for its current use by the NHS and there was no immediate threat to the former estate.

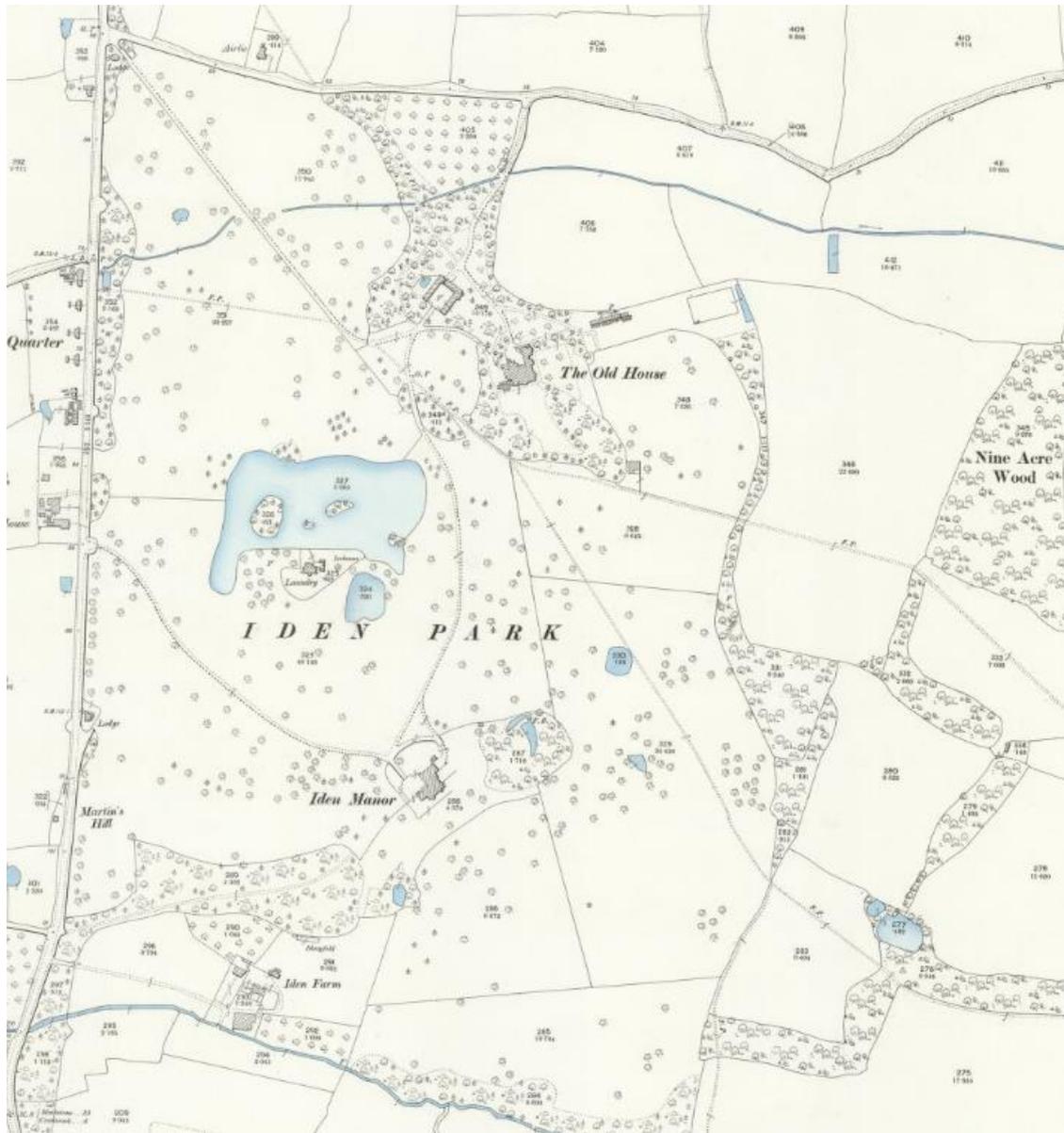


Figure 53 - 1897 OS map showing the extent of Iden Park, from Frittenden Road to the north, to past Iden Farm.

Consideration was undertaken to exclude Crowther Close as these dwellings do not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, but the existing boundary responds to the historic boundary of Surrendon and protects the ponds and trees that were associated with the main house.

