

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

9.111 The historic environment consists of buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites – these form an irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both the present and the past. The Borough has a rich historic heritage and this plays a key part in promoting economic prosperity by fostering tourism and providing attractive living and working conditions which encourage inward investment into the area.

9.112 The Borough contains 6 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, over 890 listed buildings and 17 conservation areas, and the Council is committed to using its planning powers to preserve and enhance the town's unique architectural heritage.

Conservation Areas

9.113 A conservation area is defined as an area of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. This means that when a conservation area is designated, the Borough Council has recognised that the area has a special character and identity which is worth protecting.

9.114 The Borough Council is required by legislation to “preserve or enhance” the character of each conservation area and all new proposals which affect that special character have to be considered in the light of this requirement. What is necessary is a sensitive management of change within an area rather than no change at all.

Designation and Review of Conservation Areas

9.115 The designation and review of conservation areas is undertaken independently of the Plan process. During the Plan period, all conservation areas will be reviewed on a regular basis and new designations may be made. In addition, character appraisals for each conservation area in the Borough will be drawn up. Each appraisal will clearly define and analyse the special architectural or historic interest that warrants the area's designation, providing a framework for future control and enhancement. The appraisal will be based on the following criteria and will be used to determine whether conservation area status is, and continues to be appropriate:-

- (i) The origins and development of topographical features such as medieval street patterns;
- (ii) The archaeological significance and potential, including any scheduled ancient monuments;
- (iii) The architectural and historic quality, character, and coherence of the buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area;
- (iv) The character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality;
- (v) The range of traditional materials prevalent in an area, particularly those which are characteristic of local styles;
- (vi) The contribution made by greenspaces, trees, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements to the character of the area;
- (vii) The prevailing or former land uses within the area and their historic patronage, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types;
- (viii) The relationship of the built environment to landscape, including definition of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas;

- (ix) Features which detract from the special character of the area.

Existing Conservation Areas

9.116 There is a total of 17 conservation areas in the Borough. The main planning considerations for each of these areas are set out below.

(1) The Old Town Conservation Area

Besides its function as a place to live and work, the historical associations, the working fishing beach and the urban form of the Old Town have led to its rise in popularity as a focus of interest for visitors to Hastings. The number of visitors creates some pressures in terms of volumes of traffic and car parking, particularly in high season. A balance needs to be maintained between the provision of facilities for visitors (such as amusement facilities etc), the needs of local residents and the overall aim to conserve the historical and cultural heritage of the area.

(2) Burtons' St Leonards Conservation Area

Burtons' St Leonards Conservation Area forms the core of the original Regency new town designed and built by James Burton between 1828–1835. It contains several individual buildings by James Burton and his son Decimus.

This area, from which the town of St Leonards developed, has its origins in the growth of seaside resorts and was popularised during the Victorian era. In 1977 it acquired recognition by the Secretary of State as an “area of outstanding architectural and historic interest.” The importance of this area is its axial planning and skilful integration of buildings and landscape.

(3) Blacklands Conservation Area

The Blacklands Conservation Area, located at the southern end of Alexandra Park, forms one of the main entrances to Hastings and comprises a series of buildings and landscaped features which are important contributions to the urban form of the town. The sinuous alignment of terraced Victorian buildings on the edges of Alexandra Park afford continually changing vistas and enhance the qualities of the Park, while the large detached Victorian houses situated in extensive gardens to the north, contribute to the imposing scale characteristic of this area.

(4) St Leonards West Conservation Area

Adjacent to and west of Burtons' St Leonards, this area contains the whole of the Hastings College of Arts and Technology as well as the Highlands Hotel and Undercliff area. The major expansion of the College illustrates how new design can complement the character of a conservation area.

(5) St Leonards East (Gensing) Conservation Area

This area is an extension of that part of Burtons' St Leonards referred to as Lavatoria and Mercatoria (the laundries and merchants area), the service industry part of the 'new town'. It is characterised, in contrast to the imposing scale of those properties in the St Leonards North Conservation Area, by a predominance of two-story terraced buildings housing a mixture of both commercial and residential activities.

(6) St Leonards North Conservation Area

This area comprises Pevensey Road, Charles Road, Kenilworth Road and Carisbrooke Road. It contains a predominance of detached and terraced Victorian properties varying in height between four and five storeys. These properties reflect the grandiose scale, harmonic proportions and detailing characteristic of the Victorian era.

