

## Consultation draft: Hastings Central Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



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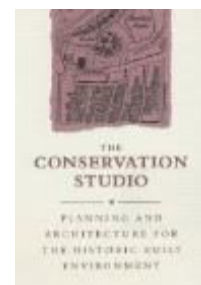
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The assistance of the Hastings Save Our Heritage Group is gratefully acknowledged.

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## Summary of recommendations

Local authorities are required to identify areas of '*special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' and to designate them as conservation areas. The special interest can then be safeguarded through planning policies and in the consideration of development proposals.

The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an understanding of the historic character of the central area of Hastings in order to justify conservation area designation. It also forms part of the evidence base for the current development of an Area Action Plan for the town centre.

Chapter 8 addresses management issues for the heritage of the town centre, the first of which is a review of the conservation area boundaries. It is recommended:

- i. That the existing White Rock and Town Centre Conservation Areas should be amalgamated to form a single Central Hastings Conservation Area.
- ii. That Hastings Pier and the White Rock Theatre, which are currently in the Eversfield Place Conservation Area, should be added to the proposed Central Hastings Conservation Area. This is because they form the western extent of the town centre and relate far more to the historical development of the resort than to Eversfield Place.
- iii. That Castle Hill, including Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square, which are currently in the Old Town Conservation Area, should be added to the proposed Central Hastings Conservation Area. This is because the castle originally related to the earliest settlement of Hastings on the site of the present town centre, and because Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square were among the pioneering developments of the New Town.
- iv. That seafront and foreshore to Denmark Place and the foreshore to Pelham Place should be newly added to the proposed Central Hastings Conservation Area. This will resolve the current anomaly where some parts of the foreshore are in a conservation area and some are not.
- v. That three new areas are added to the northeast of the proposed Central Hastings Conservation Area:
  - The area between Portland Place and the pedestrian route at the rear of dwellings along Queens Road. The terrace at the south end of Portland Place provides an attractive focus to the views along Russell Street, while the buildings on the west side of Portland Place, including the former St Mary's School, now the Jackson Hall, provide the setting to the listed Wellington Terrace opposite.
  - While the listed houses (Wellington Terrace) fronting the east side of Portland Place already have conservation area status, it is recommended that the whole triangle with Stonefield Road/Castle Hill Road and Castle Hill Passage is brought into the designation. This will include the former Railwaymens Mission Hall at Portland Villas, the trees along Castle Hill Passage, and the victorian terraces that define the main road.
  - Having included that triangle, the boundary should proceed up Wellington Road (Nos.2-36) and include the 3-storey houses on the north side (Nos.15-25). And in addition, Nos.1-5 Castledown Avenue, these Edwardian properties complement Nos.6-10 Castledown Avenue, which are already in the conservation area and frame views across the important open space of St Andrew's Cemetery,

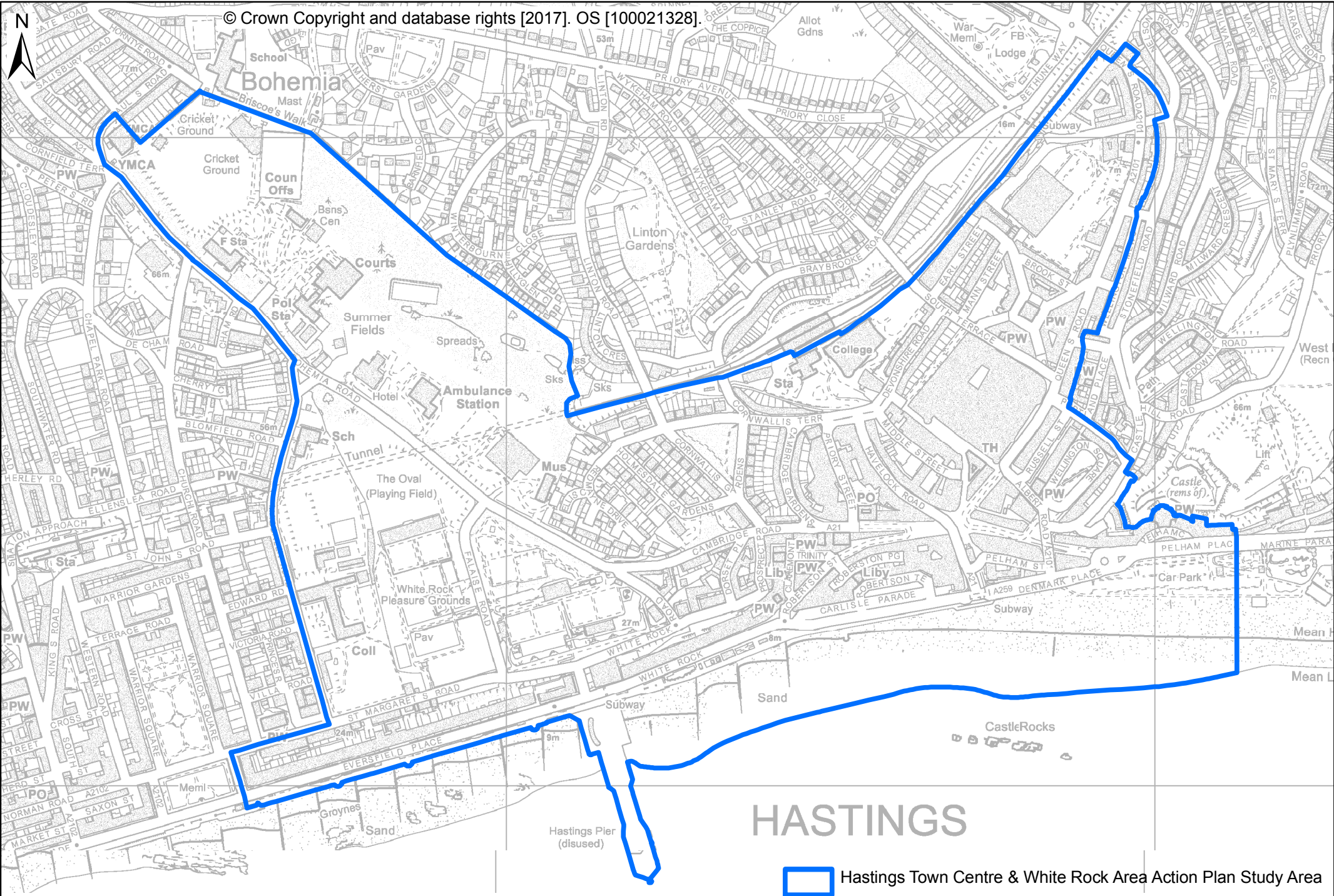
These areas are shown on the map below.


Further issues addressed in Chapter 8 include historic buildings, planning policy and practice, new development, the public realm and funding.

# 1. Introduction

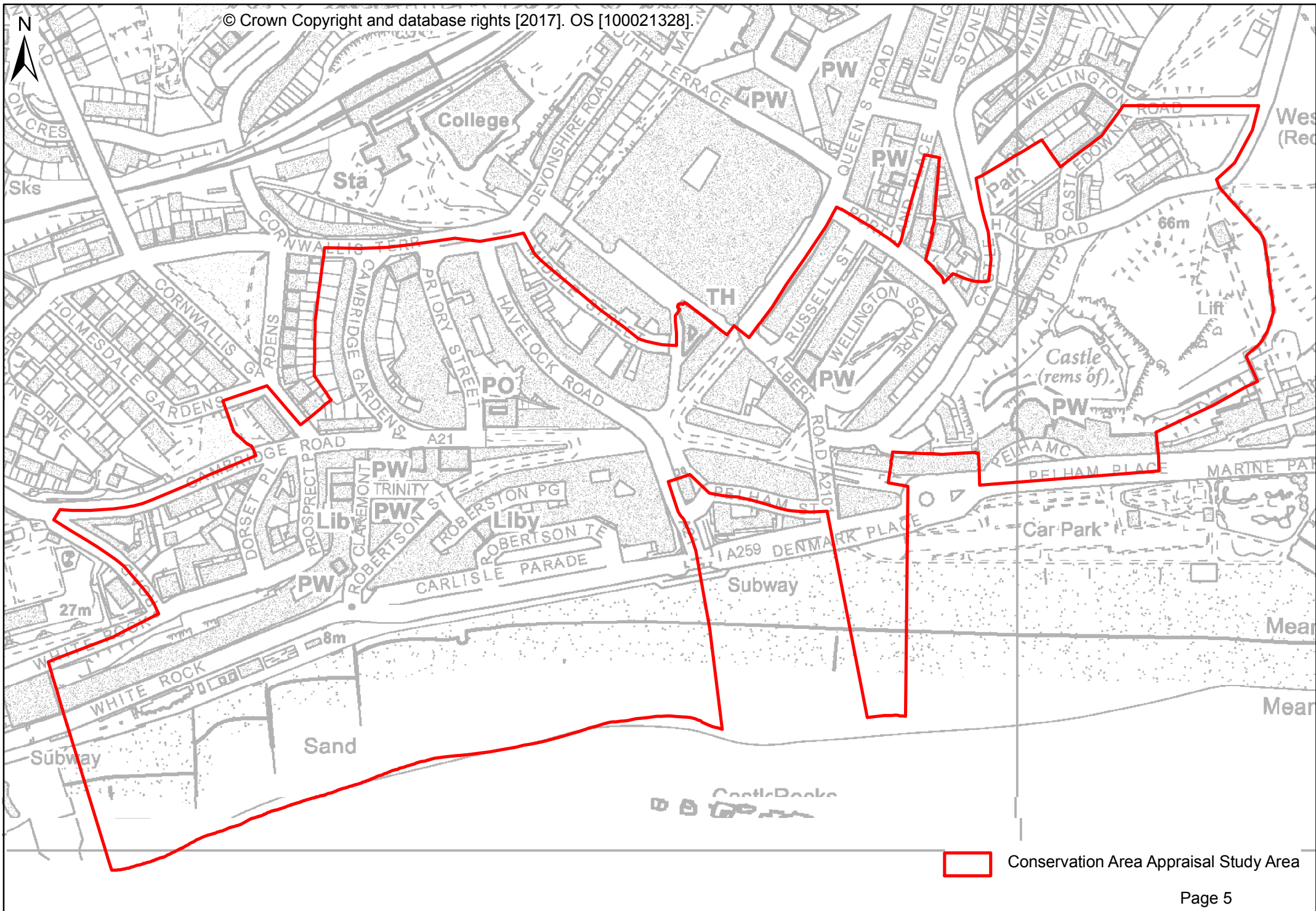
- 1.1 The distinctive character of Hastings is the product of a long history dating from at least Saxon times. This heritage is recognized in a series of conservation areas that have been designated progressively since 1968.
- 1.2 Following the successful adoption of the Hastings Planning Strategy (February 2014) and the Development Management Plan (September 2015), both of which cover the whole of the Borough, the next step is to focus on the detailed planning of the town centre. Accordingly, the 'Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Area Action Plan' (AAP) is being prepared.
- 1.3 The AAP is informed by a number of studies including the Bilfinger GVA work to assess '*the needs, capacity, strengths and opportunities of the Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Area.*' While this study addresses retail, leisure and urban design, it is clearly necessary for the AAP to include heritage issues as part of its evidence base.
- 1.4 The AAP covers all or part of seven conservation areas:
  - Old Town (part) – designated 12 November 1968
  - Warrior Square (part) – designated 7 September 1976
  - White Rock – designated February 1998 and extended 25 April 1990
  - Cornwallis Gardens – designated 25 April 1990
  - Magdalen Road (part) – designated 13 June 1990
  - Eversfield Place – designated 13 June 1990
  - Hastings Town Centre – designated 27 March 1996
- 1.5 For the evidence base, The Conservation Studio has been commissioned to undertake an appraisal of the Hastings Town Centre Conservation Area, the White Rock Conservation Area and part of the Old Town Conservation Area. Figure 1 shows the AAP study area whilst Figure 2 shows the extent of the conservation appraisal area.
- 1.6 Once adopted the AAP will form part of the statutory planning framework for the town. It will be used in the determination of planning applications and will support the continued economic and cultural regeneration of the Borough. Underpinning that framework is the statutory duty for the council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the conservation areas. To assist with that duty, this appraisal identifies the heritage issues arising from the assessment of the conservation areas and puts forward management proposals to address them.
- 1.7 Preparation of this appraisal has taken account of statutory provisions, Historic England guidance and planning policy at national and local levels. These sources are included in the references listed in Appendix 4.
- 1.8 In addition to informing planning policy and development management, the appraisal identifies the special character and significance of the Hastings Central Area that can be enjoyed by residents, businesses and visitors alike.





 Hastings Town Centre & White Rock Area Action Plan Study Area





 Conservation Area Appraisal Study Area

## 2. Legislative and Planning Policy Context

### Statutory Background

- 2.1 Conservation Areas are found throughout the country and have become a popular and accepted way of preserving the country's best examples of historic townscape, with the type of area designated varying enormously. Hastings has many Conservation Areas that embrace the best of the urban areas, coastal frontages and semi-urban townscapes including the commanding presence of the Castle.
- 2.2 While the listing of individual historic buildings began in 1944, the power to designate '*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' was first set out in the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and since then some 10,000 Conservation Areas have been designated in England and Wales.
- 2.3 The original definition remains the same in current legislation - Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act sets out the statutory duties for local planning authorities to determine which parts of their areas are of special interest, to designate them as Conservation Areas, and to bring forward proposals for their enhancement. Local Authorities also have a duty to review their area from time to time and, after public consultation, to amend or designate further areas if considered appropriate.
- 2.4 Conservation areas vary in size and character but it is the quality and character of the townscape ensemble, rather than individual buildings, that is important. The distinctiveness of the 'familiar and cherished local scene' is formed by the inter-relationship of many elements including topography, evolution over time, function and use of the land, historical events, land ownerships, the layout of roads and plots, buildings, materials, public and private spaces, greenery including parks and street trees, and uses, activities, sounds and smells. All of these elements combine together to create a chorus that gives an area its special interest.
- 2.5 Local authorities are encouraged to support their conservation areas with a clear statement of the special architectural and historic interest that justifies their designation. The production of this appraisal satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis for assessing applications for development.
- 2.6 The effect of designation is that, within a conservation area, the local planning authority has greater control over demolition, minor developments, works to trees and the display of advertisements. The aim in exercising these controls is to ensure that what makes the area special is not harmed by proposed changes.
- 2.7 In addition, Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires local authorities, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Conservation Areas when considering planning matters. This does not necessarily stifle the scope for creative design provided the objectives of legislation and policy are met without harming the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.8 Conservation areas may include a range of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and locally listed buildings. In the case of listed buildings,

Section 66 of the 1990 Act places a statutory duty on Local Planning Authorities to have special regard to preserving the special architectural and historic interest of both the listed building and its setting.

- 2.9 Designation also raises awareness of an area's special attributes that will help to foster local pride in the locality. While conservation areas do not prevent change, designation does ensure that the character of the area can be taken into account in the interest of the community as well as addressing the interests of the developer.

### National policy

- 2.10 Government policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Ministerial Foreword to the Framework sets out the role of the historic environment in the context of sustainable development and positive growth:

*"Our historic environment – buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers."*

- 2.11 Sustainable development has three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. The social role involves a '*high quality built environment*' supporting the cultural wellbeing of the community. The environmental role includes '*protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment*'.

