ASHFORD
BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN

Conservation Area Assessment

Great Chart

Conservation Areas are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."

Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve all aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

There are 43 Conservation Areas in Ashford Borough.

GREAT CHART CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

AREA APPRAISAL [Brief, objective description of Conservation Area - scale, location, other special characteristics]

The Great Chart Conservation Area is linear in form with built development extending along either side of The Street, which is the main road through the village. It is predominantly residential in character apart from one or two commercial outlets.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	The land is fairly flat from the Cricket Ground at the east end up to Ivy Cottages, thereafter the land rises towards the Church which forms a focal point at the western end and begins to dip again after Court Lodge Farm. The Parish Church is situated on the highest point of the village and indeed the surrounding area and the silhouette of the tower of the Church dominates the skyline.
archaeological significance and potential of the area	

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	The Conservation Area is characterised by a tightly knit ribbon of development extending the length of The Street, on both sides of the road. The majority of properties are small terraced houses, located close to the road with very small front garden areas. Interspersed are large detached houses set in spacious and enclosed curtilages.
the use of distinctive and traditional building materials	Ragstone, orange brick and Kent Peg tiles are the distinctive type of building materials. Most of the houses are tile hung at first floor level (particularly decorative tile hanging). Along The Street the majority of properties have either low picket fencing, iron railings or low brick walls along their frontages. Dutch gables as an architectural feature are extremely popular. Such gables are found on the village hall, the school, the Swan Inn Public House, 36 The Street, South Lodge and the porches to 1, 2 and 5 Ivy Cottages.
the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area	Along The Street itself there are no trees of any specific interest although many of the larger properties have well cut hedges. Most of the important trees in the Conservation Area are found in the grounds of Chatsworth House and particularly especially along the northern and eastern boundary of this property. A further important tree is found in the rear garden area of the Swan Inn Public House.
the prevailing or former uses of buildings in the area, and the influence of this on plan form and building types	The redundant school buildings have planning permission for conversion into three residential units. The former Methodist Chapel was converted into residential use approximately seven years ago.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
historical evolution	Court Lodge Farmhouse is the oldest property in the village. It is an example of a medieval 13th Century Stone House. The Parish Church adjacent to this building was built in the 14th and 15th Century and is a typical example of a Church found in the Kentish countryside. The Toke family have a very strong influence on the village form. The village school was built by the Rev. William Toke of Godinton. The Alms Houses were founded in 1583 by Francis Toke and rebuilt by Nicholas Roundel Toke in 1835 and The Cottage dating back to the 17th Century has a porch in the shape of a Dutch gable containing a cartouche with a crest of the Toke family. The other residential properties have grown up along The Street interspersed with these older properties.
the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside.	The Parish Church lies on the highest point of the village and indeed the surrounding area. From the Churchyard there are excellent views of the lower part of the village, the adjacent countryside and distant views of Ashford town itself.
the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area	There is a considerable problem with on-street parking along The Street during the dinner time and evening periods from customers of The Hooden Horse Public House.
identification of features that detract from the special character of the area and that may provide sites where change could be encouraged	Ornamental butterflies attached to the front elevation and roof of 12 The Street detract from the setting of the Listed Building and indeed the row of terraced properties. The former school site is also beginning to get fairly overgrown and has two tatty notice boards in the front garden. The garage site, although commercially important, is not visually attractive.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area	The car park adjacent to the Village Hall provides an important area for parking for both the Church and the Village Hall but is fairly bland in its appearance with no form of landscaping. Swan Lodge located opposite the Swan Inn Public House is a modern, two storey dwelling which adds no character to the setting of the Conservation Area. It needs to be included within the boundary however, due to the linear nature of development along The Street.
the existence of any threats to the area	There may be a continued worsening of parking problems along The Street due to the popularity of the Hooden Horse Public House.

OUTCOMES

Area boundary	Hadley House and West Gates which are both modern two storey houses are located in the former grounds of South Lodge and Chatsworth respectively. These properties should be deleted from the Conservation Area as they do not represent the general character of the more traditional properties found along The Street. The boundary at Court Lodge Farm should be amended to distinguish between the original farmyard and the newer agricultural buildings erected beyond this. The adjacent field should also be included as it acts as an important backdrop to Court Lodge Farmhouse and also St Mary's Church.
Potential Article 4 Directions	
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	
Potential improvement schemes	The Department is considering approaching English Heritage about the possible listing of South Lodge and 36 The Street which have been built to replicate the traditional architectural style found on the older historic buildings such as the Village Hall and the Swan Public House.

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