ASHFORD
BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN

Conservation Area Assessment

Pluckley Station

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.

PLUCKLEY STATION CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

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

Pluckley Station is a small settlement which lies one mile south of Pluckley village. The railway station which is still in active use has a great impact upon the settlement in terms of people using it and associated car parking. The settlement is primarily residential in character although there are also some other commercial uses such as the coalyard, brickworks and a garage, but these lie just outside the Conservation Area. The settlement is a mixture of some traditional and more modern buildings. There are examples of Dering style buildings, in particular the Dering Arms Inn a large dominant building in a prominent position within the Conservation Area at the junction with Station Road. It is also the only Listed Building at present in the Conservation Area. Within the centre of the settlement is an undeveloped "green area" with a number of mature trees which re-enforces the rural nature and setting of the settlement.

The Conservation Area was originally designated on 19 February 1987.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	Station Road is the main road travelling through the settlement . Two other roads in the Conservation Area are culs-de sac which meet at a junction with Station Road. A bridge across the railway forms part of the southern approach into the Conservation Area. Properties follow the road pattern and are visible in the street scene.
archaeological significance and potential of the area	There are no ancient monuments or areas of archaeological safeguarding in the settlement.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	In the centre of the village is a "green open space" containing dense vegetation and mature trees opposite the Station. This emphasises the rural setting of the settlement and helps soften the visual impact and use of the adjoining station car parking area. There is a walkway which travels through it. Building lines are generally close to and visible in the street scene.
the use of distinctive and traditional building materials	There is a mixture of materials. Ragstone is prominent on some of the major buildings, in particular the Dering Arms Inn , Stone Lodge, Grove House and 1 and 2 The Grove which are of particular architectural and historic merit. Other buildings have brick fascias of differing type and quality from older more traditional buildings such as Dering Terrace to the newer infill sites, such as the two detached dwellings by the Station. Clay roof tiles are also prevalent in the area on the older buildings. Slate is also used on some buildings.
the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area	There is a major group of trees in the central undeveloped grassed area by the car park and north of the coalyard. This helps soften the impact of the car parking and re-emphasises the rural nature and setting of the settlement. There is also dense vegetation and mature trees on either side of the southern approach along Station Road when travelling into the settlement over the railway bridge. This helps screen the settlement and provides a rural approach from this direction.
the prevailing or former uses of buildings in the area, and the influence of this on plan form and building types	The main use of buildings in the area is residential although there are major non-residential buildings such the Dering Arms and the Station. The Station has had a significant impact upon the area, in terms of associated commercial uses, such as the coalyard and car parking from commuters.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
historical evolution	The Dering Arms is the only Listed Building in the Conservation Area that dates around 1840. There are other traditional Dering style buildings in close proximity such as Dering Terrace. The station has influenced development in the area with associated developments such as the coalyard and the Station Master's house. There are examples of modern "infill" development at "Hinton" a post war bungalow of no architectural or historic merit which does not compliment the Dering style dwellings opposite it. There are two detached houses by the Station built in the mid-1980s. Outside the Conservation Area. there has been post war expansion of the settlement with the bungalows at Dering Close which impacts visually upon the Conservation Area.
the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside.	From a southern direction the settlement is not visible in the wider landscape until over the railway bridge. From the north, the settlement is visible over open and flat landscape and visible from footpaths running to the north and east of the settlement. There are views of the surrounding open countryside from the northern part of the Conservation Area along Station Road, an along the footpath by No. 1 The Grove going out of the settlement.
the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area	The railway station has a significant impact upon the settlement in terms of parking of cars by its users which often spills over from the assigned car parking area. This increases noise and disturbance levels in the settlements in particular during peak use hour times, and overspill parking may damage verges. There are no overly poor hoardings or advertisements. The station sign by the car park is quite prominent and could be improved. Due to parking there are excessive road markings in the area. There are also some poor road surfaces, in particular "The Grove". In front of Dering Terrace some new vehicular accesses have been installed with differing hardstanding surfaces which do not enhance the uniformity of the Terrace.
identification of features that detract from the special character of the area and that may provide sites where change could be encouraged	A corrugated lean-to on a prominent elevation of the Dering Arms Inn. The old nursery buildings at the former Grove Nurseries could also be improved. A better uniformity of surfaces in the front of Dering Terrace.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area	The parking area around the Station although this is not always sufficient to prevent overspill parking elsewhere.
the existence of any threats to the area	The excessive use of cars in the settlement from the Station not only on the "rural" character of the settlement but physical harm from damage to verges and roads. Potential alterations to the unlisted Dering style buildings under Permitted Development Rights, in particular fenestration and material changes.

OUTCOMES

Area boundary	The area of redundant nursery buildings of poor quality around Grove Nurseries was reviewed. It does not enhance the Conservation Area, however, the site now appears to be incorporated into the curtilage of No. 1 The Grove, so its removal is not recommended. It is an area to encourage improvement if possible.
Potential Article 4 Directions	On the non-listed Dering style houses to prevent permitted development minor external changes, in particular fenestration and materials. However, this could be controlled by requesting these buildings to be listed, in particular, Dering Terrace, Stone Lodge, Grove House and 1 and 2 The Grove.
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	The green square area or triangle in the heart of the settlement with a pleasant walkway through should be retained free of development as a green amenity space re-emphasising the rural setting of the settlement and softening the impact of car parking from the Station.
Potential improvement schemes	Providing an improved and unobtrusive parking facilities for the Station.

Officer: M. DAVIES

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