(7) Warrior Square Conservation Area

Warrior Square is one of the most important features of urban form along the seafront. It provides a unique contrast to the continuous facade of buildings facing the sea and in many respects represents both the link and transition between Hastings and St Leonards.

(8) White Rock Conservation Area

This area consists of a tight knit group of properties centred on Dorset Place, White Rock Road and Cambridge Road. Although it is a mainly residential area there are a number of commercial activities present. Most of the properties are nineteenth century but they vary considerably in size and style.

(9) Cornwallis Gardens Conservation Area

The area includes Cornwallis Gardens with substantial Victorian properties fronting on an attractive area of open space at the centre. It also includes Holmesdale Gardens which contains groups of buildings of similar age and style.

(10) Grosvenor Crescent Conservation Area

This area forms the western end of the St Leonards seafront and includes the attractive early nineteenth century terrace along Marina. Along the seafront area and cliff top any new development would need to be carefully integrated into the existing urban form and landscaped setting.

(11) Magdalen Road Conservation Area

Magdalen Road and the street blocks to the west contain a group of imposing Victorian terraces and semi-detached properties. To the east the Convent school and its grounds are the major elements of the conservation area. Any proposals for change should be predominantly of a residential nature. They should adhere to original roof lines, parapet levels, balcony positions, detailing and proportions.

(12) Eversfield Place Conservation Area

In this area, mainly of seafront properties, the facades of any new buildings, or any alterations to those existing, should respect the prevailing heights, massing and proportions. The promenade is a major component of this area's character and as resources permit the Council will take any opportunities to improve and enhance its appearance.

(13) Markwick Terrace Conservation Area

The area is characterised by the grand scale of Markwick Terrace, the open space in front of it and the large detached villas in adjoining streets. Landscape and the spaces between buildings are important to the character of this area. In exercising control

over development, the Council will wish to protect the area from proposals which would result in an excessive degree of infilling.

(14) Springfield Road Conservation Area

The selective infill and redevelopment of vacant sites and the improvement of those areas which detract from the existing predominantly domestic form and layout will be supported. Any such development opportunities should have regard to the traffic and parking pressures in the area and a need to employ traditional building forms and materials.

The Buchanan Hospital site is currently being redeveloped and converted for housing. The site was developed and adapted over a period and the buildings are of mixed quality. Redevelopment and conversion on the site will secure improvements to layout, access and the overall appearance.

(15) Tillington Terrace Conservation Area

The Council will support proposals to improve and enhance this area to maintain the transitional urban form which is characteristic between the Old Town and Ore. Where development opportunities exist, proposals should have regard to the parking pressures in the area.

(16) Hastings Town Centre Conservation Area

Buildings in the commercial centre of the town represent a very wide range in age, physical form and size. Much of the original Victorian and Regency architectural form and detail exists over mostly modern shop fronts of varying quality, many displaying over-strident or poorly integrated signage.

A very important issue for this area is the need for good design of shopfronts and signage. Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes 3 and 4 provide guidance on these issues.

(17) Kings Road Conservation Area.

The buildings of Kings Road, London Road and other streets to the south in an adjacent conservation area incorporate a substantial commercial element and form the main shopping centre of St Leonards. To the north is Warrior Square Station and robustly detailed Victorian buildings in residential use.

Kings Road in particular has a strong urban linear character with a coherent streetscape. The various individual shop fronts at street level being visually unified by substantial rendered masonry upper floors. The upper floor street elevations possess a strong repetitive pattern of windows and relatively simple rhythmic robust detailing of structural masonry.

As with the Town Centre Conservation Area, Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes 3 and 4 provide relevant guidance on design for shopfronts and signage.

The Council will seek to improve the general visual amenity of the area by improvements to the street scene, encouraging the use of vacant upper floors and seeking external grant funds for the repair and improvement of the buildings.

Development within Conservation Areas

9.117 The Council will seek to ensure that development in conservation areas, including redevelopment, additions and alterations to existing buildings, change of use, the design of shopfronts and the display of advertisements will have due regard to the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area. The Council will also have regard to Policy L6 on urban parks and gardens in Chapter 8b 'Landscape', insofar as they fall within conservation areas.