Consideration was undertaken to extend the Conservation Area boundary to the north to include some of the good examples of Victorian villas and terraces, however, due to the infill development and the extent of changes undertaken to many of these buildings, they were not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest. They do form a positive contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area and respond to a period of major change to Staplehurst.

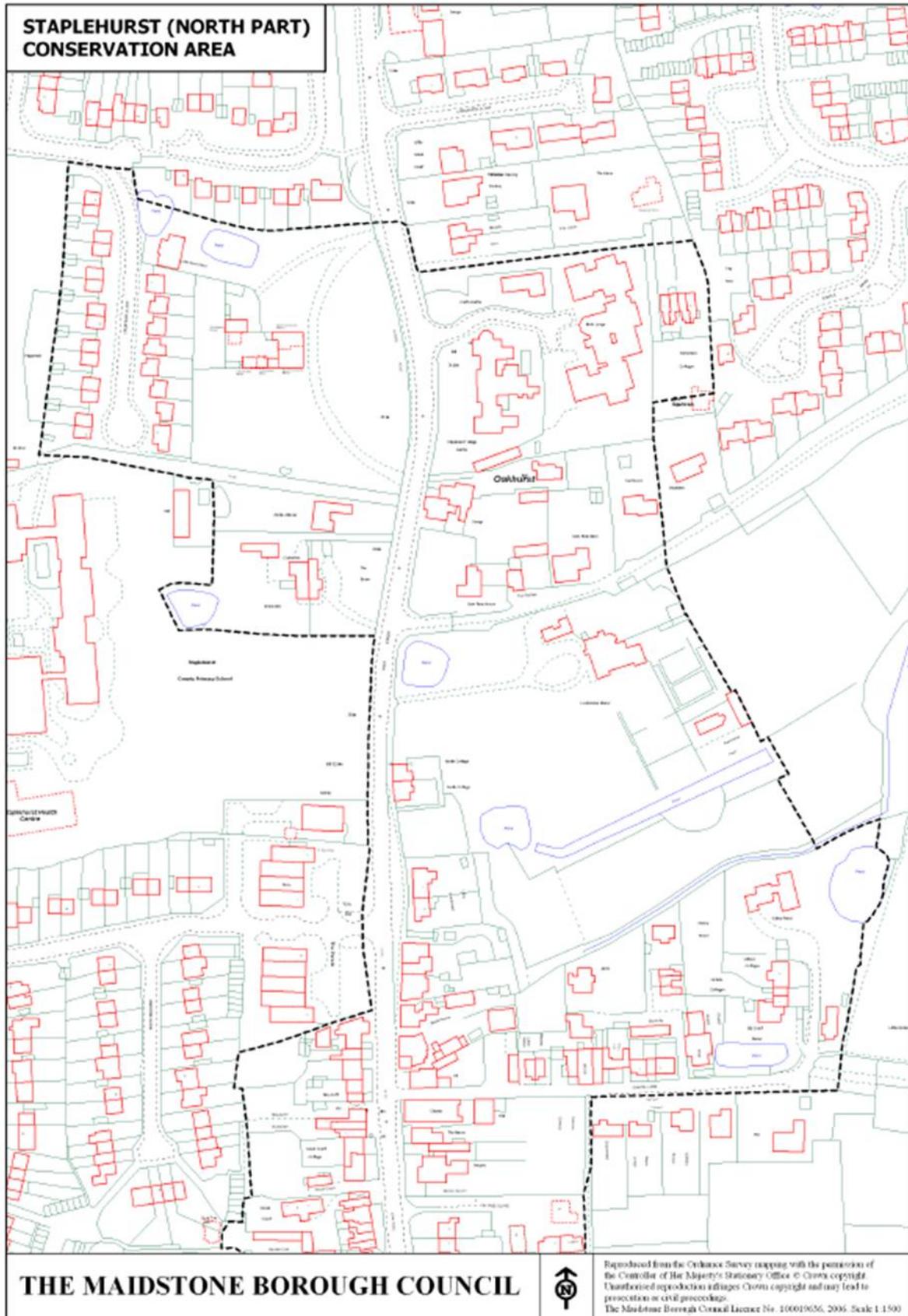


Figure 54 - north section of conservation area.

