





Conservation Areas in Medway

I. Introduction

As part of Medway Council's on-going management of its historic environment, Conservation Area Appraisals are being produced to reflect updates in legislation, guidance, our knowledge and understanding, and changes in the character or make-up of our Conservation Areas. There are currently 24 Conservation Areas in Medway:

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Brompton Lines | 7. Halling | 13. Moor Street | 19. St Mary Hoo |
| 2. Chatham Historic Dockyard | 8. Historic Rochester | 14. New Road, Chatham | 20. Star Hill |
| 3. Cliffe | 9. Lower Rainham | 15. New Road, Rochester | 21. Star Hill to Sun Pier |
| 4. Frindsbury & Manor Farm | 10. Lower Twydall | 16. Pembroke | 22. Upper Upnor |
| 5. Gillingham Green | 11. Maidstone Road, Chatham | 17. Railway Street | 23. Upper Bush |
| 6. Gillingham Park | 12. Meresborough | 18. Rainham | 24. Watts Avenue & Roebuck Road |

Of the 24 Conservation Areas, 6 have adopted Conservation Area Appraisals:

- Brompton Lines (adopted 2006)
- Maidstone Road, Chatham (adopted 2004)
- New Road, Chatham (adopted 2004)
- Historic Rochester (Adopted 2010)
- Upper Upnor (adopted 2004)
- Upper Bush (adopted 2004)

A stand-alone Conservation Area Management Plan has also been adopted for Historic Rochester, alongside design guidance for the Gillingham Park and Watts Avenue and Roebuck Road Conservation Areas, as well as general guidance on shopfront security and shopfront advertising design for historic buildings. All of the adopted Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans and other guidance can be downloaded from the [Medway Council website](#).

To establish some uniformity and for ease of use, future Conservation Area Appraisals will comprise 3 primary documents:

1. **An Introduction to Conservation Area Appraisals** - *This will provide general information about Conservation Area Appraisals and how to use them.*
2. **The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan** - *Information and guidance specific to the Conservation Area.*
3. **Conservation Area Design Guidance** - *General guidance on design principles for development in Conservation Areas, more specific advice is included in the Conservation Area Appraisal, where appropriate.*

II. Purpose

Conservation Area Appraisals help define the historic, architectural and townscape qualities that make a Conservation Area special. The character of each Conservation Area is unique, and through understanding the qualities that make it special we can manage change so that a Conservation Area's character can be retained and enjoyed by all. This is achieved by creating a framework that provides guidance to council officers and developers as to how change is managed within the area, as well as advising homeowners on how to look after the character of their homes.

Conservation Area Appraisals also provide an overview of the history of the area, identify features that contribute to its character, as well as those that are considered to detract from it. Future management of the Conservation Area is also addressed, providing recommendations for change where appropriate.

The production of Conservation Area Appraisals help the council meet their legal duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for the formulation, publication and public consultation on proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

Government policy in relation to Conservation Areas is contained primarily within Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that can be downloaded from the [.GOV website](#).

Local policy for Conservation Areas is contained in the Medway Local Plan 2003, available to download from the [Medway Council website](#).



What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation Areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place - in other words, the features that make it unique. They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are usually designated by the Local Planning Authority.

What does it mean to own a property or live in a Conservation Area?

Conservation Area designation introduces some additional controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties. However, owners of residential properties generally consider these controls to be beneficial because they also sustain and/or enhance the value of property within it. These controls include:

- The requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and/or enhance, as discussed further in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.
- Local planning policies which pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.
- Control over demolition of unlisted buildings.
- Control over works to trees.
- Limitations on the types of advertisements which can be displayed with deemed consent.
- Restriction on the types of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission.
- Support for the use of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where avoidable damage is occurring.
- Clarification of archaeological interest, thereby assisting its protection.

Further advice about living in a Conservation Area is available on the [Historic England website](#).

Whilst there are extra responsibilities placed upon owners and occupiers of property in Conservation Areas, they are usually outweighed by living in an area that people value for its distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character. This value is reflected in the price of property in a Conservation Area as they are generally valued higher and appreciate more than comparable properties in other areas, even after adjusting for location and other factors.

More information on the value of property in Conservation Areas is available in a research paper by the London School of Economics, available to download from the [Historic England website](#).