9.118 New development should be of high quality and respect the overall character found in the particular conservation area or part of it, rather than be designed in isolation or necessarily imitate earlier styles. The character of a conservation area is determined by factors such as the existing pattern of development, architectural form, local materials and any open spaces, trees, hedges and landscape or townscape features.

9.119 A proposal outside a conservation area may affect its character by virtue of its visual or functional impact, and Policy L6 on historic parks and gardens may be relevant in this respect. Such proposals must respect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

POLICY C1

Development within Conservation Areas

Planning permission for development proposals within and adjacent to conservation areas will not be granted unless:-

- a) The proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces, the streetscene and other features that contribute to the character or appearance of the area;**
- (b) There is a high standard of design and detailing which reflects the surrounding architectural style, scale, massing, boundary treatment and site coverage;**
- (c) Trees, gardens, spaces between buildings and other open spaces (and particularly parks and gardens in conservation areas) which contribute to the character of the area should not be lost;**
- (d) High quality/traditional materials and finishes that are sensitive to neighbouring properties must be employed;**
- (e) The layout and arrangements of the building(s) should follow the pattern of existing development and plot widths; and**

- (f) The character and amenity of the area would be safeguarded following the accord of the development with suitable car parking and access requirements.

The Council will expect all planning applications to be accompanied by sufficient information to allow a full assessment of the proposal to be made and will refuse planning permission if such information is not provided.

9.120 In determining suitable parking and access requirements, the Council will have regard to current parking and highway standards.

Information to Accompany Planning Applications

9.121 To enable the Council to give proper consideration of the likely effect of a proposal on the character or appearance of a conservation area, whether that development would be within or without such an area, applicants for planning permission are likely to be required to provide supporting information. The amount of detail sought will vary according to matters including the sensitivity of the site and the scale of development proposed. It might include a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation. In deciding the amount and type of detail required, the Council will take account of its intended Supplementary Planning Guidance on Urban Design and the advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) Annex 4.

Article 4 (2) Directions in Conservation Areas

9.122 An Article 4 (2) Direction (made under the General Permitted Development Order 1995) requires a planning application to be submitted for certain types of minor development where normally no application would be needed. Article 4 (2) Directions currently cover individual buildings and groups of buildings within certain conservation areas.

9.123 The Council has sought to extend the number of Article 4 (2) Directions to control minor alterations such as roofs, windows, doors, curtilage walls and painting. Further extensions of these Directions are proposed.

Demolition of Buildings

9.124 The appearance of existing buildings and features are fundamental to the character and quality of a conservation area.

Conservation area consent is required to totally or substantially demolish an unlisted building within a conservation area.

9.125 Although conservation area consent is not covered by planning legislation and therefore falls outside the scope of this Plan, there are circumstances where a proposal requiring planning permission may involve the demolition of buildings. When planning permission is required, demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and it will be for the applicant to demonstrate that this is the only reasonable course of action having satisfied the criteria in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

9.126 An unsightly vacant plot can result if demolition is not followed by new development. To prevent this the Council will expect detailed proposals for redevelopment to accompany proposals for demolition.

POLICY C2

Demolition in a Conservation Area

Planning permission for development that would follow the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area will not be granted unless:-

EITHER:

(a) the existing building does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting;

OR:

(b) it is impracticable to retain the existing building in its present authorised use, or to reinstate it to a suitable previous or alternative use; and

- (c) no other suitable and economically viable use can be found for it.

In either case, demolition of the building (for which conservation area consent would be required) shall not be started until detailed proposals for the re-use of the site have been approved by the Council. Where reasonable, the Council may seek to enter into a Section 106 agreement and/or attach conditions to the planning permission to ensure that the start and progress of the scheme accords with an agreed programme of works.

Listed Buildings

9.127 When a building is described as 'listed' it means that it is included on a list of buildings which are considered to be of sufficient historic or architectural interest to merit special protection.

9.128 The leaflet 'Listed Buildings – a Guide' provides a basic framework of general advice which includes why buildings are listed and how they should be managed. It is available from the Borough Council. Where a number of owners share responsibility for the management of a listed building, the Borough Council will, where appropriate, foster the preparation of listed building management guidelines in accordance with English Heritage recommendations. Proposals to extend or alter a listed building will frequently require planning permission as well as listed building consent. In addition, proposals to demolish a listed building may form part of a development proposal requiring planning permission.