- 2.12 Paragraph 17 sets out twelve key principles which include:

*"conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*

- 2.13 While the NPPF places great importance on the design of the built environment, some of the design advice bears directly on the historic environment as developments are required to '*establish a strong sense of place*' and '*respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials*'.

- 2.14 Section 12 of the NPPF, '*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*', provides a strategy for the management of heritage assets. It expects local authorities to ensure that conservation areas are properly justified, and for decision-making to be based on an understanding of the effect change may have on the significance of heritage assets. It is accepted that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. It is therefore helpful for decision-makers if appraisals identify those elements that make a positive contribution.

- 2.15 The Framework is supported by further advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance and by a range of guidance published by Historic England including:

- Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016)
- The Setting of Heritage Assets (2015)
- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (2015)
- Conservation Principles (2008)

## Local policy

- 2.16 The Hastings Planning Strategy (February 2014) and the Development Management Plan (September 2015) set out the Borough Council's current planning policies. The Planning Strategy follows the NPPF with a broad commitment to protect the significance of heritage assets. It does also promise a specific strategy for the historic environment.
- 2.17 The Development Management Plan includes the need to protect and enhance local character in Policy DM1: Design Principles. Part IV has more-detailed historic environment policies including:
- HN1 – criteria for assessing applications that have the potential to impact upon the significance of heritage assets.
  - HN2 – the effect of changing doors, windows and roofs in conservation areas
  - HN3 – justification for demolition involving heritage assets
  - HN4 – the effect of development on archaeology
  - HN5 – preservation and enhancement of non-designated heritage assets
- 2.18 Relevant Local Plan policies are set out in full at Appendix 5.
- 2.19 This appraisal, and its associated management proposals, provides further guidance on safeguarding heritage assets within the conservation areas that form the town centre study area.



### 3. Summary of Special Interest

- 3.1 Hastings is forever associated with 1066 and the battle that had such an effect on British history. The remains of the castle, which William I developed on the site of an Iron Age fort, overlooks the town as a constant reminder. However, the present town centre has a particular significance as an early mediaeval port, despite the evidence for this being largely lost to successive layers of history: coastal erosion, development of the resort, a thriving commercial centre, and planned developments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.2 The present town centre is very much Victorian, also significant for its close relationship with other contrasting parts of the town such as the Old Town, St Leonard's and the landscape rising northwards to the High Weald.
- 3.3 The significance, or special interest, of the town centre can be summarised by considering the historical, spatial, architectural and cultural significance in turn:

#### Historical significance

- The site of Hastings Priory
- The association with the battle of 1066
- Development of the castle that confirmed the strategic role of the town
- Hastings military role as one of the leading Cinque ports
- The role of the town as an important mediaeval trading port
- Hastings as a significant fishing port
- The development of the seaside resort
- Consolidation as a Victorian commercial centre



Figure 3 - The Castle and view to west

### Spatial significance

- Set between two headlands – Castle Hill and Cuckoo Hill (White Rock) – from which there are dramatic views over the town (Fig.3)
- The underlying history can still be traced in the topography of the town. For instance the cliff edge and the America Ground that have been absorbed into the present townscape
- The foreshore with wide views along the continuous building line of the seafront
- The urban spaces created by set-piece developments, such as Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square (Fig.4)
- The focal point and radial plan at the meeting of five roads – Havelock Road, Harold Place, Robertson Street, Wellington Place and Queens Road



Figure 4 - Wellington Square framing an urban space

### Architectural significance

- The dominance of the castle, a scheduled ancient monument
- Evidence of planned development, not only in the set pieces of Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square, but also in Robertson's development of the America Ground and in the Cornwallis Estate
- Building heights of 4-5 storeys in the centre reducing to 3-4 storeys on the periphery
- The consistent use of stucco embellished with neo-classical details
- The introduction of facilities for visitors, such as the theatres and the pier
- The collective townscape value of buildings that are not necessarily designated alone





Figure 5 - Pelham Crescent, planned to create an impact with a strong architectural form and rhythm

#### Cultural significance

- Identification with the battle, even though it did not actually take place in Hastings itself
- The layering of history: defensive location, mediaeval port, late Georgian resort, post-railway seaside attraction, Victorian commercial centre
- Shops and businesses in the radial streets that make an important contribution to the local economy
- The survival of townscapes that draw visitors to the town, the seafront being particularly important



Figure 6 - An architecturally strong town centre

## 4. Location, topography and setting

### Location

- 4.1 Hastings is an historic town situated on the south east coast between Bexhill and Rye, within the High Weald and its countryside. It is positioned 24 miles from the county town of Lewes and 53 miles south east of London.
- 4.2 The A259 provides an east-west route affording links to Bexhill, Eastbourne and Brighton to the west, and Rye, Folkstone and Dover to the east. At Pevensey, it connects with the A27 providing access to Lewes as well as the A26. The A21, the former Turnpike Road, provides access to the north and London. The A259 generally follows the line of the coast but saw adjustment and change over time, including the demolition of buildings to make way for road widening and improvement schemes. The A2100, the original London Road, provides access to Battle, while the A28 provides connections to Ashford, Canterbury and the Isle of Thanet.

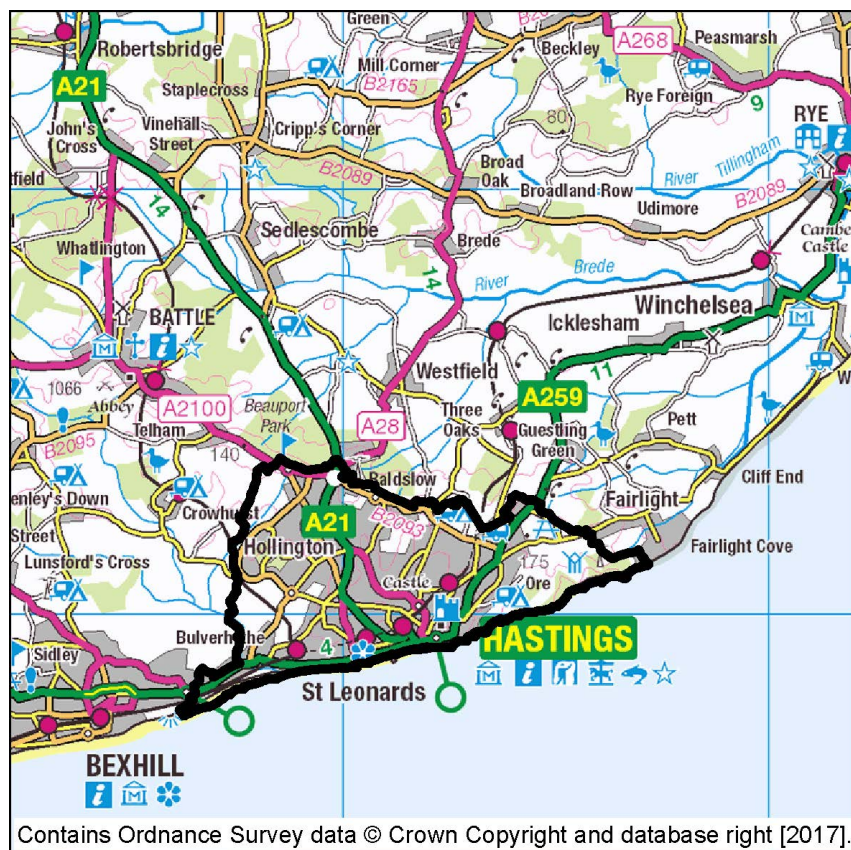


Figure 7 - Hastings Context

- 4.3 Despite its connections by road, Hastings is beset with traffic congestion. The routes of many of the roads have been defined by the natural topography of area, being constrained by the sea to the south and the High Weald to the north, with ridges and valleys and rivers carving the landscape. More recently the new Hastings-Bexhill link road (A2690) opened between Queensway in the north of Hastings and the A259 in Bexhill.
- 4.4 The arrival of the railway in 1852 saw improved access to London, Brighton and Ashford. Four railway stations serve the town: West St. Leonards, St. Leonards Warrior Square, Hastings and

Ore. Between 1905 and 1929 Hastings had a network of electric trams which ran as far as Bexhill. Trolleybuses rather than trams were used in between Bo-Peep and the Memorial including the very narrow High Street. By 1928-1929, the entire tram network was replaced by the Hastings Trolleybus system.

### Topography & Setting

- 4.5 Hastings is situated where the Weald Sandstone meets the Hastings Sands and the English Channel, forming tall cliffs to the east of the town. Geologically it is within the Wealden Dome of Kent and East Sussex. The geology is composed of the Hastings Beds which lie beneath the Lower Cretaceous rocks of the Wealden Clay and the Lower Greensand. These areas are overlain by the Gault and Upper Greensand and the Chalk, which outcrop to the east and to the west.
- 4.6 Funicular railways are located at West Hill and East Hill, providing access to the top of the hills and cliffs.



Figure 8 - West Hill Lift provides access to Castle Hill

- 4.7 Hastings town extends back from the English Channel, rising up the southern slopes of the Battle Ridge. To the south east, the ridge meets the sea with dramatic sand and clay cliffs, below which lies the Old Town in a sheltered location. Hastings Castle occupies a commanding



position with views out to sea, to east and west. Much of the castle and its grounds were lost to the sea due to the sandstone cliffs being subject to considerable erosion. As a result the present sea defences and promenade were built. However, Castle Hill was also cut back deliberately to accommodate developments, such as Pelham Crescent.

- 4.8 Historic streets and houses rise up the valley sides from the coast within the Old Town. To the west the cliffs are lower and continue to a point where they were cut through and eroded by the Old Roar Stream. They are now largely hidden by the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the seafront esplanade and the removal of the spur at White Rock in 1834.
- 4.9 The southern end of High Street and All Saints Street, including the seafront area to the Old Town retain a commercial function. However, the main shopping area is now in the Priory Valley, concentrated at the meeting of Queens Road, Wellington Place, Robertson Street, Cambridge Road and Havelock Road.
- 4.10 The beach is mainly shingle with sand revealed at low tide. Although at one time there was a natural harbour, it was subject to silt deposits. The drift geology of the Hastings area shows alluvium and storm-delivered gravels marking the location of The Old Roar stream in the Priory Valley. The former Priory marshes which were drained in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the provision of '*two rope walks each of 120-150 fathoms in length*' used for the making of rope and then an informal colony with its own shops, houses and businesses, including a coach factory, that was known as 'America Ground'.



Figure 9 - View of the seafront at low tide

- 4.11 Although less visible than the east cliff, the west cliff which runs roughly parallel with the Victorian seafront remains present largely hidden within the townscape. The drama of the

skyline responding to the topography and landscape is best experienced from the sea or at least from the foreshore. At street level it makes way for rich and varied streetscenes allowing the evolution of the town to be interpreted.

- 4.12 It is also as a result of the geology and topography that the beach and cliffs set the scene for a distinct historic townscape where Hastings Castle presides over the coastal strip, former quays, irregular historic plots, the Victorian suburbs and the new town.



Figure 10 - A view towards the castle presiding over the town

## 5. Historical Development

### Overview

- 5.1 Although the extent of archaeological investigations in Hastings is limited, they do confirm that there was human activity in the area from the pre-historic era onwards. The first record of the place-name was in 771 when the South Saxon people of Hesting (*gens hestingorum*) were defeated by the Mercian King Offa.
- 5.2 The settlement was named *Haestingaceastre* when the Anglo-Saxon *burh* was founded in about 878 probably as part of a system of 31 fortresses built by King Alfred to drive the Vikings out of Mercia and London. Hastings soon became more than just a fortress: it developed as a centre of trade sufficient to have its own mint by the late 10<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.3 In the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, Hastings was a port based mainly on an inlet that ran through what is the present town centre and into the Priory Valley providing a natural harbour. The Saxon town was to the west of this in the White Rock area. Trade with the continent became important as well as the fishing industry and by the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century Hastings was one of the five ports (Cinque Ports) on the Sussex and Kent Coast that provided ships to serve the Crown in return for privileges of self-governance.
- 5.4 In 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, recognized the strategic significance of Hastings. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 1066, crossing from St. Valéry to Pevensey, he then moved his troops and ships to Hastings attracted by the defensible high ground. It was here that an initial castle was built, probably as a timber stockade, and from here that William advanced to the site of the famous battle on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1066. After the battle, Hastings castle became the stone structure that survives in part today. It was the principal fortification and administrative centre of the Rape of Hastings.
- 5.5 With a market in existence, certainly by 1103, Hastings reached considerable importance in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century as a leader of the Cinque Ports on a par with Dover. In the early settlement to the west of the castle, there were six churches as well as the Augustinian Priory of Holy Trinity and the Hospital of St Mary Magdalen.
- 5.6 However, as Rye and Winchelsea emerged with Cinque Port status, the fortunes of Hastings declined. The harbour was prone to silting, arising from coastal erosion, and this was exacerbated by a series of major storms from 1236 to 1287, which caused significant damage along the south coast.
- 5.7 A planned settlement had begun to be laid out in the Bourne Valley, to the east of the castle, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Although the seaward part was washed away in the late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, this area now known as the Old Town developed as the main focus of Hastings in the later mediaeval period. As a result, the earlier settlement in the now silted Priory Valley was all but abandoned.
- 5.8 Several attempts were made to re-create the port by constructing harbour arms of timber and stone, but they were unable to resist the force of the sea. Hastings therefore continued a more modest existence as a centre for fishing and trade based on ships that were drawn onto the foreshore. As a result, there was little change through the post-mediaeval period.

- 5.9 Interest in Hastings as a resort started in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Dr Richard Russell had published his dissertation advocating the drinking of sea-water and sea bathing in 1750, but improvements in accessibility were an important factor too, which initially favoured Brighton. The London Road was turnpiked in 1753 and the journey from London to Hastings, which had taken 3 days in 1745, was reduced to 8 hours by 1828.
- 5.10 The changing role of Hastings was marked by civic buildings, including a town hall and assembly rooms, being added to the Old Town, which then extended westwards along George Street in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Development then started to re-colonise the area to the west of the castle: Wellington Square was started in 1815, but was not completed until 1828, and Pelham Crescent was built in 1824-26. There are also early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in Castle Hill Road.
- 5.11 In the 1830s, the White Rock promontory was removed to allow for an improved coastal road, and the Priory Valley was drained to the Old Roar Stream, which was culverted. This opened the area up for development, however the major stimulus for change was connection to the railway network. The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway reached Bulverhythe from Lewes in 1846 and was extended to St Leonards in 1851. At the same time, the South East Railway reached Hastings from London and then constructed a more-direct route to London in 1852. The resulting increase of visitors led to the introduction of purpose-built hotels, such as the Railway Hotel (1851) and the Queens Hotel (1864).