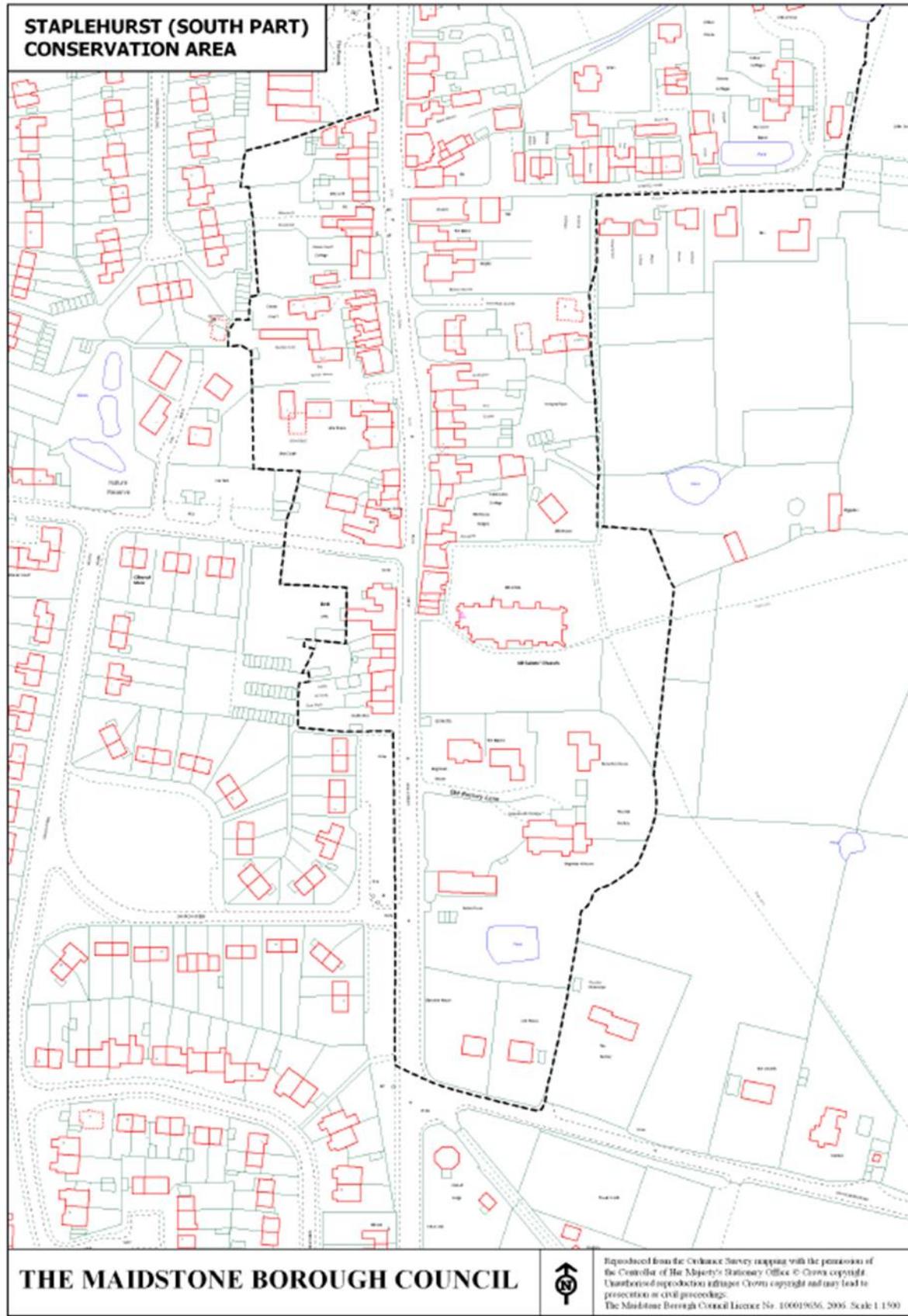


Figure 55 - southern section of conservation area.

13.0. DESIGN CODES

13.01. Neighbourhood Plans

Many Neighbourhood Plans have already considered design codes or principles, and these should be used as part of the overall Design Code for the settlement. Where a Neighbourhood Plan has not considered these or been created, a design code will be formed.

Staplehurst have produced a Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 (September 2013) which has a key list of vision points, including maintaining and enhancing the rural character, its immediate setting, and the wider parish; protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and enforcing the quality of new development through the use of materials, details and inclusive design that responds to context. The document also provides a summary of village character and architectural details.

13.02. Design Codes – Guiding Principles

Any proposed design within the Conservation Area or within the setting of the Conservation Area should comply with the Design Code Approach as per the National Model Design Code (NMDC) process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>). The NMDC is based on a series of place characteristics from the National Design Guide, and places these in a wheel. These ten characteristics of a well-designed place form are explained further within the NMDC guidance.