9.129 The Borough Council will take a rigorous approach to the protection of these buildings. A number of listed buildings have been sub-divided which has resulted in instances where the building is neglected and falling into disrepair. The Council will therefore take action wherever possible to ensure these buildings do not deteriorate.

9.130 Care must be taken to maintain the special architectural or historic character of listed buildings. Listed buildings can be damaged inadvertently by unsympathetic alteration or extension. Demolition is regarded as a last resort and will not be approved, unless it can be demonstrated that every effort has been made to continue the present use or find a suitable alternative use for the building, or the building is unsafe and cannot be made safe.

9.131 The Council recognises that the continued use of listed buildings is vital to their long term maintenance. The most suitable use for any building is the one for which it was originally designed. However, as needs and standards change, this is not always possible. In such cases, the best way of conserving a listed building is to find a use which is both compatible with its special architectural or historic appearance, character and setting, and minimises any loss or damage to the historic fabric of the building.

9.132 The character of a listed building is often determined by its setting, which may include its relationship to other buildings, local landscape features, planned grounds and gardens. The Borough Council will, where appropriate, foster the sympathetic management and conservation of such landscape features, grounds and gardens in order to protect and enhance the setting of related listed buildings.

9.133 Applications for planning permission or listed building consent must provide sufficient information to assess the full impact of the proposal on the building having satisfied the criteria in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

** Applications should include a plan to identify the building in question; measured drawings of all floor plans; and external elevations affected by the proposals and to a scale which clearly identifies the works. Drawings should also show the building as existing and as proposed. The inclusion of photographs is particularly helpful – in relation to all elevations in demolition cases, or of the part of the building affected (interior or exterior) in alteration or extension cases. Other plans and drawings as are necessary to describe the works to an appropriate scale should be included.*

In addition to drawings, a statement is required which clearly sets out the justification for the proposals which will include why the works are desirable or necessary.

POLICY C3

Development Involving Listed Buildings

Planning permission for development involving proposals to extend or alter a listed building will only be granted if all the following criteria are met:–

- (a) It is appropriate in design, scale, materials and colour to the form of the building;
- (b) It will not detract from the special architectural or historic character and appearance of the building;
- (c) It does not involve changing the use of a listed building to one which would adversely affect the special architectural or historic value, or its setting, unless the existing use can be proved to be no longer practicable;
- (d) It does not involve externally or internally altering a listed building in a way which would adversely affect its special architectural or historic character; and
- (e) It will not adversely affect the setting of a listed building.

Planning permission will be refused for applications affecting listed buildings if sufficient information is not provided to allow a full assessment of a proposal to be made.

POLICY C4

Demolition of Listed Buildings

Planning permission for development that would follow the demolition of a listed building will not be granted unless:–

- (a) It is impracticable to retain the listed building in its present authorised use, or to reinstate it to a suitable previous or alternative use; and
- (b) No other suitable and economically viable use can be found for it.

Demolition of the building (for which listed building consent would be required) shall not be started until detailed proposals for the re-use of the site have been approved by the Council. Where reasonable, the Council may seek to enter into a Section 106 Agreement and/or attach conditions to the planning permission to ensure that the start and progress of the scheme accords with an agreed programme of works.

Winch Huts

9.134 Winch huts are a characteristic feature of the working fishing beach in the Old Town. They are visible from viewpoints above the beach on both the East and West Hills and it is important that they should continue to have a traditional appearance suited to their function.

POLICY C5

Winch Huts

Planning permission will be granted for new winch huts only if they are limited to a size related to their function only and reflect the design and external materials of traditional winch huts.

Enhancement Schemes

9.135 The Borough Council will use its powers and resources to improve the environment of conservation areas. Opportunities to develop improvement schemes in partnership with private owners or agencies will be sought.

9.136 The Borough Council will consider:-

- (i) Making grants available and promoting enhancement schemes of hard and soft landscaping, including the utilisation of traditional materials and securing replacement tree planting to reinforce the special character of a conservation area;
- (ii) Making grants available and promoting redecoration, restoration of boundary walls and other enhancement schemes on identified buildings or groups of buildings which substantially contribute to the character of the area;

- (iii) Bringing vacant sites into use through the application of compulsory purchase notices;
- (iv) Improving the appearance of untidy sites by serving Notices on landowners under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Archaeological Sites and Ancient Monuments

9.137 There are 6 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Borough, which are nationally important. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 requires an application for scheduled monument consent to be made for any work affecting an ancient monument. The Plan aims to prevent any damage resulting from development to these monuments and their settings.