Figure 11 – Queens Hotel and town from the air after WW1



- 5.12 The silted harbour, having no clear ownership, was occupied by squatters and artisans who apparently demonstrated their independence by flying the American flag. The land, which became known as the America Ground, was vested in the Crown after a public inquiry in 1827. After that, it was cleared and a London merchant, Patrick Robertson, took a lease from the Crown in 1849. Robertson developed Carlisle Parade, Robertson Terrace, Robertson Street, the triangle of Claremont and Trinity Street and Linton Road, now the east end of Cambridge Road.
- 5.13 This was the genesis of the town centre in the form it is known today, which means that few buildings in the centre existed prior to 1850. The area to the north, including Havelock Road, Middle Street and Priory Street were developed in about 1875 and the focal point of the loosely radial streets was the Prince Albert Memorial Clock Tower of 1862 (removed in 1973). The Cornwallis Estate, including Cambridge Gardens and Cambridge Road, was developed from 1873 by John Howell a major builder who became Mayor of Hastings.
- 5.14 In 1880, the shifting focus of Hastings from the 'Old Town' back to the west of the castle was characterized by the construction of a new Town Hall in Queens Road. The seaside resort continues to develop with Hastings Pier in 1869-72, the ambitious White Rock Baths built under the Parade in 1874, and a series of entertainment venues such as the Gaiety Theatre (1881), the Empire Theatre (1899 – Now the DeLuxe) and the White Rock Pavilion (1913-27).
- 5.15 During the 1930s, Sidney Little (Borough Engineer from 1926-50) undertook a dramatic remodeling of the seafront using *moderne* concrete and colourful mosaics. This provided a more commodious promenade and included Europe's first underground car park. Despite these improvements, Hastings' fortunes began to decline, first in comparison with the ascendancy of Bexhill as a destination, and then in the face of the European package holiday.

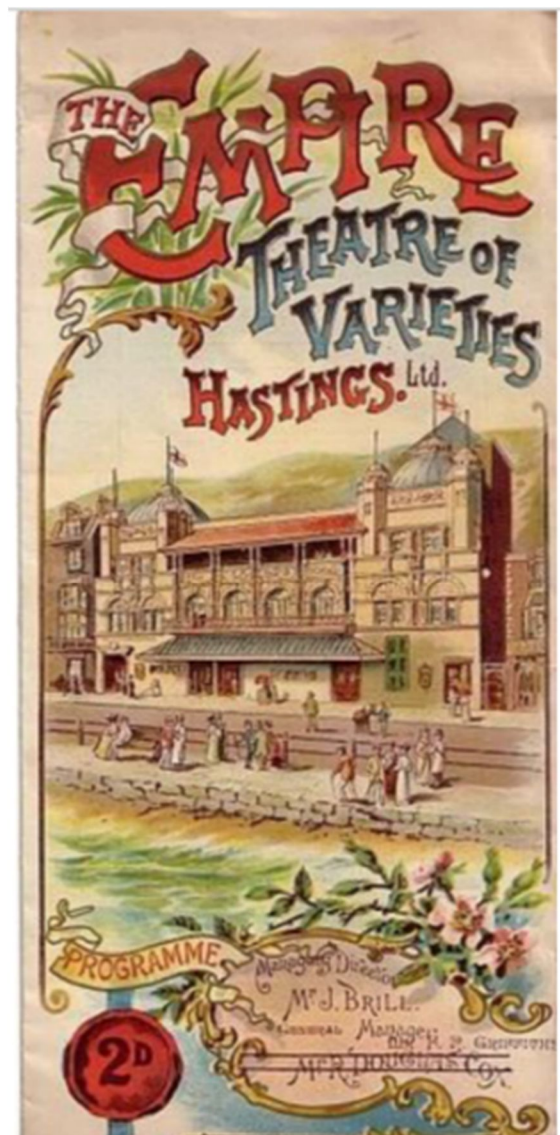


Figure 12 - A Poster of the Empire Theatre (Source: Hastings Museum)

- 5.16 The 1960s saw some extremely poor developments, such as the replacement of the Castle Hotel with a Tesco Store (now Poundstretcher) and the particularly un-neighbourly redevelopment of housing between Pelham Street and Wellington Place for Woolworths (Fig.13). Greater attention has been paid to architectural quality in more recent times and the dominance of traffic has been significantly addressed in schemes of pedestrianisation.



Figure 13 – The former Woolworths building, now Sports Direct

## 6. Assessment of special interest/significance

### Spatial - Development of Plan Form

- 6.1 Although the Area Action Plan has been drawn to reflect the Central Area and 'modern' town of Hastings, the evolution of the town extends beyond this boundary and is reflected in the number of conservation areas that cover the study area.
- 6.2 Hastings Castle is one of the earliest sites to have been developed, having origins that considerably pre-date the Norman Conquest. The first record of a settlement at Hastings dates from the 9th century and it is most likely that this was in the area where the natural harbour was located to the west of Castle Hill on the site of the present town centre.
- 6.3 Hastings flourished in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a leader of the Cinque Ports, which enjoyed privileges in return for maritime services to the Crown. The origins of this arrangement are debated but the Cinque Ports were formalised by a charter granted by Henry II in 1155. However, a series of storms, notably in 1287, caused a reshaping of the south coast. As a result, the natural harbour began to silt up and the focus of the settlement shifted to the east side of the castle, now known as the Old Town, which continued to grow during the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.4 An early map of the Survey of the Sussex Coast by Palmer, Sir Thomas Coverte, Walter, Reynolds and Nicholas dated 1578 shows the Castle on top of the cliff, set further inland than at present, with a commanding view over the town below to the east. The former port is depicted as an inland lagoon (Figure 14).



Figure 14 – Extract from 1578 Survey of the Sussex Coast (NLS)



- 6.5 William Borough's map of 1598 which is not as detailed as the earlier Survey of the Coast shows a valley to the west of the Castle with *Hafting* to the east (Figure 15)

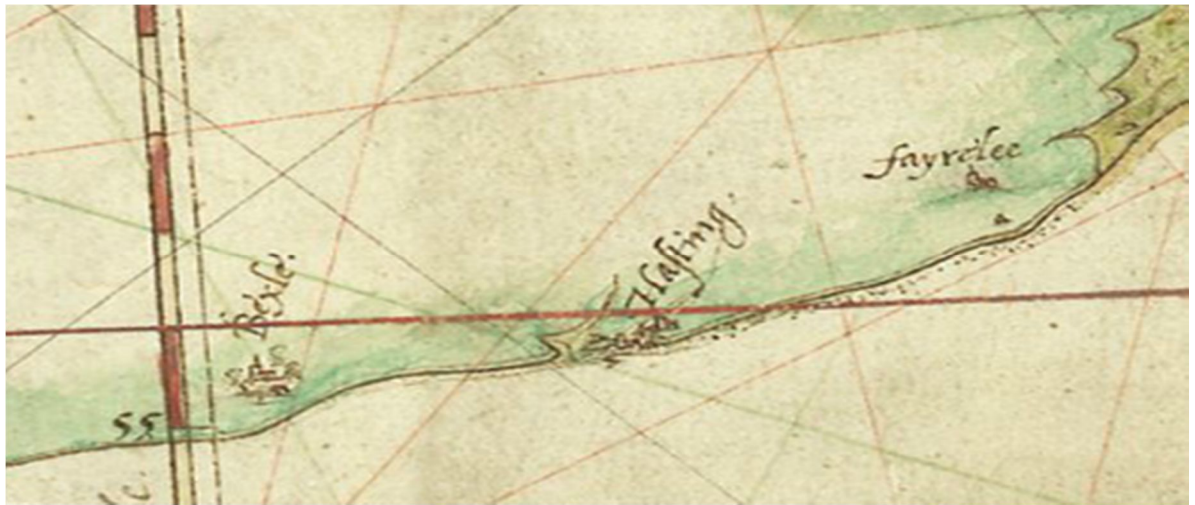


Figure 15 – Extract from William Borough's 1598 Map (NLS)

- 6.6 The silting up of the natural harbour, due to storms up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, rendered efforts to rebuild it almost impossible. Although the Old Town remained largely unchanged to the north of the town wall, significant growth was seen to the south west below the cliff. This area, now West Street and George Street, became known as the Suburb.
- 6.7 By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Samuel Cant's map dated 1746 (Fig.16) shows the harbour silted up and fronted only by the Priory. This contrasts with the Old Town, which is shown as a planned layout with regular frontages to the two main streets and long, narrow burgage plots behind. Further post-mediaeval takes the form of irregular squares to the west of the High Street.
- 6.8 Cramp notes the two churches of the Old Town – St. Clements and All Saints – as well as All Saints Street, The Bourne and High Street leading into the Old London Road. According to the key provided by Henry Cousins we can note New Castle Street and New George Street below the castle cliff, continuing across the Old Roar River via a bridge known as Priory Bridge. This leads to what appears to read as waterways defining an area referred to as the *Haven*. This is the site of the original natural harbour which, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, became the cricket ground. Below this, on the foreshore are the Priory Marshes which were colonized as an independent squatter settlement known as the America Ground. Later still, this was developed to become Robertson Street.
- 6.9 White Rock is shown, surmounted by a windmill and edged by low cliffs. The promontory that can be seen jutting out to the foreshore was removed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to facilitate development of the seafront that still masks the cliffs. The road sweeping round the Priory House follows the line of Prospect Place and White Rock Road, better shown in the drawing reconstructed from a map of about 1750 (Fig.17).

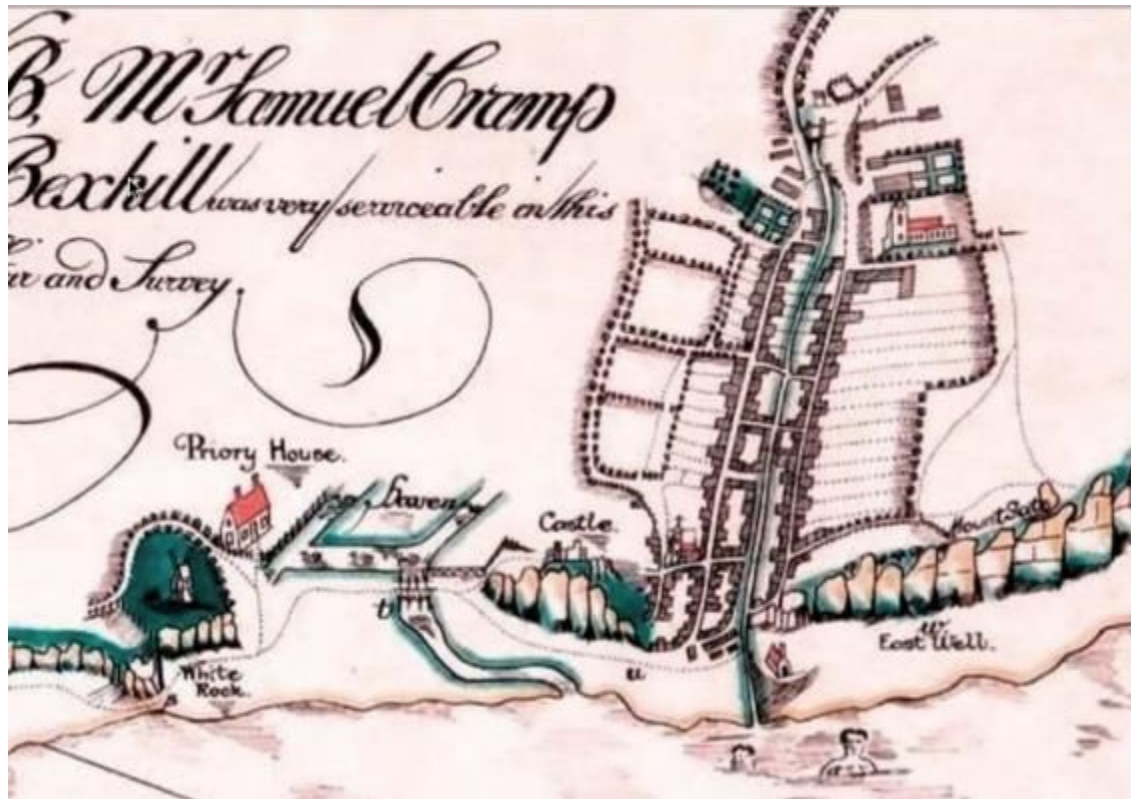


Figure 16 - Extract from 1746 Map by Samuel Cant for Samuel Cramp

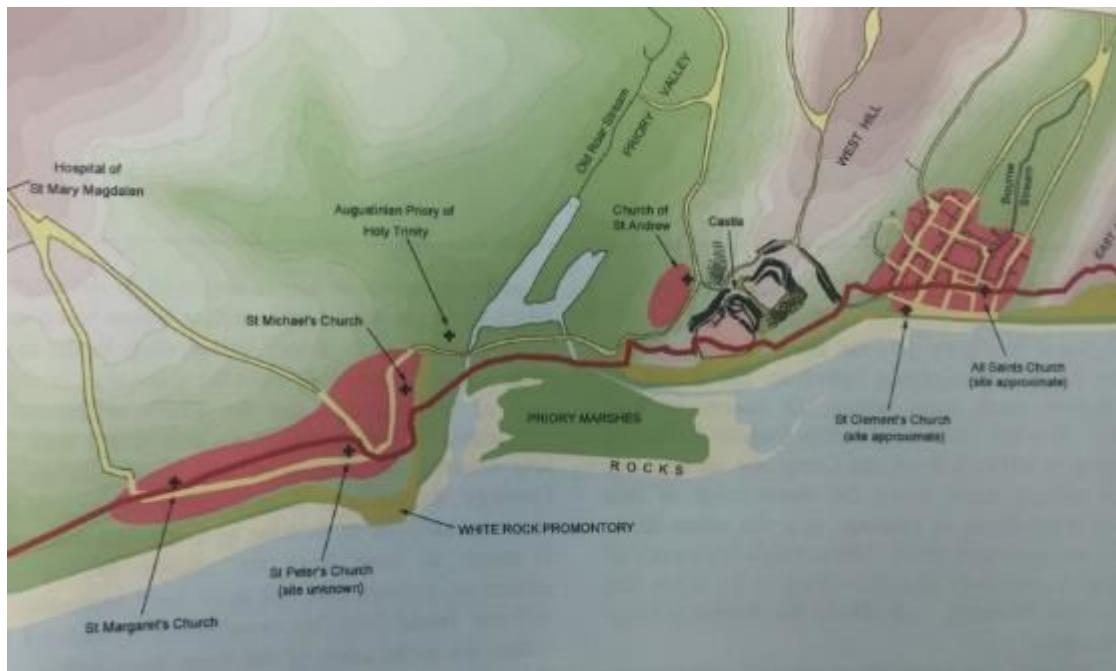


Figure 17 - Drawing c.1750 with the red line demarcating the top of the cliffs

6.10 The c.1750 map shows Bohemia Road leading north west from White Rock towards 'Bohemy Farm' and Honnington Corner, and this is confirmed in Yeakell and Gardner's Map of 1778-83.

However, it was not until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that this tortuous route out of Hastings would be smoothed by the construction of Cambridge Road.

- 6.11 The 1806 Ordnance Survey drawings were produced against the background of the Napoleonic Wars, and they exhibit a heightened interest in defence, particularly along the vulnerable south coast. Military barracks are recorded at Hastings, 'Bopeep' and Bexhill. A faded aquamarine wash defines the coastline from Pevensey Bay to Hastings.



