ASHFORD
BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN

Conservation Area Assessment

Smallhythe

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.

SMALLHYTHE CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

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

Smallhythe is a small sporadically develped linear settlement located along the B2082 Smallhythe Road approximately 1½ miles south of Tenterden. The settlement is surrounded by open countryside forming part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It contains a number of important Listed Buildings, in particular two groups - St John the Baptist's Church and Priest's House, and Smallhythe Place and barn which is a tourist attraction owned by The National Trust. The settlement is primarily residential but there is a major commercial use at Tenterden Vineyards which includes a shop, tea-room, museum and Garden Centre. The settlement is well spread out and includes a number of open spaces in between buildings emphasising the rural setting of the settlement.

ASPECT UNDER CONSIDERATION	COMMENT
topography/physical structure and its relationship to the sites topography	The settlement is linear in character following the B2082 Smallhythe Road. This is the only road apart from Spots Lane a small cul de sac. The Smallhythe Road rises in gradient from the south to north and development is spread out. There is no pedestrian footway. The southern entrance into the Conservation Area is marked by a bridge over the Reading sewer. The properties are close to and very visible in the street scene.
archaeological significance and potential of the area	There are no ancient monuments but St John the Baptist's Church is an area of archaeological safeguarding.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality.	There are a number of open spaces between properties forming part of fields. At the northern part of the Conservation Area is a large car park serving Tenterden Vineyards. A graveyard surrounds St John the Baptist's Church. There is also a substantial orchard between the Priest House and Smallhythe Place. Smallhythe Place (Ellen Terry's residence) acts as a tourist site attracting visitors around its grounds. Other spaces are residential curtilages around houses. St John the Baptist's Church is a dominant building visible in the skyline in particular when viewed from the north along the Smallhythe Road.
the use of distinctive and traditional building materials	A number of dwellings have traditional clay roof tiles, tile hanging and red brick fascias such as Spots House, Bologna and Martins Cottage. There are two distinctive timber framed buildings of particular importance - Priest's House and Smallhythe Place. At the northern part of the Conservation Area, the boundary includes some of the buildings at Tenterden Vineyards which are of no particular merit. The enclosures in the area are generally low hedgerow and some low fences.
the contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, or other organic elements to the character of the area	There are a number of open spaces/fields between buildings which look out to open countryside. Smallhythe Road is lined with hedgerow through the settlement. There are also a number of trees along the highway verge and a prominent orchard between the Priest's House and Smallhythe Place. This produces a pleasant 'Green Corridor' through the settlement and emphasises its rural character and setting.
the prevailing or former uses of buildings in the area, and the influence of this on plan form and building types	The majority of the buildings in the area are residential. The main commercial site is, Tenterden Vineyards although the current Conservation Area only partly covers it. This has resulted in associated developments such as new buildings and the Car Park. The site also has other facilities such as a shop, tea room, nursery and museum which attract visitors and tourists which with Smallhythe Place is an important tourist attraction in the area. The other non-residential building is St John the Baptist's Church which is a prominent building in the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
historical evolution	St John the Baptist Church, Priest House and Smallhythe Place date from the 15th Century. The other Listed Buildings on the western side of the Smallhythe Road date from the 18th Century. There are some more modern developments down Spots Lane and at Tenterden Vineyards, but little else. The facilities at the Vineyard have resulted in increased traffic and visitors. There is further linear development of the settlement northwards along Smallhythe Road, outside the Conservation Area.
the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside.	The settlement lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is surrounded by open countryside. To the south is a characteristic Wealden open landscape. The rural settlement is quite well screened by mature vegetation and trees when entering from this direction. The undeveloped open gaps between buildings allow views over open countryside from within the Conservation Area, in particular to the south and east. Approaching from the north is characterised by more sporadic built linear development and dense vegetation before entering the Conservation Area.
the extent of loss, intrusion, or damage sustained by an area	Smallhythe Road is often a busy road travelling through the settlement. Cars often travel at speed resulting in intrusive noise. The Vineyard has sometimes displayed excessive adverts along the road verge. The signs relating to Smallhythe Place and the Church are sympathetic to the character of the area.
identification of features that detract from the special character of the area and that may provide sites where change could be encouraged	Over-intensive advertising at the Vineyard.