Figure 56 - the National Model Design Code wheel showing the ten characteristics of a well-designed place.

14.0. PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

14.1. Planning Considerations

Sensitive and responsive management of development is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas, its setting, or the approaches to it. 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.

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 (NPPF) and any subsequent revisions, additions, or replacement government guidance.

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.

14.2. Information required for an application

The Maidstone web site gives advice on the content of a planning application – see [validations checklist](#).

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/>).

A simple template and guidance has been produced by Maidstone Borough Council for smaller domestic proposed works. This can be found <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/heritage-and-landscape/heritage-statements> .

Where proposed works are to be undertaken that could affect known archaeology sensitive areas, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment should be provided. This information can be found via the Councils GIS System [[link](#)] or via <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>



Figure 57 – High Street, looking south.

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 clearly show 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 validated.

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.

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](#).

Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the Conservation Area or on sites affecting its setting.

14.3. New Development within the Conservation Area

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 states that the Conservation Area is appropriate for minor residential development as set out in Policy H27 – normally this would be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that it is appropriate within the context of the Conservation Area and will not harm its special character.

It is considered that the scope for new developments within the conservation area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the vernacular building materials that dominant that area.

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. A mix of architectural styles and ethos within the area should not be used to create a single dwelling or building as this creates a poor quality, confusing design.

Buildings should respect the predominant scale, and not exceed two storeys. The social hierarchy of the buildings should be respected, responding to the scale and appearance of the building, together with the prominence or position within the street scene. The ridge and eaves line should work with the neighbouring buildings but be individual to ensure that variety is formed.

The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the Conservation Area. Special areas, such as church yards and protected gardens shall have extra consideration for impacts of harm to ensure that these spaces can continued to be enjoyed.

New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the Conservation Area, these include: -

- Ragstone
- Red brick
- Clay plain Kent peg tiles for roofs or tile-hanging
- Weatherboarding
- Cast iron or aluminium rainwater goods
- Timber windows and doors, ideally slim-profile double glazing

In the case of red stock bricks and tiles it will be important for them to be made of Wealden clays or clays of similar geological formation. Any material selected will be required to be demonstrably used widely on nearby buildings.

Architectural details should respond to Vernacular styles and detailing. Consideration for the scale of the building is important to work with the existing buildings. Roof pitches are an important feature with the main street as they form part of the character.

Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. All substantial trees within the Conservation Area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size. The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the Conservation Area.

In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations: -

- Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See Extensions SPD.
- 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 should be subservient to ensure a large area of roof scape. Dormers should be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof, with a timber casement window. 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.
- Roof lights will not be considered acceptable to front elevations. They may be considered acceptable to rear or concealed roofs 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.
- Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- 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.
- Signage whether in the public domain or as part of a commercial business frontage should respect the character of the conservation area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature.

14.4. New development within the setting of Designate Heritage Assets

New development within Staplehurst or the surrounding area that has the potential to impact on the setting of the Conservation Area or listed buildings should look to 'enhance or better reveal their significance' (NPPF, 2023- 206). In addition to the guidelines provided, the following should be considered.

14.4.01. Layout

The proposed layout of a scheme should recognise the existing, historical development pattern of the settlement. Where more modern development has introduced new patterns, this will not naturally be accepted for future development.

The formation of streets should look to consider the hierarchy of spaces, ensuring the central road through Staplehurst is the predominant road, with smaller, domestic scale roads off.

The proposed layout should provide connectivity with the existing settlement, ideally with pedestrian routes to the historic core and retail area.

14.4.02. Trees and Landscaping

Developments should preserve trees and hedges which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character or setting of the Conservation Area.

New development should look to ensure that the tree cover is retained. Adding trees to act as screens will generally not be supported where the setting of the Designated Heritage Assets will be harmed.

New developments will be encouraged to use hedges as part of the main boundary treatments, mixed with some low-level Kentish Ragstone or brick walls. High boundary treatments within the public realm will be prohibited as this creates poor views which will impact the setting of designated heritage assets.

14.5. Existing Buildings

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 circumstance. The redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context.

In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments provided within a Heritage Statement.

14.6. Non-designated Heritage Assets

Where recognised, either before or during an application, weight will be given for the retention of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA), as per Policy DM4.