Figure 18 - 1806 Pen and Ink precursor to the Ordnance Survey

- 6.12 The survey map (Fig.18) shows development appearing on land to the east side of the Old Roar River along New Castle Street and on the America Ground. Further sporadic developments are noted to the north and east, as at Guensing Farm beyond the study area.
- 6.13 Creighton's 1835 map (Fig.19) notes the four parishes of the Borough and a well-developed Old Town. There is still very little building between White Rock and Castle Hill, but the seafront road is becoming more prominent as St Leonard's begins to develop. Increasing use of this coastal road had a significant impact on the how the town evolved.





Figure 19 - 1835 extract of R Creighton and J & C Walker's map for Lewis' Topographical Dictionary

- 6.14 Certainly the promontory of White Rock often meant that the road was impassible due to rock falls (see Figure 20) until it was removed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The draining of the marshes and culverting of the Old Roar Stream saw the expansion of the town followed by the development of the America Ground.



Figure 20 - c.1810, White Rock from an unsigned drawing



- 6.15 By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hastings saw an increase in building activity, but also the loss of key buildings, such as St Michael's Church and the Holy Trinity Priory. This period has left its mark on the spatial character, development pattern and urban grain as Hastings grew into a resort and met the demand for visitor accommodation during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Although less formal than the more architectural development of St. Leonard's, further to the west, the squares and radial streets of the town centre create a distinctive character.
- 6.16 Once the site of lime kilns, Wellington Square can be seen as the first part of the modern town. It was developed from 1815 by bankers Breeds, Fancomb & Wenham and was originally named Wellington Place, which is now the name of the East side of the square. It is a set-piece of grandeur formed by three terraces framing an elongated rectilinear green. Railings from around the garden in the centre of Wellington Square were taken for scrap metal in the Second World War. The surviving buildings stabling and carriage houses serving the square, back onto Russell Street to the west. In the 1930s the square became used as a terminus for country buses. Today the group retains its architectural and townscape presence with seaward views afforded as a result of the rising topography, but that outlook is now marred by Poundstretcher which replaced the Castle Hotel (Fig.22).



Figure 21 - Wellington Square and former home of John Blomfield, the celebrated Hastings photographer



Figure 22 - the former Castle Hotel

- 6.17 Development expanded from the Old Town towards the evolving town centre. Below the castle, Pelham Crescent, Pelham Place and Pelham Arcade were built by Joseph Kay for Thomas Pelham, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Chichester in 1823-25. The first phase included a revetment for the carriage drive to Pelham Crescent and the church of St. Mary-in-the-Castle. This development, originally including seawater baths was seen as an important component of the Regency town, not only as a set-piece architectural design but also for its strongly contrasting appearance to the other developments of the time. The arcade was a concept introduced to England from Paris by John Nash but, unlike other examples of the time, this development integrated three aspects – the Crescent, the Terrace and the semi-subterranean Arcade. It echoes classical and late mediaeval Italian architecture with Parisian overtures, a strong piece of elevated townscape overlooking the sea and a frame for the church (Fig.23).
- 6.18 It was also a purposeful investment in Hastings with the intention of attracting visitors to the seaside location but it was not favoured by all. Charles Harper in 'The Hastings Road and the Happy Springs of Tunbridge' described it as the '*hideous stucco semi-circle of Pelham Crescent.*' Perhaps the full intended impact of Pelham's development was not realised until the buildings to the foreground were removed in later times.
- 6.19 In addition to road improvements, the railway station built in 1851, located to the west of the Priory Valley, coincided with the redevelopment of the America Ground by Patrick Robertson, a wealthy London banker. This formal scheme saw new seafront buildings including Carlisle Parade, Robertson Terrace set back behind a shallow square, and the Queens Hotel.





Figure 23 - Aerial image of the evolving New Town with buildings in front of the set-piece, Pelham Crescent

- 6.20 At White Rock, St. Michael's Cliff was cut back to allow building to impose itself on the landscape, changing the pattern and grain of the settlement to the extent that development was now either built in close proximity to the cliff face or built into it. It made way for almost continuous development from Roberston Street to St Leonard's. The cliff-face was stabilised with large-scale brick retaining walls from the early 1830s. At the east end, the building line follows the cliff into Claremont. The track under the cliff was officially named Stratford Place in 1834. The section between Robertson Street and the pier became known as White Rock Place. The new road was facilitated by the White Rock promontory being blown up with gunpowder in 1834/5 (Fig.20).
- 6.21 This work coincided with the erection of a new coastguard station on top of the cliff. Lowered in height and leveled, this area was once called Cuckoo Hill but is now St Michael's Place. New businesses that emerged included the Coach Factory (later Courts the Furnishers), built in 1834/5, and the White Rock Brewery. Part of the cliff was cut back at Verulam Place, immediately to the west of today's pier, and ten houses were built there in 1833 or soon after.
- 6.22 Robertson Street, Claremont and Trinity Street as well as Linton Terrace became the commercial centre of the new town during the 1860s (Fig.24). The distinctive radial pattern, with Havelock Road curving north to the railway station, established a central focus for the town. It also provided opportunities for key corner buildings, of Italianate and Neo-Classical influences, rising to 4 storeys. This saw the emergence of a new approach to town planning with set-pieces of townscape and curving street patterns reminiscent of the fashionable redesign of a number of European cities.



Figure 24- 1859 Hastings New Town

- 6.23 Some exceptions to the prevailing four-storey scale were made, most notably by the former Palace Hotel (1885-6) at 34-36 White Rock. This set-piece design built over shops by Arthur Wells for the Spiers and Ponds group rises to six storeys with an eight-storey tower. Other imposing buildings include the Brassey Institute (1878-80) in Claremont and the adjacent printing works.



Figure 25 – The former Palace Hotel: the tallest buildings along this stretch of the seafront





Figure 26 - 1908 OS Map showing the extent of the town at the end of the Victorian period

- 6.24 The evolution of the town into a seaside resort saw the building of Hastings Pier in 1869-72 and the construction of the White Rock Baths in 1876. Three baths were built under the promenade including separate Gentleman's and Ladies' Baths as well as Turkish Baths. The pier was refurbished with a bandstand in order to provide the full public experience of the seafront promenade.
- 6.25 The seafront from White Rock to the modern town includes a number of distinctive Victorian buildings addressing the promenade and commanding a sea view, such as the remaining part of a grand early 19th century terrace at Nos. 16-24 White Rock. These developments displaced earlier commercial buildings, for instance the White Rock Brewery was replaced by the Palace Hotel in 1885.
- 6.26 While the Edwardian period saw little growth there was change nonetheless. New architectural styles began to emerge which had a marked impact on the spatial character and development plan, perhaps exemplified by the terracotta of the Empire Theatre (now the Deluxe), built in 1897 to the design of Ernest Runtz, which involved the removal of a section of the earlier Pelham Place.
- 6.27 After the First World War, the town saw renewed expansion with attractions designed to encourage revival of the resort. The White Rock Pavilion was built in 1927, replacing the Hastings Infirmary, and the White Rock Baths became a cinema. However, the most ambitious project was the remodeling of the seafront in a *moderne* style by the Council's Engineer, Sydney Little. This included widening of the promenade, the provision of the distinctive concrete shelters, and England's first underground car park at Carlisle Place. Further groynes were built to stabilise the beach and the White Rock baths were roofed over to enclose them in a development by the Hastings and St. Leonards Public Baths & Aquarium Company (Fig. 27).



Figure 27 – White Rock Baths with roof over, circa 1935



Figure 28 - 1927 OS map extract showing further growth inland and along the coast road



6.28 Hastings suffered 85 raids by the Luftwaffe from July 1940 to the end of the war in 1945. 550 high-explosive bombs were dropped on the town as well as some 760 incendiary bombs. The town was also hit by 16 flying bombs ('doodlebugs'). In 1944 a doodlebug fell onto the sea off Carlisle Place but the explosion nevertheless caused extensive damage to the town centre. In all, 463 houses were destroyed while a further 14,818 were damaged. Hastings Pier was 'sectioned' (by removing sections of decking to isolate it from the shore) and was occupied by the army. It suffered some damage from bombing raids but reopened in 1946. Various additions were made to it in the 1950s and 1960s. It closed in 2008 for safety reasons and then fell victim to a fire in 2010. After extensive work the pier was reopened in July 2016 (Fig.30).



Figure 29 - Hastings Pier just before the First World War (Hastings Chronicle)



Figure 30 - The renovated pier, reopened July 2016



- 6.29 Bomb damage and resultant clearance saw significant redevelopment and regeneration. The Albany Hotel, which had been destroyed by a bomb that bounced off the roof of the Queens Hotel, was redeveloped as Albany Court and the rear of Debenhams. However, it was not only war damage that led to renewal: Subsequent developments, such as the construction of the Priory Meadow shopping centre on the former cricket ground, have had a marked impact on the prevailing and more locally distinct development pattern, grain and typology of built form.



Figure 31 - 1958 Ordnance Survey with contours in red

- 6.30 Large-scale insensitive redevelopments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have had a negative impact on the town centre. For example, the pressure to accommodate larger stores resulted in the Castle Hotel being demolished in the 1970s for a featureless supermarket, now Poundstretcher.

### Influences – Road and Rail

- 6.31 Despite the growth of the new town and its suburbs, some key elements of the earlier settlement plan survive to this day and have had a significant influence on the spatial pattern of the study area. These include the more notable road improvements, which sought to conquer obstacles such as the cliffs, the White Rock promontory, the silted lands and marshes of the America Ground and the development of the Haven area, which became the cricket ground in 1870. The sweep of Robertson Street leading off the seafront into the town centre is as a result of the evolving development of the America Ground.

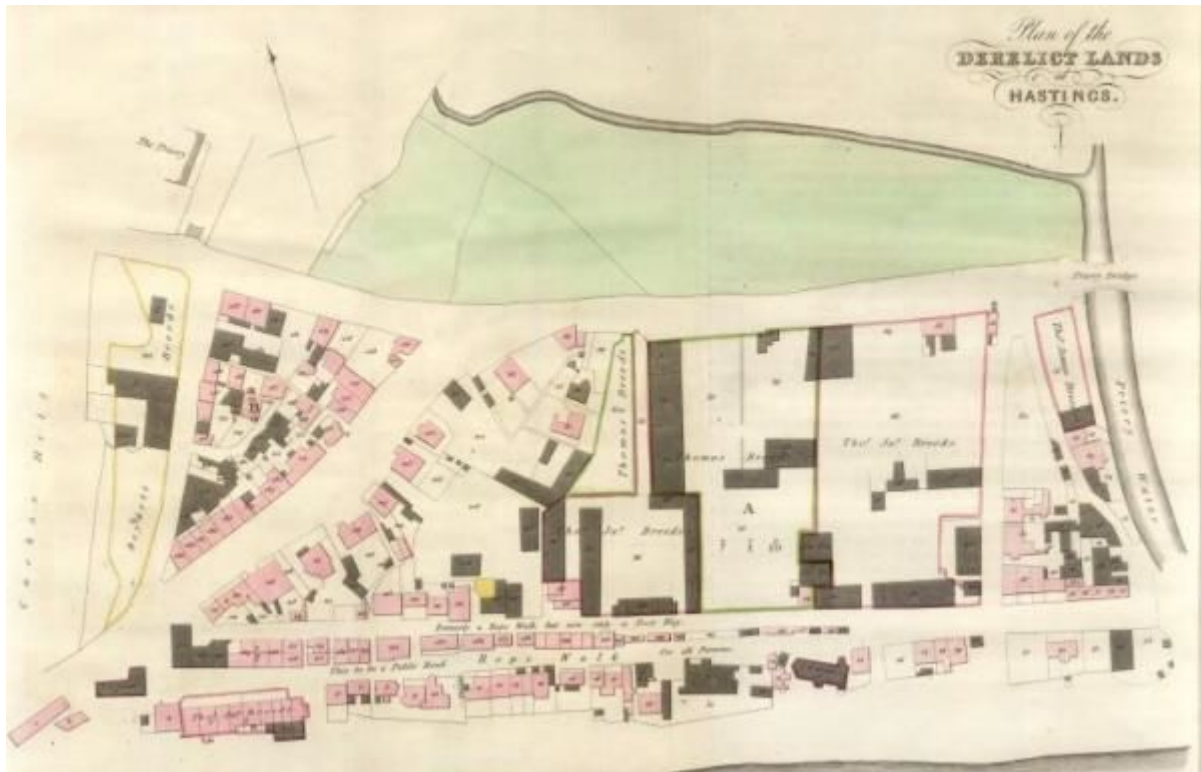


Figure 32 - America Ground, surveyed in 1830.

- 6.32 The pattern of development, once more organic in nature, saw a greater degree of order and formality arising in town planning from Europe such as the designs for Wellington Square and Pelham Place, then Carlisle Parade as well as the structure of the what became the new town centre with its radial pattern of roads, converging streets and key corner buildings (see townscape map one attached at Appendix 2).
- 6.33 The arrival of the railway in 1859 generated further interest in the seaside location. The station is to the north of the central area and its influence can be seen in further growth to the north of Linton Terrace (now Cambridge Road) including the late Victorian terraces of Havelock Road, Middle Street and Station Road. By 1890 the new town was nearing completion, but it was not until the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century that today's town centre was completed by the Priory Meadow development occupying the former cricket ground. This is to the north and west of the study area.

### Influences – Topography

- 6.34 The challenging terrain to the west of Castle Hill has led to the evolution of a town that has absorbed the cliff face to establish a distinctive and largely continuous street scene from Claremont to White Rock. The seafront development obscures the cliff while the buildings of White Rock Gardens and St Michael's Place on the higher ground form the backdrop.
- 6.35 By contrast, the development of Robertson Street and Carlisle Parade were not only influenced by improvements to access but also the drainage of the low-lying land and the clearance of insubstantial development.

## Influences – Landownership

- 6.36 Although growth and development was more prevalent during the Regency and Victorian periods, the extent of piecemeal development and the variation in the character and appearance of buildings can be attributed to the extent of landownership as well as speculative development. Pelham Crescent was developed by Thomas Pelham, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Chichester, Wellington Square by speculative bankers, and Cornwallis Gardens and Cambridge Gardens by the Cornwallis family. A significant amount of development and change was led by the Borough Council, particularly from the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Open spaces, parks, gardens and trees

- 6.37 The urban form of the study area has seen an intense amount of development. As a result of the demand for building and pressures for growth, open spaces such as parks, public gardens and trees are limited. Where they exist, they often make a significant contribution to the visual character and appearance of the area and a contrast to the urban form.
- 6.38 Although sitting above the town, the open space associated with the Castle is of eminent importance, not only historically and in terms of defence but also as an amenity space for public enjoyment. The study area includes the immediate grounds of the remaining Grade I castle ruins and much of the open space at Castle Hill/Wellington Road.
- 6.39 While there are a number of residential properties along Castle Hill Road, its character is quite distinctive due to their relationship to informal spaces. At the top of the hill, this creates a sense of isolation being removed from the day-to-day activities of the town below.



Figure 33 – Castle Hill where substantial dwellings have an air of isolation

- 6.40 The hill is not devoid of trees, but its exposed location offers little protection to the elements. Trees remain to the south western side of the cliff providing a backdrop to the dwellings rising up Castle Hill Road.