IV. Approach

Methodology for appraisals

Historic England has published a range of guidance on how to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals which has been used as a basis for the methodology used in Medway. The methodology employed comprises the following steps and is explained in further detail over the next few pages:

- Desk-based research into the history of the area.
- Surveys of the Conservation Area and its boundaries.
- A review of the condition of the Conservation Area since the last appraisal was undertaken to identify changes and trends.
- An analysis of views which contribute to appreciation of the character of the Conservation Area.
- Where appropriate, the identification of character zones where differences in spatial patterns and townscape are notable that have derived from the way the area developed, its architecture, social make-up, historical associations and past and present uses.
- A description of the character of the Conservation Area and the key elements that contribute to it.
- An assessment of the contribution made by open space within and around the Conservation Area.
- Identification of heritage assets, other positive contributors, and where applicable, detractors.
- The development of a Management Plan for the Conservation Area.

Research

Desk-based research is an invaluable tool to gain a greater insight into a Conservation Area. The research will typically comprise:

- Visiting the local studies centre (for example Medway Archives).
- Architectural reviews such as the Buildings of England series (often referred to as Pevsner Guides).
- Consulting the Historic Environment Record, historic area assessments and character studies.
- Investigating historic photographs, maps and plans.



Survey

In order to gain a full understanding of the character of the Conservation Area, a series of site visits are undertaken which broadly follow the *'Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit'*. The toolkit uses a check-list of environmental features to create a guided survey of how each contributes to an area's character under the five main headings - spaces, buildings, landscape, views and ambience; with a scoring mechanism to show the relative positive or negative contributions of each feature.

Additional surveys are also undertaken to identify contributing features to the character of the area, including non-designated heritage assets which are considered to be of merit in terms of their historic, architectural or townscape contribution. Detracting elements are also noted to help build a complete picture and inform the creation of the Management Plan.

Identifying the setting and views

Important views will be identified both because they contribute to the understanding and appreciation of the special character of the Conservation Areas (and in some cases the contribution of their landscape setting), as well as being a consideration in assessing the impact of new development within the Conservation Area or its setting.

The methodology utilises Historic England's Good Practice Advice document (GPA3 - second edition) *'The Setting of Heritage Assets'*, and focuses on the significance of each view in terms of its historical, architectural, townscape, aesthetic and community interest; and of the key landmarks or heritage assets noted within it.

IV. Approach

Open space

Areas of open space within or around the boundary of a Conservation Area can be an important contributing factor to the overall character. An investigation of their enclosure, visual, and/or other sensory contribution, the relationship between public spaces and private space, the qualities they offer, and the identification of settlement edges forms part of the analysis.

Heritage assets

Each Conservation Area Appraisal will identify heritage assets that are considered to be of importance to the townscape, or contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of the area. In Medway, heritage assets most commonly include:

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduling is Historic England's oldest form of heritage protection and is the selection of nationally important archaeological sites. Scheduled Monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground; but they are always considered to be of national importance. There are over 200 categories of Scheduled Monuments ranging from prehistoric burial mounds to churches, and even more recent results of human activities such as factories and military structures. Currently there are around 20,000 Scheduled Monuments, with 77 in Medway.

Listed Buildings

The Listing of buildings celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also adds it as a consideration of the planning system so that they can be protected for future generations. The general principles for Listing are that all buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are likely to be Listed, as are most buildings built between 1700 and 1850. Particularly careful selection is required for buildings from the period after 1945, and buildings less than 30 years old are not normally considered to be of special architectural or historic interest because they have yet to stand the test of time. There are around 500,000 Listed Buildings currently, with 646 in Medway.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

Non-designated Heritage Assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decision making but are not formally designated heritage assets, such as Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Their significance could lie in their rarity, representativeness, architectural interest, townscape value, group value, artistic interest, historic association or archaeological interest.

V. Management



Management Plan

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas from time to time. Producing Design Guidance and Management Plans is a simple yet effective means of achieving this.

The production of the Conservation Area Appraisal will allow for a greater understanding, which can then be used to inform what possible actions or interventions are required through the Management Plan to protect and enhance the significance of the Conservation Area.

Design Guidance

Published Design Guidance is an invaluable tool that provides advice to owners and occupiers of property in a Conservation Area, as well as information for developers and Planning Officers when considering development proposals.

Often much of the architectural interest of a Conservation Area lies in the subtle design of details such as walls, fences, gates, doors, windows, roofs and footpaths; therefore it is important that these features such as these are protected, retained and replaced in a sympathetic way wherever possible. Design Guidance aims to identify these features and provide advice on their repair and replacement which in turn will help maintain the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Stricter controls for the external appearance of houses within a Conservation Area can be achieved through the use of Article 4 Directions.

Contact us

For advice on planning issues please contact the Medway Council Planning Department on:

- 01634 331700
- planning.representations@medway.gov.uk

For advice on matters relating to Listed Buildings or buildings in a Conservation Area, please contact a Conservation Officer at Medway Council on:

- 01634 331700
- design.conservations@medway.gov.uk