As within listed buildings, a NDHA could be of local interest through archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic interest. It does not have to have all four areas of interest to be recognised as a NDHA.

We encourage nominations for NDHA. A guidance on how to nominate is available on our website [<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/heritage-and-landscape/listed-buildings>]

14.7. Window and Door Replacement

Replacement Windows can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of a conservation area. Where there is no Article 4 Directive (refer to Appendix 2), it will be encouraged that traditional and historic windows and doors are retained, and where there is a need to replace, these will be undertaken with timber, and of a design responding to the dwelling.

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.

Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same considerations as dormers in relation to numbers, position, and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used. Rooflights should not be placed on principle elevations unless screened by parapet or similar.

14.8. Extensions

Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).

Any extensions should respect the spacing and character of the street scene, and not look to overcrowd or dominant the street scene.

14.9. Boundary Treatments

Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be hedging, low brick walls or wooden open fencing.

Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

Where there are existing ragstone walls, these should be retained as they form a significant contribution to the character of the area.

The demolition of boundary walls to allow for off-road parking will be refused where the loss of the boundary treatment will have a negative impact on the character of the conservation area.

Further details can be found in the Boundary Walls Guidance [link]

14.10. Commercial and Retail

Retail and commercial functions within many of the conservation areas offer many advantages and can often help create a vibrant and attractive street scene. The retention of shops and services will

be encouraged, though it is recognised that there has been a decline in the use of shops over recent years². Creative change of these buildings can often find new uses, and by recognising that places need to be adaptable, it is able to adjust to changing retail and social trends and offer shoppers and visitors the experience they want and need.

Where there is a proposed loss of a shop, evidence must be provided to show that all efforts have been undertaken to retain the shop.

Shop fronts and signage should respect the character of the conservation area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature. Large scale signage and covering of principle windows will be discouraged as this provides a negative appearance.

Further information can be found in the Shop Front Guidance

[https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/your-councillors?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTNBjTJGJTJGJbWVldGluZ3MubWFpZHN0b25lLmdvdi51ayUyRmRvY3VtZW50cyUyRnM4NzMOOCUyRINob3AlMjBmcm9udHMlMjBhbmQlMjBhZHZlcnRpc2VtZW50cyUyMC0lMjBtUVOREVELnBkZiZhbGw9MQ%3D%3D]

14.11. Parking

The creation of parking for both domestic dwellings and for commercial/ retail/ business use can have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that for many businesses to survive, especially retail, then ease of parking is important. A balance judgement will be undertaken to ensure that the parking does not have negative impact on the business.

Parking for private dwellings will be considered on a case for case basis. Where conversion of a building is proposed, parking will be taken into consideration for the impact on the harm to the significance and setting of the heritage asset. This will include incremental impact from previous development within the area.

14.12. Traffic Management

The impact of traffic within most Conservation Areas has a critical impact on the area. The build-up of traffic and congestion at peak times can be significant. However, this needs to be considered with the success of an area retaining a vibrant and viable core and therefore access to the centre should continue to be encouraged while reducing the number of cars involved.

The Management Plan alone cannot reduce traffic concerns, but additional consideration for the proposed conversion of buildings into HMO's or flats, and the associated car parking and traffic should be undertaken as part of the consideration for conversion.

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/historic-towns-and-high-streets/>

The position of the carparking on a proposed scheme should be considered as parked cars (or the open hardstanding) can have a negative impact on the character of the area. It may not always be appropriate to locate the parking to the front of the building.

14.13. Public Realm Improvements

The public realm is often managed by different organisations, including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, and the parish council.



Figure 58 – simple brick building, with architectural details formed in brick.

Where practical and possible, consideration for improvements should be undertaken. These could include items such as:

- Resurface High Streets and key/ main road within the Conservation Area
- Mitigate against urban road schemes in rural areas, or where required, ensure that they are minimal or designed to respond to the character
- Parking controls within more sensitive areas
- Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings
- Measures to ensure that property owners outside the conservation area are encouraged to maintain and plant new hedges
- Improve quality and consistency of shop fronts, signage, and lighting
- Improve green and communal spaces
- Reduce clutter in some areas
- improve Highway's requirements, such as thinner yellow lines, reduction in signage, etc.
- improve front boundary treatments
- improve pathways and connectivity.

Historic England provide good guidance on improving public realm -

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/streets-for-all/>

14.14. Demolition

Where a building has been recognised as having 'neutral' or 'positive' contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, there will need to be justification to clarify for the loss of the building or structure.

Buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstance. The redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context.

14.15. Carbon Reduction Incentives and Schemes

Within Conservation Areas, it is possible to install carbon neutral or 'Green' initiatives, though they will require consideration. A holistic, whole building approach should be undertaken to the building, rather than a presumption of a single solution, such as double-glazed windows.

Where a planning or listed building consent application is submitted, it will be expected that the holistic consideration for the buildings has been undertaken by providing a simple statement, either within the Design & Access Statement or within the Heritage Statement.

There are numerous options available, many will be site specific, but the general considerations are:

- Solar panels should not be installed on buildings where visible from the public realm, or if the building is listed. Consideration for any associated plant, including the batteries should be considered, and should not be within the public realm.
- Double glazing is generally not permitted within listed buildings. With other buildings within conservation areas, it is preferred that it is not installed to primary routes or buildings of local or national interest. The installation of secondary glazing creates a strange reflection, and the additional weight of the glass requires a larger or chunkier frame, both of which can alter the appearance of the building in a negative appearance.

The manufacture of double glazing has a high carbon contribution due to the use of glass and UPVC, and therefore it is recommended that existing windows are overhauled, repaired and secondary glazing installed.

- Secondary glazing can be installed to improve the thermal efficiency of buildings. This often provides a better solution than installing double glazing. The use of shutters on buildings can improve the heat-loss of the building and could be found in many older buildings.
- Awnings to windows are generally associated today with shops, but they have been traditionally used on domestic houses to provide sun screening and to protect the glass from weather. The use of awning could be used, where appropriate, to assist against solar warming.
- Ground and Air Source Heat Pumps can be installed to buildings within the conservation area, with planning permission [?]. The external air source should not be visible from the public realm. Consideration for any potential archaeology should include within an application, with the expectation of where there is deemed to have potential, that a Watching Brief will be conditioned.
- External insulation will not be considered acceptable to a majority of buildings within the conservation area due to the visual impact on the appearance of the property.
- Retrofitting is a wide subject, with some aspects that would not need permission to be undertaken, such as loft insulation.
- External Electric Car Charging points should be formed via a pole, rather than connected to the wall. Where a pole or freestanding system is not practical, the unit should not be placed on the principle and/or front façade of the building and be positioned as discreetly as possible. The point should be a socket system and not a tethered (ie, with fixed cable). The cable connecting the socket to main supply should not be run where visible and it should consider the fabric and details of the building.

As these often require dedicated off-street parking, works to create the off-street parking should be considered. The demolition of front boundary walls or treatments will not generally be allowed within the Conservation Area due to the negative impact on the character.

14.16. Ecology Measures

Integrated biodiversity enhancements, such as bird/bat bricks/tiles/tubes, and bee bricks, should be included with any new builds or extensions.

With listed buildings, some consideration for these should be undertaken to enhance biodiversity. Alternative positions may be a more sympathetic solution, such as the grounds, existing boundary walls (if brick or stone), or associated outbuildings.

Where replacement roof coverings or alterations are proposed, then integrated biodiversity enhancements should be included if the building is not already hosting ecology (such as bats).

14.17. Services

There is a growing demand for services and the associated equipment to domestic houses. Consideration for the character of the area, and the setting of listed buildings should be undertaken.

- Satellite dishes (one per building) will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- Air conditioning units (and associated plant) should not be placed where it can be seen from the public realm.
- Meter Boxes should not be placed on the front façade of the building but should be located within the grounds.
- Alarm boxes should be positioned with consideration to ensure that they do not form the main focus of an elevation or cover architectural details.
- Security Cameras will not usually be supported unless a strong business case is provided. Where they are needed, they should be sensitively positioned, with the minimum number of cameras required.
- Security measures, such as grills and shutters will not be permitted where visible from the public realm as these often provide a negative impact on the appearance of the street scene. Where there is a strong business requirement for shutters, these should be internal and open to allow for passive security protection. [Refer to shop guidance].

14.18. Enforcement Strategy

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.



Figure 59 – generally two-storey, with the odd three storey building.

Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. All substantial trees within the conservation area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size.

The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the conservation area.

In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:

- Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).
- 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 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.
- Roof lights may be considered acceptable to rear elevations 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.



Figure 60 – example of a flush fitting rooflight – ‘Conservation Rooflight’.

- Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be hedging, low brick walls or wooden open fencing. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation. (Refer to Boundary Treatment Guidance)
- Shop fronts and signage should respect the character of the conservation area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature. (Refer to Shop Front Design Guidance).

14.19. Enforcement Strategy

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.

15.0. ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

15.1. Buildings in Disrepair

This is currently not a significant issue in Staplehurst Conservation Area. However, 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:

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 days' notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

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.

'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.

15.2. Trees

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.



Figure 61 – green spaces, boundary treatments and trees make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

15.3. Traffic Management

The impact of traffic within the conservation area is a critical factor. The build-up of traffic and congestion at peak times can be significant. This is partly due to the success of Staplehurst at retaining its vibrant and viable core and therefore access to the centre should continue to be encouraged while reducing the number of cars involved. This might involve parking provision on the fringes of the centre and more control of parking in High Street.

15.4. Reinstatement of Original Features

There are examples, though thankfully not too many in the conservation area of damage caused to the character of the conservation area caused by injudicious alterations to properties. Such alterations include re-roofing in inappropriate materials, replacement windows and doors of inappropriate design, signage or materials and discordant surface finishes. The Council would like to see a process of reversal where this has happened. This can only be by persuasion as there are no provisions to enforce reinstatement where the alterations are covered by permitted development. Nevertheless, the Council will encourage property owners to reinstate traditional forms and materials as part of ongoing maintenance.

15.5. Public Realm Improvements

There are a variety of options available that could help improve the public realm. A balance needs to be undertaken to ensure the character of the conservation area and the vibrancy of the settlement, this is especially important with cars and parking and the local amenities.

Consideration of improvements should include:

- Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings
- Measures to ensure that property owners outside the conservation are encouraged to maintain and plant new hedges



Figure 62 – local shops and facilities should be supported.

15.6. Article 4 Directions

The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions to withdraw permitted development rights. The individual permitted development rights which can be removed are limited to specific classes of development. Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is given in Department of the Environment Circular 9/95, which states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where firm evidence exists that damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area is likely to take place or is already taking place because of the exercise of such rights.

At present there are no Article 4's in place at Staplehurst.

16.0. REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES

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.

17.0. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Street Furniture/building frontages	Improve quality and consistency of shop fronts, signage, and lighting	Maidstone Borough Council Parish Council
Traffic	Parking restrictions to High Street and vicinity New parking provision walkable distance from the High Street to encourage visitors	Maidstone Borough Council Parish Council KCC Highways
Inappropriate modifications	Take steps to encourage reversal of inappropriate modifications carried out to buildings and frontages	Maidstone Borough Council Parish Council
Shared surface	Resurface the central area of the High Street	Parish Council KCC Highways
Boundaries	Review conservation area	Maidstone Borough Council Parish Council



Figure 63 – local butchers and shops offer limited local parking within the High Street.

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Appendix 1 - Staplehurst CAA Bibliography

Author	Publication Date	Title	Volume No	Editor
Newman, John	2012	The Buildings of England Kent: West and the Weald	-	-
	2009	Archaeologia Cantiana	-129	-
Hasted, Edward	1798	The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent	V5	
KCC		Kent Historic Environment Record https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx		
KCC Heritage Conservation Group	2004	Kent Historic Towns Survey Headcorn – Kent Archaeological Assessment Document	-	-
Dr Harris	1724	A History of Kent	-	-
Pernille Richards	2021	History on our doorstep – a walk in Headcorn		Ella Martignetti

Appendix 2 - USEFUL CONTACTS

- Historic England Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA
customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk
- Kent County Council (Heritage Conservation Group) Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14
Email: heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk
- Maidstone Borough Council (Heritage, Landscape & Design), Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ.
Email: Conservation@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

- Institute for Archaeologists, Miller Building, University of Reading, Reading RG6 6AB. T: 0118 378 6446 Email: admin@archaeologists.net
- Landscape Institute 33 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QG T: +44 (0)20 7299 4500 Email: <mailto:mail@landscapeinstitute.org>
- Royal Institute of British Architects 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD T: +44 (0)20 7580 5533 Email: <mailto:info@inst.riba.org>
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, RICS Contact Centre, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry CV4 8JE T: +44 (0)870 333 1600
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
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37 Spital Square London E1 6DY info@spab.org.uk
- Design and Access Statements
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101121172431/http://cabe.org.uk/files/design-and-access-statements.pdf>