- 6.41 The open space is accessible from the town below by car, on foot or taking advantage of the funicular railway, the station at West Hill being listed.
- 6.42 Within the town below there are limited public spaces. Where these exist, they were either planned or formed as a result of a loose urban form following the alignment of streets and paths or because development took place in such a manner to allow for accidental open space. Nevertheless, where considered to be of importance, they have a role to play in enriching the character and appearance of the area and also creating variety in the urban form and streetscene.
- 6.43 Formal areas, such as the cemetery to the north east of Milward Road is contained by natural stone walls. Wallinger's Walk, a public footpath leading to Wellington Road, forms its south eastern boundary. As well as containing the space, the cemetery offers a sense of peace and tranquility in contrast to the suburban activity of the area. Railed sections to the wall along Wallinger's Walk afford views into the space. It contains a number of trees that add to the visual amenity and greening of the environment.



Figure 34 - A cemetery providing a contained peaceful space

- 6.44 In contrast to the cemetery the space in front of the properties to the east side of Castle Hill Road reads as being a part of the pressure for development without much thought for amenity provision. The formal and informal gardens sit high above the level of Castle Hill Road and are contained by high walls forming the back edge of the carriageway. A mixture of formal and informal planting, including trees and shrubs along with open lawns, creates the sense of privacy and a private domain. The nature of the space in front of the two terraces, has a degree of public accessibility. A central stepped path leads from Castle Hill Road up to the two terraces and connects with a raised path that cuts through the space.

- 6.45 Wellington Square is a formal oval shaped garden that narrows toward its southern end. Once contained by railings and serving the occupants of the terraced housing forming the three sides of the square, it is now without containment, apart from wide granite kerbing around its perimeter. Most of the buildings are listed Grade II with Wellington Square Baptist Church at the end of the western terrace being Grade II\*.



Figure 35 - Wellington Square c.1904 (Geoff Wolfe collection 1066online)

- 6.46 The space contains a number of mature trees toward the middle and top sections while, in the lower section, a path cuts through the green on a diagonal from the north east corner to a point along its south western boundary and a further path cuts across the lower section. A planted border follows the diagonal path. The lower section is devoid of planting and contains a number of bollards and street signs as well as an information board. The remaining formality of the space compliments the buildings comprising the square. As a surviving remnant of 'seaside Hastings' it is an important space dating from the initial development of Hastings new town and its emergence from the coastal extension of the Old Town along Pelham Place and Castle Street. It is now rather divorced from the town by the busy Albert Road.
- 6.47 Robertson Terrace (1850) provides the backdrop to a shallow three-sided square fronted by Carlisle Place. The terrace was once more-uniform in its appearance with the forward projections forming book-ends with the Queens Hotel<sup>1</sup> (1862) at the eastern end. Although not directly bombed during WWII, the consequences of multiple drops nearby resulted in the need for postwar rebuilding of the terrace. Today it is home to the Debenhams store.

<sup>1</sup> After suffering storm damage in 1987, the Queens Hotel closed but has been renovated to form seafront apartments known as Queens Apartments.

- 6.48 The public space was part of the original concept for Robertson Terrace by Patrick Robertson. It once directly bordered Carlisle Parade, the coast road. However, in 1931 the road was superseded by the promenade built by Sidney Little on land reclaimed from the foreshore. This project also included an underground carpark in the void created by moving the sea wall outwards, which provides the opportunity for planting above. Despite these changes, the original boundary wall survives with a planted border behind and limestone statues of a lion and unicorn at each end on substantial stone plinths. The statues, by James Bubb, symbolized the crown's ownership of the land. They are said to have been intended for Buckingham Palace but were brought to Hastings by Decimus Burton.
- 6.49 Within the core of the central area, town houses are generally void of 'green' front gardens. The properties to the east side of Castle Hill Road have front gardens to some extent and are already referred to above. Where front gardens do exist, they generally occur in later Victorian and Edwardian developments and are contained by railings (Wellington Square), walls or walls surmounted by railings but there is an overall lack of greening or trees present within those small garden areas.
- 6.50 Tree lined streets are not prevalent in this part of Hastings. Where they do appear, this has been as a result of recent street improvements such in the main shopping area along the eastern end of Robertson Street. Havelock Road has one street tree on its west side.
- 6.51 The trees that do play a role in contributing to the visual character and appearance of the central area and the greening of the environment are predominantly contained within private rear gardens with the exception of Carlisle Hill Passage where large mature trees sit above the battered ramparts to the north side of the road within the grounds of the vacant church hall. The often poor condition of mature trees is an issue.

### Public Realm

- 6.52 The public realm not only includes formal public open spaces but the informal spaces, the spaces left over after planning, space between buildings and in front of buildings, from one side of the street to the other. In the case of Hastings, the seafront, promenade and beach are important components. The public realm also includes the network of paths, twittens and passages that are often remnants of the historic spatial and development pattern. The public realm is a significant asset in its own right.
- 6.53 The central area contains a varied public realm. Its town centre core which is partly pedestrianised from Castle Street leading via an underpass below Albert Road along Wellington Place to a focal point of activity in the town centre from which five roads radiate, including Wellington Place. Harold Place and Havelock Road provide a vehicular through route from the seafront to Cornwallis Terrace and the station. Controlled service access is also provided along Queens Road which sees this space containing a number of bollards along both sides of the road edge. Station Road is pedestrianised for the large part and opens into the external plaza in front of the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre and the north side of the Town Hall.
- 6.54 The need to provide access for vehicles has created a sense of discord and confusion in the function of streets, particularly the through road between the seafront and station, as well as



servicing. This disparity has not assisted in attempts to improve the heart of the town centre and routes often addressed by the back of buildings or dead frontage.

- 6.55 Weaknesses in the pedestrianisation are evident where Denmark Place meets Harold Place, and where Albert Road dominates the approach toward Wellington Place. Despite the underpass, Albert Road severs Castle Street from the remainder of the centre. Albert Road also dominates what was once the historic connection between Pelham Crescent and Old Town with the newer town centre.
- 6.56 Although extensive resurfacing took place at the time of pedestrianisation, it was some time ago and is now showing signs of age and poor maintenance. It also appears confusing due to the mixture of materials and need for street furniture to control movement.
- 6.57 Beyond the core of the town centre, for instance in Trinity Street and Claremont, substantial improvements have been achieved with setted carriageways, granite kerbs and stone-flagged pavements.
- 6.58 The coast road, promenade and seafront form an extensive part of the public realm. It forms the foreground to the townscape of Hastings connecting the old and new towns. It is an important thorough-fare for vehicles and pedestrians but also an important east-west connection across the coast.
- 6.59 Its role as an amenity asset was recognised from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a place for health, both for the sea air and for bathing. However, going to the seaside was strictly controlled by physicians and the manners of the age. Promenades evolved during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to permit safe perambulations close to the sea, but bathing was constrained by the need for privacy. This was addressed by the provision of underground pools, such as that beneath Pelham Crescent designed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the White Rock Baths built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.60 Over time, the promenade became a focus of attention and activity, although the pier was the *piece de resistance* of seaside architecture. Hastings pier, first built in 1869 has a history of reinventing itself rising from the ruins, be that storms or fires. In 2015/16 it was once again resurrected and forms an important part of the seafront experience and the public realm.
- 6.61 While road improvements allowed the promenades to develop, and with them the distinctive seafront terraces, this has also facilitated the growth of traffic along the A259 which now creates a barrier between the seafront and the beach. The re-opening of the pier and the rehabilitation of the White Rock Baths are spearheading a regeneration of the seafront. However, there is still an appearance of neglect and decay in the sunken areas above the baths, in the iconic seafront shelters and the access ways to the subterranean car parks.

### Views, vistas and focal points

- 6.62 The topography of Hastings is defined by the strong presence of the cliffs and the Castle, presiding over the town with development expanding along the valley and climbing to higher ridges. This affords spectacular panoramic views from higher grounds across the townscape and seascape. The re-opening of the pier now provides the pedestrian with the opportunity to experience wide views of the townscape effectively from the sea and to read the development as it climbs above the cliffs. These views are a key element in the character of the conservation area that need to be taken into account in any consideration of development proposals.
- 6.63 At street level, the pattern of development, differing built forms and the alignment of roads combine to create a rich townscape perceived as a sequence of views and glimpses. These are punctuated by landmark buildings and eye-catching corner buildings that are particularly distinctive to Hastings, reinforcing the role that the buildings play in townscape legibility.
- 6.64 The notation map 2 attached at Appendix 2 demonstrates the level of visual interest that the Hastings central area has to offer.



Figure 36 – View from the Castle to the west to include Wellington Square, the Pier and beyond.

## 7. Audit of heritage assets

- 7.1 Character areas. Sections 5 and 6 have provided a detailed account of the history of Hastings and the significance of its surviving physical form. The character of the town centre varies according to its history, sequence of development, layout and detailing. This can be considered in four distinct character areas: Castle Hill including Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square, the Town Centre, White Rock/Cambridge Gardens, and the Seafront (as shown on Map 3 of Appendix 2).
- 7.2 Within each character area, the assessment identifies designated heritage assets (Ancient monuments and listed buildings) and buildings that are recommended for inclusion on the Council's Local List. In addition, there are buildings which, although not included on specific lists, are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. All of these categories – listed, locally listed and positive – can be considered as heritage assets to which planning policies apply. They are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map 4 of Appendix 2.
- 7.3 Most of the remaining buildings are considered to be neutral in respect of their effect on the conservation area. However, there are a few buildings that have a negative effect. In these cases, opportunities for sensitive redevelopment would be welcome in due course, but it is recognised that these may be long-term aims.

### Castle Hill including Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square

- 7.4 Description. This area is dominated by the remains of the Norman castle and the open space to the east that formed the outer bailey of the castle. This part is a scheduled ancient monument and the standing remains are listed at Grade I. The West Hill Lift, which emerges into the open space, is listed at Grade II. The high points afford spectacular sea views and views across the town centre and, to the east, across the Old Town (Fig.36).
- 7.5 This area also includes the earliest development of the resort as it re-colonised the site of the original settlement. Housing on Castle Hill Road began from about 1800 and the first ten properties are listed at Grade II. The row continues with Castledown Terrace, eight mid-19<sup>th</sup> century stucco houses, that it is recommended should be considered for local listing.
- 7.6 The set-piece developments of Wellington Square and Pelham Crescent followed in the 1820s suggesting how Hastings might have developed along similar lines to Brighton. Although appearing to have a homogeneity in building types, the square was built in phases by separate builders which accounts for the variation in detail, height and roof form. Mornington Mansions, No.1 Wellington Square, is a particular landmark in approaches from the south acting as a hinge between the Square/Albert Road and Castle Hill Road.
- 7.7 Wellington Square develops grandness at a nonetheless domestic scale. Consistent features include the first-floor balconies with delicate ironwork and slender columns supporting tented roofs of zinc. The houses have a classical hierarchy of windows diminishing from the first-floor *piano nobile* upwards. The ground floors are distinguished by rusticated stucco. This formality creates a strong sense of enclosure, which contrasts with the, now, informal landscape of the square and the non-traditional stack-bonded paving.





Figure 37 – Listed properties in Castle Hill built below the west facing Castle Cliff

- 7.8 The houses in the Square are listed at Grade II, while the later Baptist Chapel (1838) is Grade II\*. Pelham Crescent, including its landmark church and arcade, is all Grade II\* listed. These developments are joined by Castle Street, which is dominated by the modern seven-storey tower of Cavendish House. Of the stucco buildings on the north side, four are listed at Grade II (Nos.3, 4, 5 & 8). Of the remaining four, No.6 is recommended for local listing because it is a pair to the listed No.5 but for the altered bay windows, which could be restored. No.7 makes a positive contribution with its Edwardian detailing and No.9 has a plain but well-fenestrated front. Nos.10 &11, adjacent to Albert Road detract from the established stucco character of Castle Street.
- 7.9 To the rear of Castle Street, the short crescent of flats at Nos.1-16 Castle Gardens, make a positive contribution as a modest set piece of Edwardian design with classical influences. It survives remarkably intact.
- 7.10 On the north side of Castle Hill, the distinctive early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing at Nos.6-10 Castledown Avenue are recommended to be considered for local listing, as are No.4 Wellington Gardens and Nos.109-115 Castle Hill Road. These latter houses are landmarks on Castle Hill providing an attractive foil to the green skyline.
- 7.11 Building condition. Public investment has seen considerable improvements to St Mary-in-the-Castle and Pelham Crescent and this campaign is continuing with the restoration of the arcade. Nonetheless, these buildings remain on the Historic England Heritage-at-Risk Register. In

general, however, the housing throughout this area is in good condition and the regular appearance of scaffolding is an indicator of continuing maintenance.

- 7.12 It is the commercial areas that have suffered more. Castle Street has some poor shopfronts with over-sized fascias, loss of detail and under-used floorspace. The former Empire Theatre, now The Deluxe, has suffered the loss of terracotta detailing and unsympathetic alterations, particularly to the ground floor. The adjacent amusement arcades detract from the Grade II\* frontages of Nos.7-9 Pelham Place. In the area proposed for inclusion, the former Railway Mission Hall at Portland Villas off Castle Hill Passage, recommended for local listing, is in very poor condition.
- 7.13 Public realm. The lack of planning in the original layout leaves the backs of buildings exposed to the public realm. This is particularly apparent in views down Castle Hill Road. However, this area also has the best of the defined public spaces in the town centre: Pelham Crescent, Wellington Square and St Andrew's cemetery at Wallinger's Walk. These contrast with the informal spaces in front of Castledown Terrace and, of course, on Castle Hill.
- 7.14 Characteristics:
- **Materials:** Render with stucco details predominate on 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings accompanied by wrought-iron balconies with 'tent' roofs. The loss of stucco details, such as cornices and balustrades, should be resisted. Edwardian and later buildings are often faced with red bricks and stone detailing
  - **Scale and massing:** Modest buildings tend to be of three storeys. This rises to four storeys for the grander set-pieces. Development is mostly in the form of terraces with little space between building and pavement. With historical plot-widths and traditional fenestration, this gives a distinctive vertical rhythm to the townscape
  - **Colour:** Historically, renders were self-coloured but, over time, they have been brightened by painting in a palette of white and cream colours. Other colours are beginning to emerge and, with too much contrast, there is a danger of unnecessary discordance
  - **Roofs:** Roofs are conventionally pitched using a mix of blue slate and clay tiles. The earlier roofs tend to be hipped. Slate allows the low pitches seen, for instance on Pelham Crescent and the Baptist Chapel
  - **Joinery:** The majority of windows were double-hung sliding sashes with timber frames. Earlier windows had multiple panes but from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with increasing availability of plate glass, glazing bars could be dispensed with leaving just two panes divided by the meeting rail. Where traditional windows survive, they should be retained – thermal and physical performance can be readily improved using unobtrusive methods. Dormer windows are not generally a characteristic of this area – an exception can be seen in Portland Terrace. Doors are panelled in various patterns of four, five and six panels either raised-and-fielded or with heavy bolection mouldings. Some have glazing to the upper panels
- 7.15 Opportunities. New housing inserted between Castle Hill Road and Castledown Avenue was perhaps the last development opportunity of any significance in this area. However, the 1960s property at Nos.10/11 Castle Street could be redeveloped to give a better frontage to Albert Road. There are significant opportunities for the enhancement of historic property in Castle Street. These include the reinstatement of the semi-circular bay to No.6 and replacement of the top-hung windows to No.7. The main problem, however, is the visual disconnection between the ground and upper floors caused by insensitive shopfronts and signage. No.8 is the exception where the shopfront maintains the elegance of the building as a whole.