9.138 Certain areas of the town have also been recognised as being of particular archaeological importance.

9.139 Those wishing to carry out development will be expected to comply with practical guidance on the treatment of archaeological sites in the development process as outlined in the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice.

9.140 The Borough Council will identify, record and protect archaeological sites and historic elements in the landscape and encourage and develop the educational, recreational and tourist potential of archaeological sites and monuments through suitable management and interpretation. On sites of archaeological significance, particularly in those areas identified as being 'Areas of Archaeological Interest' on the Proposals Map, the Council will require that the archaeological aspects of development proposals are examined and evaluated before planning applications are determined. The Council regards preservation in situ as more satisfactory than by record.

POLICY C6

Archaeological Sites and Ancient Monuments

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would adversely affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important archaeological site or monument or their settings, unless the applicant has:-

- (a) Undertaken an adequate assessment of the archaeological implications of the proposal; and
- (b) Demonstrated that the particular archaeological site(s), monument(s) and setting(s) will be satisfactorily preserved either in situ or by record (i.e. adequately investigated and the results reported).

Replacement Doors and Windows

9.141 The gradual removal of original architectural features from buildings, including ornate Regency, Victorian and Edwardian front doors and traditional timber box sash and casement windows, is gradually eroding the character and appearance of conservation areas.

9.142 The Council will use the criteria set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2 'Replacement Doors and Windows for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas' when considering applications.

POLICY C7

Replacement Doors and Windows in Listed Buildings

Planning permission will only be granted for replacement doors and windows on listed buildings if they are exact replicas of the original or are of an appropriate design and materials. UPVC and aluminium replacements are not acceptable.

POLICY C8

Replacement Doors and Windows in Conservation Areas

Planning permission will only be granted for replacement doors and windows on buildings in conservation areas if they replicate the original or are of an appropriate design and materials. UPVC and aluminium replacements are not generally acceptable. However, 'slim section' replacement windows will be considered – but only in the following circumstances where they match the original design:–

- (a) On rear facades hidden from view; or
- (b) In total replacement of all windows in an isolated or detached building. This does not apply to terraced buildings where the continuity of fenestration is important; or
- (c) Where the replacement slim section window would not harm the character or appearance of the building or the area.

Roof Materials

9.143 Many of the buildings in the Borough's conservation areas are in terraces where it is important that the continuity of materials on roofs is maintained. Views over rooftops are defining features in both the character and appearance of many conservation areas in Hastings and St Leonards – the use of traditional materials in such areas is of particular importance.

9.144 Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1 'Roof Materials for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas' sets out detailed criteria which the Council will use when considering applications.

POLICY C9

Roof Materials for Listed Buildings

Planning permission will only be granted for replacement roof coverings on a listed building if the covering is a replica of the original or is of an appropriate material.

POLICY C10

Roof Materials in Conservation Areas

Planning permission for replacement roof coverings on a building in a conservation area will only be granted where the covering is a replica of the original or is of an appropriate material, normally natural Welsh slate or clay tile.

Alternative materials will be considered only in the following circumstances:–

- (a) Where the roof is hidden from view; or
- (b) In total replacement to an isolated or detached building; or
- (c) Where the proposed roofing materials would not harm the character or appearance of the building or the area; and in any of these cases
- (d) The material is not interlocking concrete tiles.

Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

9.145 The Council will expect a very high standard of shopfront design where listed buildings are affected and in conservation areas. Proposals for shopfronts will be assessed against the criteria set out in Policies DG14 and DG15 in Chapter 9a 'Development

Guidelines', as well as Policies C1 and C3 as appropriate. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3 'Shopfront Design' sets out detailed design criteria which the Council will use when considering planning applications.

Outdoor Advertisements and Signs in Conservation Areas

9.146 Particular sensitivity needs to be applied in assessing proposals for advertisements and signs in conservation areas or where the setting of a listed building would be affected. Where the erection of advertisements requires specific consent, the Council will assess proposals against Policy DG16 in Chapter 9a 'Development Guidelines'. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs' provides further advice and criteria which the Council will use in assessing applications for advertisement consent.