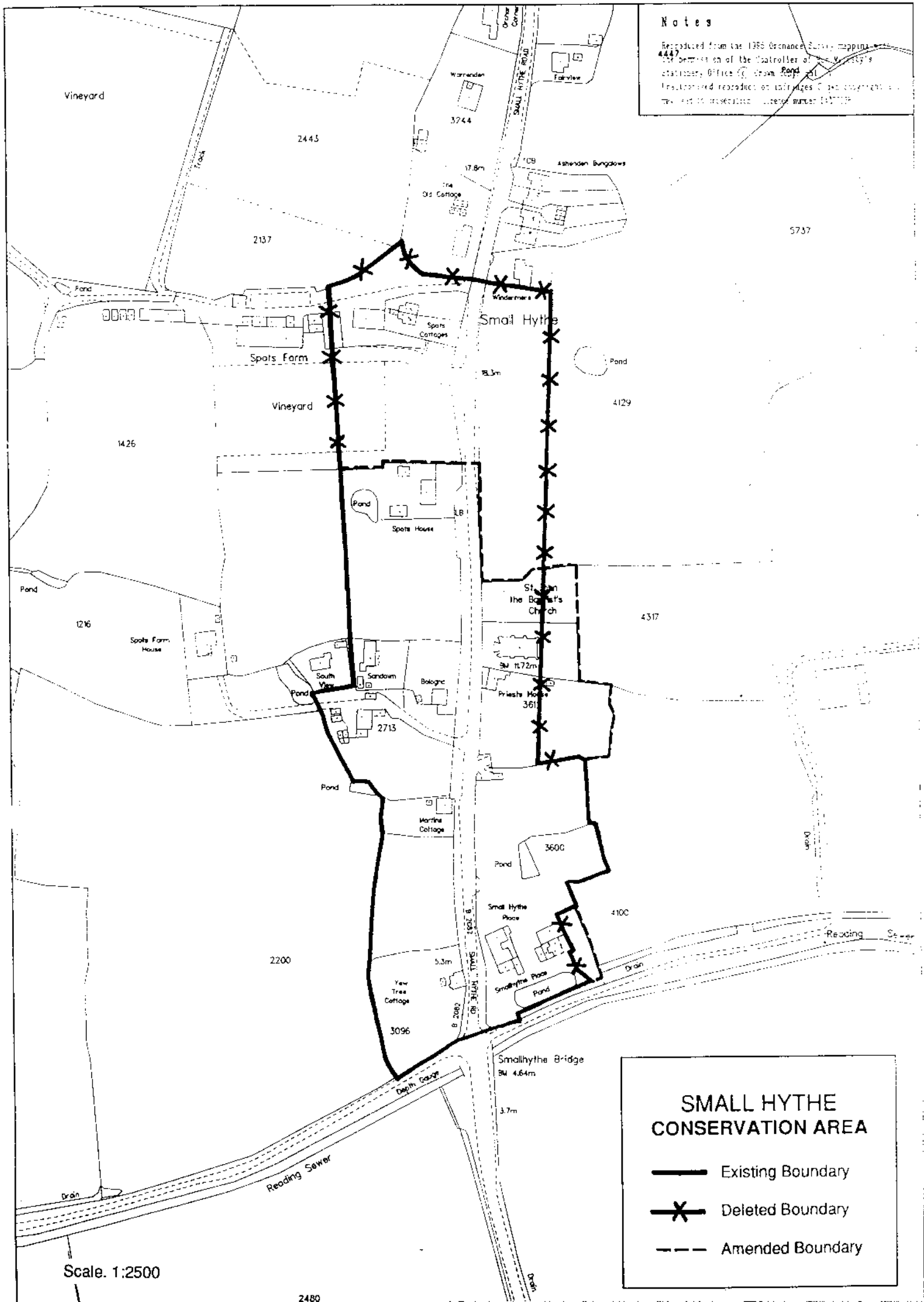
AREA APPRAISAL	COMMENT
the existence of any neutral areas - those that neither enhance nor detract from the character of the conservation area	The parking area serving Smallhythe Place located just outside the southern boundary of the Conservation Area provides for parking not available within the Conservation Area.
the existence of any threats to the area	Potential alterations to the unlisted buildings at Spots House and Yew Tree Cottage under permitted development rights. These are located in prominent locations along the Smallhythe Road adjacent to the main groups of listed buildings in the settlement. Fenestration and material alterations in particular could have an adverse impact upon the character of the area.

OUTCOMES

Area boundary	The northern part of the Conservation Area runs through Tenterden Vineyards and a building on the site. The Conservation Area includes a car park serving the Vineyard and a Garden Centre. Spots Cottages located closeby are of no outstanding merit. This is an area of no particular merit to include within the Conservation Area and is more logical that it should be reduced to the boundary of Spots House. The same applies on the opposite side of Smallhythe Road where the existing boundary runs through an open field and includes part of the curtilage of Windermere, a chalet bungalow of no outstanding merit. The boundary is proposed to be reduced to the field north of St John the Baptist Church. Minor changes are proposed to include more of this field that forms part of the setting of the Church, the Church graveyard and part of the curtilage of Smallhythe Place not currently included.
Potential Article 4 Directions	Permitted development, material and fenestration changes to the prominent non-listed buildings along Smallhythe Road and controlling unacceptable enclosures. However, there is no evidence of real and specific threat that will occur.
Site Policies (proposals and protection)	A general presumption against development within the open spaces between the premises as these emphasise the rural nature and setting of the site.
Potential improvement schemes	A pavement to link Smallhythe Place and the Car Park.

Officer: M DAVIES

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Notes
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Vineyard
Warnenden
Fairview
Small Hythe Road
Orchard Corner
Ashenden Bungalows
The Old Cottage
Track
Pond
Windermere
Sports Cottages
Small Hythe
Sports Farm
Vineyard
Spots House
St Mary the Blessed Virgin's Church
Sports Farm House
South View
Sandown
Bologne
Priests House
Martins Cottage
Small Hythe Place
Yew Tree Cottage
Smallhythe Bridge
Reading Sewer
Drain
Depth Gauge
Scale. 1:2500
2480
SMALL HYTHE
CONSERVATION AREA
Existing Boundary
Deleted Boundary
Amended Boundary