- 7.16 The Deluxe also presents opportunities to regain the sense of the original theatre, such as the reinstatement of terracotta detailing, making more of the second-floor colonnade, removing the much-derided green canopy and restoring the ground-floor frontage
- 7.17 Although improvements have been carried out to the car park on the south side of Pelham Place, more could be done to acknowledge the important axis of St Mary in the Castle and to reduce the intrusion of street furniture into views of Pelham Crescent.
- 7.18 Summary of issues:

Positives:

- Includes the majority of open spaces, formal and informal
- Set-piece Regency developments – Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square
- Dramatic views across the town, particularly from Castle Hill
- Landmarks:
  - The Castle
  - St Mary-in-the-Castle

Negatives:

- Condition of buildings:
  - The De Luxe
  - Pelham Arcade
  - Former Railway Mission at Portland Villas, Castle Hill Passage
- Buildings that detract from the historic character:
  - Cavendish House
  - Muriel Matters House
  - Nos.10/11 Castle Street
- Shopfronts and advertising:
  - Nos.7-9 Pelham Place
  - Castle Street

Actions:

- Include the Castle Hill area within a new Central Hastings Conservation Area
- Add to this character area:
  - The foreshore in front of Pelham Crescent
  - Portland Place, west side, including Nos.1-4 on the south side
  - Castle Hill Road, west side (Nos.73-81) and Nos.1-12 Stonefield Road (to complete the triangle with Portland Place)
  - Castledown Avenue, northwest side (Nos.1-5)
  - Wellington Road (Nos.2-36 and Nos.15-25)
- Consider the addition of identified buildings to the local list. These are summarised in Appendix 1 and shown on map 4 of Appendix 2
- Safeguard views across the town both to and from the castle
- Keep the Pelham Crescent axis clear of intrusive street furniture
- Re-connect Wellington Square with the town centre through public realm improvements
- Development management response to the characteristics of the area to include;
  - Resist the removal of stucco embellishments, such as architraves, cornices, brackets, quoins and rustication



- Encourage the reinstatement of such features where they have been lost and there is evidence for their details
- Resist the removal of traditional sash windows and panelled doors
- Take all opportunities to reinstate traditional forms of windows
- Make full use of the Council's shopfront guidance to secure improvements when changes are being proposed
- Address the use of colour by avoiding strong colours and discordant contrasts -
- Protect vulnerable undesigned heritage assets, such as Castle Hill Road, from inappropriate changes
- Consider seeking group improvements, for instance to Castle Street



## Town Centre

- 7.19 Description. The heart of the town is essentially a series of radiating streets fronted by mainly rendered buildings of three and four storeys. The rounded corners facing the hub, or node, emphasise its focal role creating a memorable space. Cambridge Road and Robertson Street elongate this space westwards before dividing at the ornate 'flatiron' of the former photographic studios, which are listed at Grade II. This highly decorative building, with shallow curved bays and rusticated stucco is a marked contrast to the plainer frontages opposite. However, despite listing, it has a very poor shopfront with an angular projecting fascia.
- 7.20 Robertson Street continues with a high quality of stucco terraces, particularly from No.17 westwards. No.21 is listed for its Art Nouveau shopfront. The shopfront at No.23 is also highly detailed, but others are less successful, such as the severely functional fronts to Nos.17-19.



Figure 38 – Debenhams remains an impressive building on Robertson Street. The street then diverges, continuing to one side as Robertson Street and the other, as Cambridge Road

- 7.21 On the north side, the Creative Media Centre shows how modern buildings can be successfully integrated into the townscape, even next to the listed United Reform Church, through the use of restraint and proportion.

- 7.22 Robertson Street curves towards the seafront with a large mural on the return to Robertson Passage commemorating the America Ground that preceded Robertson's terraced development. This layout is punctuated by Holy Trinity Church, listed at Grade II\*. The design by S S Teulon was adapted from an earlier proposal for a site on Cambridge Road. The church occupies most of the triangle with Trinity Street and Claremont. Trinity Street has a distinguished terrace on the north side with large tri-partite windows to the first floor. The west side of Claremont is a complete contrast, with the eclectic Gothic revival style of the Brassey Institute, now library, and the adjoining former printing works (Both Grade II listed). Claremont is characterised by canted bays more generally associated with the seafront and reaching a highly detailed climax at the early 20<sup>th</sup> century No.4.
- 7.23 Behind the Claremont buildings a service road runs under the cliff into which caves have been hollowed out. These include a large subterranean area under the Observer Building on Cambridge Road used as storage for the printing works. At the end of Claremont, Brassey Steps rise up the height of the cliff to Cambridge Road offering a framed glimpse of the sea from the top.
- 7.24 As Robertson Street leads into Cambridge Road, it includes the General Havelock PH (Grade II) and then Yate's Wine Lodge, built as a music hall and assembly rooms. This has heavy pediments to the huge first-floor windows that express the former use. This is recommended to be considered for local listing as is the former post office of 1930, which has been extended as part of the Brighton University buildings fronting Priory Street. Less successful is the ESK building on the west side of Priory Street.
- 7.25 On the south side of Cambridge Road, the Grade II United Reform Church and the Hastings Media Centre of 2004 are notable. Most of the other buildings in Cambridge Road make a positive contribution except for the extremely bland Nos.27/29, which ironically appear to have historical origins.
- 7.26 Wellington Place has a wide range of buildings in terms of materials, scale and date. The north side has late Georgian buildings of which Nos.3 and 12/13 are listed at Grade II. At the east end is a former drapers' shop of 1929 very much in the style established by Montague Burton buildings. At the west end, the rebuilt Nos.14/15 are the least successful of the rounded corners fronting the hub. On the south side there is a variety of styles including the neo-Georgian rebuilding of Nos.14/15 (1933) and No.12 (1949). The use of red brick stands out from the predominance of renders. At the east end is the re-modelled Woolworths building, now Sports Direct, which detracts greatly from the character of the conservation area particularly in views from the seafront. The adjacent Nos.8/9 is equally devoid of distinctive detail.
- 7.27 Queens Road and Station Road are lined with modest buildings that make a positive contribution, although the loss of architectural detail tends to make some of them very plain. As Queens Road meets Albert Road, the corners are given a strong emphasis by the Gothic sandstone Town Hall of 1880 (Grade II) and by the Italianate red brick and stone of the former Gaiety Theatre, now the Odeon Cinema. This is recommended to be considered for local listing as are the former Council Offices behind the Town Hall.
- 7.28 The theatre building includes the modest entrance to the Queens Arcade of 1882, which runs through to Wellington Place. Further on along Queens Road, opposite the Priory Meadow



Shopping Centre, there are a few positive buildings but their qualities tend to be lost to generally poor shopfronts and several buildings reduced to a single storey.



Figure 39 – The discreet yet ornate entrance into Queens Arcade.

- 7.29 Behind this part of Queens Road are the Grade II listed buildings of Russell Street, which frame views towards Portland Place. Behind the cinema, and opposite Wellington Square, is the 1960s rebuilding of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Castle Hotel, now Poundstretcher. This largely faceless structure detracts considerably from views out of the Square and the setting of its listed buildings.
- 7.30 Havelock Road was laid out to connect with the railway station, opened in 1851, and the gentle gradient is said to have been evened out with spoil from the cutting of the railway tunnel. On the west side, the General Havelock PH and Yate's cut through from Robertson Street. Beyond these are further mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco buildings before Lacuna Place (2012), which was the first phase of the Priory Quarter development. To the north and west of this are modern buildings including Queensbury House, facing the railway station, and the multi-story car park in Priory Street.
- 7.31 On the east side, the exuberant Nat West Bank of 1904, recommended to be considered for local listing, soon gives way to the uninspired concrete frame of Nos.33-43 fronting the

telephone exchange. However, late 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco with canted bays continues the street culminating in the highly decorative Golden Cross PH of 1899, subsequently renamed as Flairz.

- 7.32 Building condition. While the structural condition of buildings appears to be generally sound, there are signs of neglect, for instance in the domestic buildings on the east side of Havelock Road and in Wellington Place, and evidence of the under-use of upper floors. Both these factors can make buildings vulnerable to progressive decay.
- 7.33 The United Reform Church is the only building in this area on the Historic England Heritage-at-Risk register. It is classified as 'poor' due to movement cracks,, damp penetration and inadequate rainwater goods.
- 7.34 The main issue, however, is the gradual erosion of detail particularly in shopfronts and in the loss of stucco details, for instance on the former Queens Hotel.
- 7.35 Public realm. A good deal of the central area has been pedestrianised, but it does suffer from a lack of co-ordination of often well-intentioned schemes. This has led to a variety of paving materials, half-hearted pattern-making and unnecessary street furniture such as bollards and guard rails. A notable exception is in Trinity Street and Claremont where a much higher quality of traditional materials has been used for street surfaces.
- 7.36 Trees along Robertson Street/Cambridge Road and the single tree in Havelock Road show that planting is not impossible. However, for trees to thrive in future, more care must be taken in selecting appropriate species and specifying best practice in planting.
- 7.37 Characteristics:
- **Materials:** Render with stucco details predominate for residential and commercial buildings while sandstone denotes the higher status of church buildings, public buildings, such as the Town Hall and banks, such as the NatWest Bank at Havelock Road. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, red brick was used in conjunction with stone dressings for the Gaiety Theatre and for the Golden Cross PH in Havelock Road. Red brick was also used in the 1930s, particularly for neo-Georgian buildings, such as the former Post Office in Cambridge Road and buildings on the south side of Wellington Place. Glazed mathematical tiles were used in imitation of brick for Nos.12/13 Wellington Place
  - **Scale and massing:** Town centre properties are mostly four storeys, although the main part of Debenhams rises to five floors and some, more-domestic buildings have three. A strong vertical rhythm derives from residential plot widths even though many commercial buildings are now multiples of those widths. Rounded corners at the central hub make the space particularly distinctive
  - **Colour:** Renders are generally painted in shades of white and off-white. However, the stronger cream colour of Nos.20/21 Wellington Place and the purple of No.4 Claremont may be a sign of change. Stone and red brick add to a varied palette, but the black painted rustication of No.53 Robertson Street detracts from the townscape
  - **Roofs:** In the centre, most roofs are hidden behind parapets so that there are only occasional glimpses of slate. A few houses had slated mansards as can be seen at Nos.17-20 Queens Road. Clay tiles were used on earlier properties and to good effect on Teulon's Holy Trinity Church
  - **Joinery:** Timber sash windows still prevail, but there are plenty of signs that they are gradually being replaced with less satisfactory substitutes. There are several surviving

historic shopfronts, but these are a minority compared with those with over-deep fascias, modern materials and no relationship to the building above.

Opportunities. There are clear redevelopment opportunities on the sites of Poundstretcher and Sports Direct, and on the south side of Castle Street. There is also a case for developing the single-storey properties on Queens Road opposite the Priory Meadow Centre.

- 7.38 The open space at the hub is a major element of the town centre that should be generally less cluttered. However, there is a significant opportunity to replace the Prince Albert Memorial clock-tower, removed in 1973, with a modern eye-catcher perhaps part functional and part sculptural. This should be linked to a redesign of the surfaces treating the space a whole and giving particular attention to the pedestrian connections from Robertson Street to Wellington Place and Queens Road. A Borough-wide streetscape manual would assist this process giving emphasis to the need for less variety and more co-ordination.
- 7.39 There is a major opportunity for the reinstatement of architectural detail. This includes, principally, the restoration of lost stucco, such as moulded architraves, cornices and console brackets, and also the reinstatement of joinery including appropriate windows and doors as well as shopfronts. This would require public funding as there is little financial incentive for embellishment. It would also need to be underpinned by the publication of guidance to explain the expectations.
- 7.40 The restoration of details is particularly important on the focal corner buildings, especially the former photographic studios on the corner of Cambridge Road and Robertson Street, which was once even more assertive than it is today.
- 7.41 It is important that the central focus should be kept free of obstacles so that it can be animated by people and events. Nonetheless, the single tree in Havelock Road shows that there are opportunities for further planting in the radial streets particularly where architectural quality and views are less critical.
- 7.42 Summary of issues:
- Positives:
- Dramatic radial plan
  - Large central open space
  - Consistency of three and four-storey Victorian architecture
  - Strong rhythm of plot widths, height, scale and proportions
  - Robust townscape united by the use of classically derived detail
  - Landmarks:
    - The Town Hall, Queens Road
    - The former Golden Cross PH, Havelock Road
    - Holy Trinity Church, Robertson Street
    - Distinctively rounded corner buildings
  - Sequential views through the townscape and important longer views to the castle, particularly from Cambridge Road

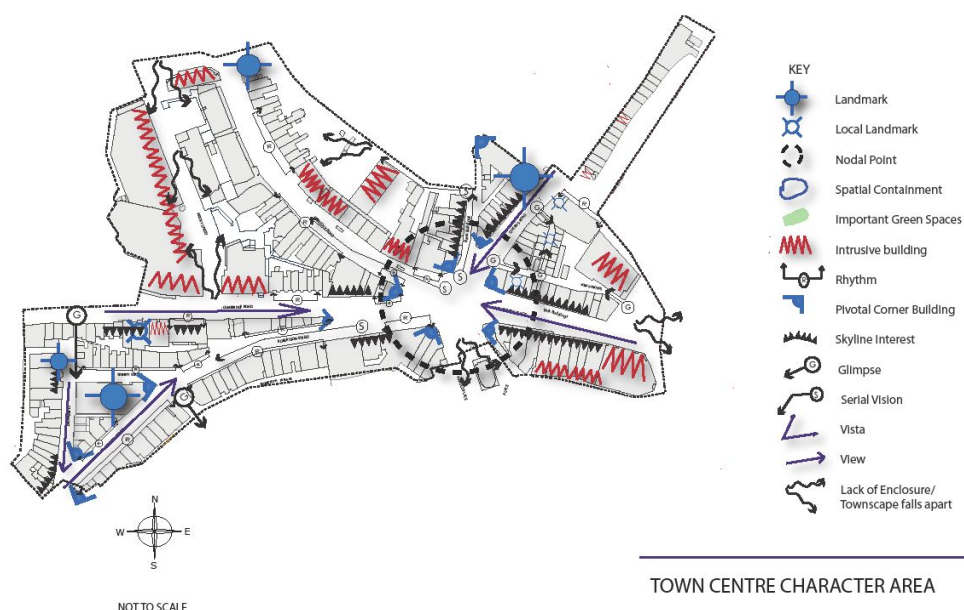


### Negatives:

- Building condition:
  - United Reform Church (Building-at-risk)
  - Nos. 45/46 & 52-55 Havelock Road (Vulnerable)
- Buildings that detract from the historic character:
  - Poundstretcher, Albert Road
  - Former Woolworths, Wellington Place
  - Nos.14/15 Wellington Place (Corner with Queens Road)
  - Nos.33-43 Havelock Road
  - Queensbury House
  - Priory Street Car Park
  - ESK building, Cambridge Road
  - Nos.27/29 Cambridge Road

### Actions:

- Public realm:
  - Rationalise surface materials and street furniture
  - Provide for adequate maintenance
  - Minimise clutter – signage, bollards and guard rails
  - Prepare guidance in a Borough-wide Townscape Manual
- Consider the provision of a new focus to replace the function performed by the Prince Albert Memorial clock-tower until 1973
- Make full use of planning opportunities to resist the loss of historic detail – eg traditional windows and stucco embellishments
- Make full use of the Council's adopted Shopfronts and Advertisements guidance to recover traditional shopfronts and particularly to address problems of over-deep shop fascias
- Ensure that applicants demonstrate a full understanding of townscape elements – width, height, scale, proportions, materials and detailing – in making proposals for new development



## White Rock / Cambridge Gardens

- 7.43 Description. Much of this area occupies elevated ground that frames the town centre to the west just as Castle Hill does to the east. White Rock Gardens and St Michael's Place follow the edge of a modest cliff, but this is little seen because it is masked by the seafront properties that developed in front of it.
- 7.44 The area between Prospect Place and Dorset Place is said to be the site of St Michael's Church, part of the Augustinian priory that survived from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century until 1413. Indeed, the Ordnance Survey of 1873 has an annotation 'St Michael on the Rock' with an arrow pointing in this direction. Certainly, the density and irregularity of the existing cottages would suggest the possibility of earlier archaeology. On the south side, Nos.1-5 St Michael's Place were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as coastguards' cottages taking advantage of a commanding position.
- 7.45 The area was used to stable horses for Hackney carriages, as the curiously five-sided Trinity Mews would confirm. However, White Rock Gardens was developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with elegant stucco villas taking advantage of sea views from their elevated location.
- 7.46 Cambridge Road cut across the area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to provide a more direct link to Bohemia Road. Two-storey rendered terraces lined the south side, including the kite-shaped Trinity Villas, with its internal communal garden, on the corner with White Rock Road.



Figure 40 – Long view along Cambridge Road

- 7.47 On the corner of Cambridge Road and Prospect Place is the Observer Building constructed in 1921 for FJ Parsons, the publisher and printer of local newspapers. The Cambridge Road frontage is an ornate three-bay giant order of buff terracotta with raised lettering announcing the company's business. On the return, its five storeys reduce to four as a utilitarian industrial print hall. This building is recommended to be considered for local listing.
- 7.48 Opposite, and returning up both sides of Cambridge Gardens are a series of late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces. These houses are part of the Cornwallis estate laid out in 1873 by the local builder, John Howell. The houses, generally of three storeys with basements, have canted bays and Italianate stucco detailing. The original front doors are of four panels with heavy bolection mouldings. Some of the houses have also retained the cast-iron railings and gates to the basement areas. Collectively, these buildings are a fine example of Victorian planning that makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.



Figure 41 – Sweeping street of Cambridge Gardens defined by a consistency of terraced dwellings.

- 7.49 At the south end, Nos.5-7 Cambridge Gardens, once three houses, have been heavily altered and amalgamated to form commercial premises. At the north end, spanning between Cambridge Gardens and Priory Street is a 1930s Neo-Georgian building, now known as Gizmo House. The red brick walls are in Flemish garden wall bond (three stretchers to one header), sometimes known as the Sussex bond, surmounted by a plaster cornice and a hipped slate roof.



- 7.50 Building condition. The Cornwallis houses appear generally sound, although some of those fronting Cambridge Road have lost cornices. The main issue is the more widespread loss of original doors, windows and railings.
- 7.51 Of greater concern are the terraces on the south side of Cambridge Road where many of the doors, windows and cornices have been lost. On White Rock Road the frontage of Trinity Villas has been systematically defaced by the use of a rough render, modern joinery and the removal of cornices.
- 7.52 At the time of preparing this document the Observer Building is little used and mostly boarded up. It is vulnerable to decay and must be considered a building-at-risk.



Figure 42 – An important landmark building in need of re-use

- 7.53 Public realm. While granite kerbs survive throughout this area, the stone-flagged pavements of Prospect Place and St Michael's Place are a rarity that gives a glimpse of what streets would have been like throughout Hastings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This faded quality makes the appearance of red concrete slabs in White Rock Gardens quite bizarre. Elsewhere, pavements tend to be tarmac or, where there are concrete slabs, they are repaired with tarmac.

7.54 Surprisingly, Cambridge Gardens is still served by overhead telephone cables, which detract from its uniformity. At its junction with Cambridge Road, there is a bewildering array of railings, traffic signs, bollards and nine sets of traffic lights.

7.55 Characteristics:

- Materials: Render is the dominant building finish throughout this area. It is used functionally on the cottages of Dorset Place and Prospect Place and as architectural stucco in Cambridge Gardens and White Rock Gardens. The Observer Building departs from this tradition by using buff-coloured terracotta that is more suited to the display of lettering. A less successful departure is the pebble-dashing of Trinity Villas.
- Scale and massing: The two-storey cottage scale of houses on 'the rock' reflect the fact that this was one of the earliest parts of the town to be developed, for instance before the America Ground was laid out. This scale extends along Cambridge Road to Trinity Villas, however it becomes grander with the more ostentatious houses of White Rock Gardens. The Observer Building marks an abrupt change to a commercial town centre scale, not only higher but more extensive. Cambridge Gardens marks the edge to with a consistent domestic scale against the Priory Street car park and the ESK building
- Colour: Cambridge Gardens is beginning to see the introduction of greens and greys in contrast to the more-traditional off white stucco. However, it is in Cambridge Road that there is competition for more discordant colours from the dark green of the Union Bar to strong yellows, reds and blues
- Roofs: The older buildings have clay tiled roofs while Welsh slate became widespread from the 1840s with the advent of rail transport. However, roofs do not contribute greatly to the streetscene because of narrow streets and the prevalence of parapets
- Joinery: The loss of traditional sashes is prevalent throughout the area. Replacements introduce both non-traditional materials and non-traditional top-hung opening. Notable are Nos.8/9 Cambridge Gardens where sash windows have been replaced with a single pane to the whole opening

7.56 Opportunities. The main priority is the refurbishment and re-use of the Observer Building. There is also scope for an Article 4 direction to control the permitted development that is eroding the consistency of the residential terraces. The effectiveness of such a direction can be improved by the publication of guidance to explain the concerns and expectations for the area. It is also necessary to ensure that existing planning controls over non-residential buildings or flats are exercised to the same degree.

7.57 As with the town centre, a streetscape manual would help to simplify the use of materials and to reduce the proliferation of signage and street furniture through the adoption of good design principles and co-ordination.

7.58 Summary of issues:

Positives:

- Elevated position of White Rock area providing widespread sea views and views towards the castle
- Fine detailing of property in White Rock Gardens – stucco and ironwork
- Intimate character of Dorset Place with surviving evidence of historical stabling
- Strong rhythm and uniformity of Cambridge Gardens
- Landmarks:

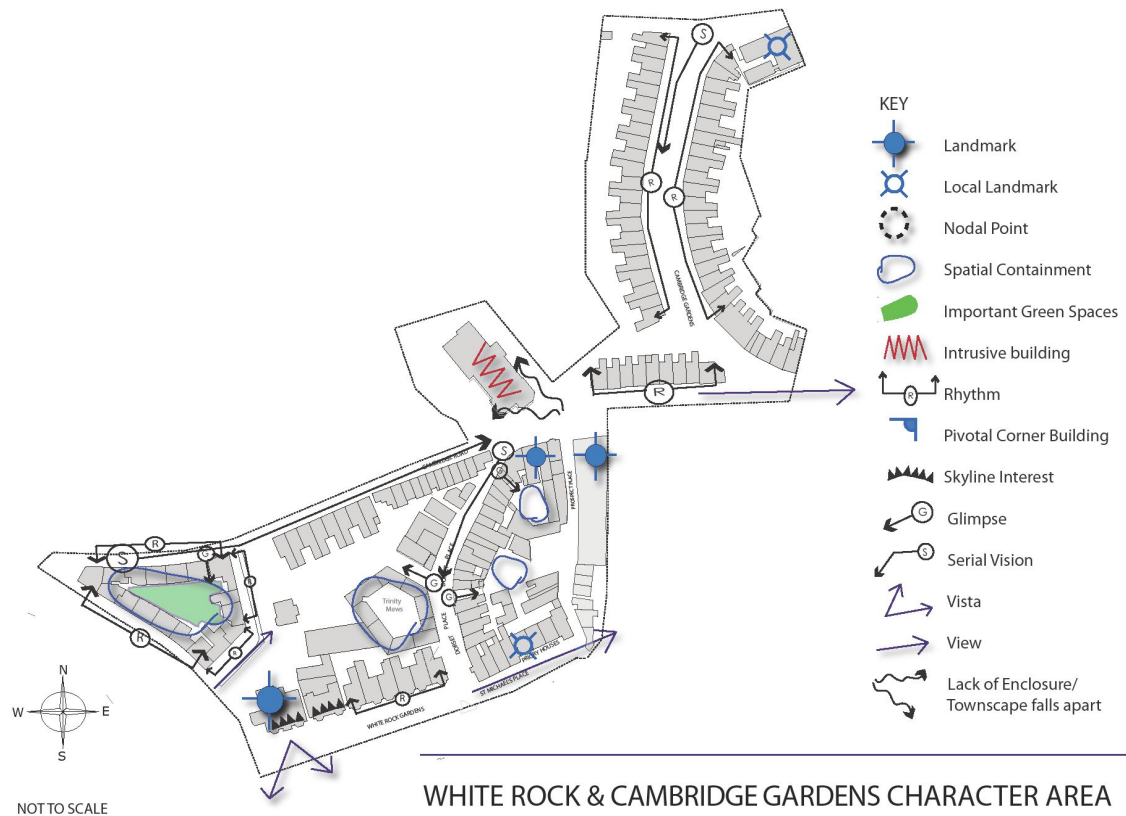
- White Rock Mansion
- The Observer Building
- Survival of historic paving materials

#### Negatives:

- Building condition:
  - Observer Building (Building at risk)
  - Low maintenance of cottages – eg 17 Dorset Place, 13/14 Prospect Place
  - South side of Cambridge Road (Loss of detail)
  - Nos.34-50 Cambridge Road (Loss of detail)
- Buildings that detract from the historic character:
  - Holmesbury House, Cambridge Road (corner with Cornwallis Gardens)
  - Nos.5-7 Cambridge Gardens

#### Actions:

- Amalgamate the White Rock and Town Centre Conservation Areas into a new Central Hastings Conservation Area
- Publish guidance to promote better maintenance of buildings
- Improve control of minor alterations
- Make full use of powers to resist the loss of historic detail (Article 4)
- Public realm:
  - Take strategic action to promote the use of traditional materials and to reduce clutter
  - Seek the removal of overhead wires in Cambridge Gardens
- Discourage the use of discordant colours



## The Seafront

- 7.59 Description. The continuous building line extending eastwards from the White Rock Theatre follows the cliff that defines the White Rock area, curving inland on Robertson Street and Claremont. After Robertson Street, there is the more formal layout of Carlisle Parade and Robertson Terrace. Contrasting with this urban front, the openness of views to east and west along the foreshore is an important element.
- 7.60 The White Rock Hotel, now stripped of all ornament, is noted in 1873 as an infirmary. Beyond this is the modern redevelopment of Norman Court and then Nos.16-20 (Grade II listed) are all that remains of a once more-extensive terrace. These properties have basement areas that set them back from the road, but the remaining properties eastwards step forwards to the edge of the pavement. The first four of these, with bow windows, balconies and verandahs, are also listed at Grade II. No.21 retains its cornice mouldings and sash windows.
- 7.61 There follows a miscellany of buildings with canted bays but much loss of detail. Then the French influence of the former Palace Hotel (1885-6) with balconies, bays and arches, and a section that rises to eight storeys. Much of the stucco detailing above ground floor level has since been simplified, but the building remains flamboyant and is listed at Grade II. The ground floor retains the pilasters and fascias of the shop openings divided by console brackets with urns above. Arthur Green's is an original shopfront.



Figure 43 – The Palace Hotel



- 7.62 The Victorian Gothic building at Nos.40/41, also Grade II, was the carriage works of Rock & Co. The workshops to the rear have a lift up the cliff-face to take carriages to the showroom. A variety of four-storey buildings, most with canted bays, turn the corner into Claremont.



Figure 44 – Views from the seafront into Claremont have an eclectic skyline

- 7.63 Between White Rock and the beach, a generous promenade was created when the sea wall was moved outwards in the 1930s as part of the seafront improvements by Sidney Little, the Borough Engineer. This provides space for a remarkable series of '*nautical moderne*' concrete seaside shelters (Grade II), the granite memorial of 1902 to the Boer War (Grade II), a fountain, and then the former White Rock Baths now used as a BMX and skate park called The Source.
- 7.64 The more formal terraces of Robertson Street return into Carlisle Parade with an octagonal bay giving emphasis to the acute-angled corner. Dating from the early 1850s, these are four storeys with basements, stuccoed with rustication to the ground floor, first-floor balconies and verandahs and a generous modillion cornice. They set the theme for the Astral Lodge Hotel and the

Chatsworth Hotel before another faceted corner announces the set back of Robertson Terrace behind a shallow square guarded by the lion and unicorn statues. Robertson's plan continued around the square but was interrupted in 1963 by redevelopment for Albany Court and the rear of the Debenhams department store following war-time bomb damage. The layout is completed by the former Queens Hotel of 1858, now converted into apartments.

- 7.65 Carlisle Parade was widened in the 1930s as part of Sidney Little's improvements. In the void between the Victorian and new sea walls, Little created an underground car park, said to be the first in Europe. This is listed at Grade II including the entrance ramps, sunken garden and shelters.
- 7.66 To the east of Harold Place, there is the bland late 20<sup>th</sup> century development of Homedene House and then the much-altered Carlisle PH, which has stucco elements to the ground floor suggesting a grander past. Behind these buildings, Pelham Street was once the main road, connecting with Robertson Street before Carlisle Parade was developed.
- 7.67 At Albert Road, the rear of the former Woolworths significantly detracts from the seafront character. The area is completed by the 1960s triangle between Denmark Place and Castle Street. This presents a spirited semi-circular east end closing views along Pelham Place.
- 7.68 Building condition. The terraces of the Robertson layout are in good condition, the main casualty being the loss of original windows. However, some of the buildings further west are clearly under-used and decaying. A pattern of ad hoc alteration and low maintenance is evident in White Rock, including the listed buildings, and most of the shopfronts do little to enhance the area. However, investment in repairs at the former carriage works and the pier may stimulate further improvements.
- 7.69 Public realm. Claremont has been enhanced by a simple scheme providing a setted carriageway, granite kerbs and sandstone pavements. At Robertson Street, this meets the diluted version: Tegula concrete setts and concrete paving slabs now 'maintained' with patches of tarmac.
- 7.70 The promenade was surfaced in red tarmac and there is now a campaign of improvements associated with the rehabilitation of the White Rock baths. However, the concrete entrances to the carparks remain uninviting and the sunken areas of The Source remain to be made more attractive than the current exposed ducting would suggest. Near The Source, the remaining columns of two gas lights could be exploited as features rather than symbols of decay.
- 7.71 Characteristics:
- **Materials:** All the buildings are rendered with varying degrees of stucco embellishment. The exception is the concrete frame and brickwork of Albany Court, which do make it stand out. Concrete was also used extensively for the 1930s improvements to the seafront
  - **Scale and massing:** The consistent four-storey terraces of the Robertson layout set the restrained tone for the seafront. However, the Place Hotel dramatically breaks that rule with its eight-storey tower
  - **Colour:** The palette of white and near-white finishes prevails along the seafront except for the buff brick of Albany Court. Some properties, such as No.6 Carlisle Parade and the Lansdowne Hotel, have details picked out in a colour contrast. The main colour highlight though comes from the lively mosaics on Sydney Littles shelters

- Roofs: Roofs are generally of slate, which became abundant from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. However, with the prominent exception of the Palace Hotel, they are largely unseen.
- Joinery: A lot of original windows have been lost particularly along White Rock. This is compounded by the fact that many of the replacements have been of very poor design that detracts from the historic character of the seafront

7.72 Opportunities. There is an extensive opportunity for a programme of building repair, including the reinstatement of lost details, in order to recover the elegance of the seafront. This could be coupled with highway improvements. These works would need to be promoted with clear statements of expectation through historic building guidance and a streetscape manual.

7.73 It is clear, however, that capital investment is only effective if it is supported by commitments to maintenance backed by firm development management.

#### 7.74 Summary of issues:

##### Positives:

- Almost continuous façade of 19<sup>th</sup> century seaside development
- Consistent building height (except the former Palace Hotel), lower on White Rock and rising towards the town centre
- Openness of views along the foreshore and seafront
- Increased formality of the Robertson development of Carlisle Place and Robertson Terrace
- Lion and Unicorn statues from Buckingham Palace
- Promenade and shelters by Sydney Little
- Landmarks:
  - Hastings Pier
  - The White Rock Theatre
  - The Boer War Memorial
  - The former Palace Hotel
  - The Brassey Institute (Library)

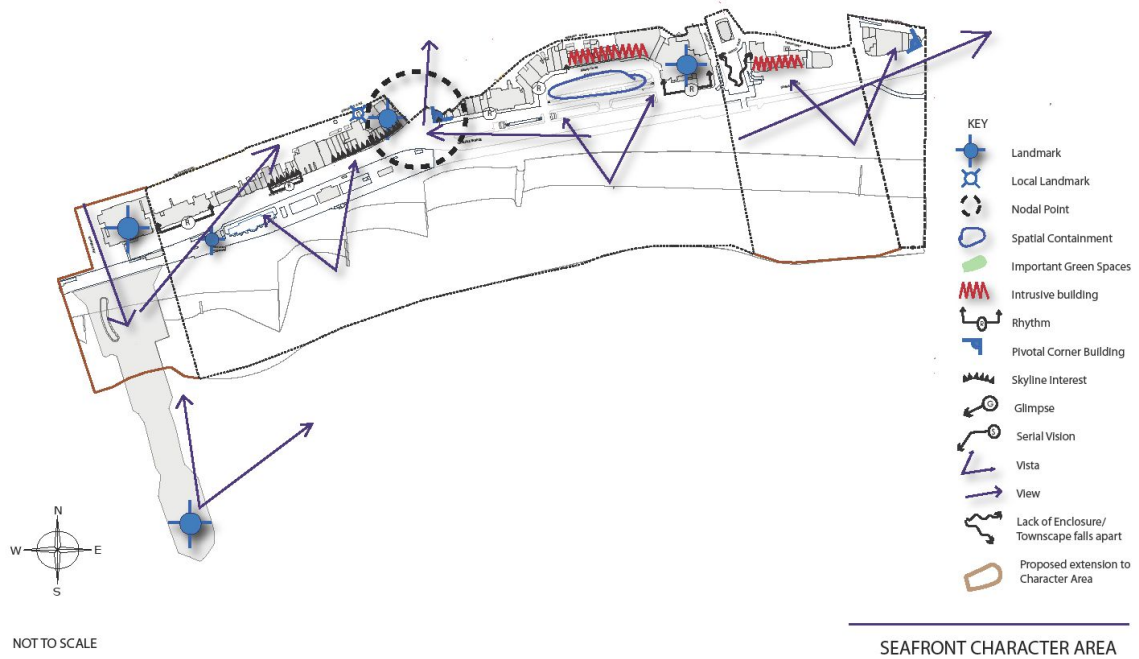
##### Negatives:

- Condition:
  - Nos. 21-31 White Rock (Vulnerable)
  - No.6 Claremont (Building-at-risk)
- Buildings that detract from the historic character:
  - The White Rock Hotel
  - Albany Court
  - Homedane House
- Loss of detail particularly on White Rock and corner with Claremont
- Poor shopfronts

##### Actions:

- Include Hastings Pier and the White Rock Theatre from the Eversfield Place Conservation Area into a new Central Hastings Conservation Area
- Complete the inclusion of the foreshore to the south of Denmark Place
- Make full use of planning opportunities to resist the loss of historic detail – eg traditional windows and stucco embellishments

- Make full use of the Council's adopted Shopfronts and Advertisements guidance to recover traditional shopfronts
- Maintain public realm to a consistent standard





## 8. Management Plan

- 8.1 While there are immediate consequences from the designation of conservation areas, such as control over the demolition of buildings or the felling of trees, the expectation is for active management. Indeed, planning legislation places a further duty on local authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas.
- 8.2 A management plan can fulfil that statutory duty and explain the steps that should be taken to maintain the special interest of the area. However, conservation areas are not necessarily preservation areas and, in most places, change is inevitable. The challenge, therefore, is to manage change in a manner that does not lose sight of the qualities that make a place special.

### Designation

- 8.3 Conservation area boundary review. Conservation areas in Hastings have been designated progressively since the enabling legislation was introduced in 1967. First, the historical and picturesque qualities of the late mediaeval Old Town were recognized in 1968 and, perhaps because it was the first, this designation extended to include Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square even though they have little to do with the character of the Old Town. This was followed by designation of the planned developments of St Leonard's and then the White Rock and Cornwallis Gardens Conservation Areas were designated in 1990.
- 8.4 The Town Centre designation in 1996 was the product of a study called Hastings 2000. Its extent was constrained by the remit of the study so that the White Rock Conservation Area had to be extended in 1998 to complete a gap in coverage of the historic seafront that might otherwise have been included in the town centre designation.
- 8.5 This rather ad hoc process now deserves a more objective review. The remarkable layering of Hastings' history reveals that the Old Town was not the original town and that the White Rock and Castle Hill were defining elements of the earlier mediaeval settlement. There is, therefore, a strong case for amalgamating the White Rock and Town Centre Conservation Areas and for including the castle into a single town centre designation. This would also have the effect of bringing Pelham Crescent and Wellington Square into the town centre area recognizing that they were pioneering developments of the resort which established the 'new town' on the site of the first settlement (as shown in Map 5 of appendix 2).
- 8.6 Having re-defined the town centre by these amalgamations of existing designations, a few further adjustments are recommended for historical or logical reasons:
- Hastings Pier and the White Rock Theatre relate more directly to the resort history of the town than to Eversfield Place. They should therefore be brought into the town centre designation defining its western extent
  - The designations follow the low water mark in parts but not in others. Clearly the foreshore is important to the history of Hastings and to its current appearance. The boundaries should follow the low water mark throughout
  - This would mean, for the sake of completeness, the inclusion of the Pelham Street / Denmark Place / Harold Place triangle and of Muriel Matters House and Cavendish House. Pelham Street was once the main thoroughfare along the front, connecting with Robertson Street

- The area between Portland Place and the pedestrian route at the rear of dwellings along Queens Road. The terrace at the south end of Portland Place provides an attractive focus to views along Russell Street, while the buildings on the west side of Portland Place, include the former St Mary's School, now the Jackson Hall, provide the setting to the listed Wellington Terrace opposite.
- While the listed houses (Wellington Terrace) fronting the east side of Portland Place already have conservation area status, it is recommended that the whole triangle with Stonefield Road/Castle Hill Road and Castle Hill Passage is brought into the designation. This will include the former Railwaymens Mission hall at Portland Villas, the trees along Castle Hill Passage, and the victorian terraces that define the main road.
- Having included that triangle, the boundary should proceed up Wellington Road (Nos.2-36) and include the 3-storey houses on the north side (Nos.15-25). And in addition, Nos.1-5 Castledown Avenue, these Edwardian properties compliment Nos.6-10 Castledown Avenue, which are already in the conservation area and frame views across the important open space of St Andrews cemetery.

- 8.7 Listed buildings. While Hastings overall has a fairly high coverage of listed buildings, they are very much concentrated in the Old Town where listing criteria, particularly age, are more easily met. However, as the local list survey elicits more detail of significant unlisted buildings, there may well be a case for listing the best examples.
- 8.8 Local list. In partnership with local community interest, the Council has embarked on the preparation of a local list for Hastings. These are buildings which, although they do not qualify for statutory listing nationally, are nonetheless important in the local context. Inclusion on the local list adds to the weight that can be given to their significance when they are considered in the terms of the NPPF.
- 8.9 Local listing will be important in the town centre where few buildings pre-date the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century after which statutory listing becomes much more selective. In the course of this appraisal, a number of buildings have been identified that, it is recommended, should be considered for local listing. These are set out in Part 2 of Appendix 1.
- 8.10 Positive buildings. These are buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, and thus help to define its special interest, even though they are not nationally or locally listed. They are noted on the Heritage Assets map 4 at Appendix 2. Positive buildings can be regarded as heritage assets in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Planning

- 8.11 Policy. It is important that planning policies, as they evolve through the development plan, should continue to deliver expectations for safeguarding heritage assets and the promotion of the historic environment as a powerful driver of regeneration and economic prosperity.
- 8.12 Development management. Controlling development for the long-term future of Hastings is a major role for realising policy ideals. Consideration should be given to secure good design through a design review process. However, it is likely that this will only apply to major cases. It is important, therefore, to ensure that design review includes a teaching and learning element so that the principles of good design can be applied in all cases and best practice becomes everyday practice.
- 8.13 Article 4 directions. The principle of using Article 4 directions to control permitted development

is already established in Hastings. However, existing directions restricting painting, made in 1952, are clearly in need of updating in terms of both their scope and their legal basis. While there are few properties in the inner conservation areas that are single dwellings, to which the full scope of a direction might apply, colour is a major issue when there are so many rendered buildings. A major overhaul of Article 4 directions is, therefore, recommended.

- 8.14 Compliance. The Council already indicates, through its website, a willingness to use the available powers for enforcement as may be necessary. However, this should give a clear priority to action in respect of the historic environment because it is so irreplaceable.
- 8.15 An objective understanding of the existing position can be gained from a photographic survey, which provides a baseline for measuring change, monitoring building condition or providing evidence for enforcement. Photographic records should be updated at least every four years because works carried out in breach of planning permission, or contrary to a condition of an existing permission, cannot be enforced against after four years. (There is no such time limit in respect of enforcement related to listed building consent).
- 8.16 While a photographic survey will provide the necessary evidential baseline, it is important that the area is monitored on a day-to-day basis so that action against unauthorised works can be taken promptly. This function can be performed informally by local amenity groups as much as by Council officers.
- 8.17 Prompt action in response to unlawful works is vital. It is important, therefore, that procedures are already in place for the effective service of urgent works, amenity notices.

## **Buildings**

- 8.18 Condition. It is clear from the analysis of the character areas that there are issues arising from the condition of buildings. These can result from unauthorized work, in which case there may be a compliance issue, or from the neglect of maintenance. Remedies for the latter are more likely to rest with economic regeneration initiatives that can give added value to repairs and more beneficial uses.
- 8.19 In any case, a buildings-at-risk survey is advocated in order to establish the scale of the problem. This should be linked to a buildings-at-risk strategy to ensure that problems are addressed through heritage management.
- 8.20 Loss of detail. Over time, many of the buildings in the town centre have lost architectural details. This is particularly the case with stucco embellishments, such as cornices, and architraves, where removal is no doubt simpler than repair. Notable examples include the former Queens Hotel and Yates PH.
- 8.21 A number of historical shopfronts have survived in Hastings. Indeed, No.21 Robertson Street is listed because of its Art Nouveau shopfront. However, many have been altered to meet modern needs or expediency leaving the original form as a matter for interpretation.
- 8.22 The fact that very few of the buildings in the town centre are single dwellings means that material alterations to most buildings are subject to planning controls. It may be, therefore, that further loss of detail can be prevented through a robust definition of what amounts to 'material' change.

- 8.23 Maintenance. There is considerable scope for the publication of guidance on maintaining buildings in order to prevent deterioration and higher costs in the long run. There are several national sources that can assist with this including Maintain Our Heritage, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings and the Institute of Historic Building conservation.

### New development

- 8.24 Opportunities for entirely new development in the town centre tend to be limited by the high density of heritage assets. However, there is scope for righting some of the wrongs of the past, such as the former Woolworth store, now Sports Direct, which has lost all its qualities and now blights Albert Road, a significant link between the centre and the seafront. The Poundstretcher store similarly blights the south side of Wellington Square.
- 8.25 While quality can be promoted in such cases by design review, it will be helpful to set out the Council's expectations in advance through development briefing in order to avoid unrealistic aspirations. This is especially important where major gains stand to be achieved for the character and quality of the historic environment. Development briefing can establish the scope for development and the design expectations, within the constraints of the conservation area. On the other hand it also provides certainty for investors.
- 8.26 Raising the quality of development is equally important in smaller cases. Owners and occupiers can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals, and the Council can maintain meaningful development management responses through staff training and guidance.

### Public realm

- 8.27 Section 6 and the GVA report both note the poor existing condition of the public realm in Hastings. This results from un-coordinated improvements, the clutter of unnecessary signage and street furniture, and low levels of maintenance. For instance, the well-intentioned improvements to the car park in front of Pelham Crescent has introduced lighting masts on the axis of St Mary in the Castle that detract from the principal view.
- 8.27 Significant enhancements can be achieved through the adoption of a streetscape manual, building on the regional advice in the English Heritage '*Streets for All*' publication. Restricting the palette of materials, details and furniture will improve the appearance of the town centre, making it more legible and reducing maintenance liabilities.
- 8.28 It is vital that major spaces, such as the hub of the radial streets at the centre of the town, are kept free of clutter so that they can be defined more by the animation of activities and surrounding buildings. However, there is an important opportunity to reinstate a focus to replace the Prince Albert Memorial clock-tower that was removed in 1973.
- 8.29 Trees are not common in the town centre, but they do make an important contribution, for instance to Wellington Square, Castle Hill Passage and Cambridge Road. A few trees have been introduced more recently with mixed success and this demonstrates how vital it is to specify appropriate species and planting practice. For mature trees, succession planning is also important in order to maintain the desired levels of tree coverage.



## Economics

- 8.30 The need for regeneration in Hastings demonstrates that its market performance is not as buoyant as it should be. While major capital investments as diverse as shopping centres and public realm improvements can have a significant effect, they can also have the unintended consequence of diverting attention from the existing fabric.
- 8.31 There is therefore significant potential for the injection of external funding, for instance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to improve the existing building stock not only to benefit the appearance of the historic environment but also to create added value within the buildings so that they are more capable of sustaining future maintenance.