

# HEADCORN CONSERVATION AREA

## Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## INTRODUCTION

### The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

The concept of conservation areas was first brought into being by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, but the relevant legislation now is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. This act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Designation as a conservation area makes additional controls available to the local authority. Briefly these include the control of demolition of unlisted buildings, more restricted permitted development rights for single dwelling houses and protection of trees.

In addition to these enhanced powers, the local authority is also required when dealing with applications for planning permission to have special regard to the question of whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. (Section 72.1 of the Act) There is a presumption that developments which would not preserve or enhance this special character should be refused planning permission.



Church of St Peter and St Paul Headcorn

## Background to the Appraisal

Local authorities are required, by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to carry out reviews of conservation area boundaries (Section 69.2 of the Act). This is to consider whether the boundaries should be increased or decreased depending on the continued contribution that the area to its special character. It will also assist in the process of making informed decisions on planning applications where it is important to value and take into account the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.

The most appropriate form for fulfilling these requirements is the production of a conservation area appraisal for each individual conservation area.

Historic England published an advisory booklet on the form which conservation area appraisals should take in February 2019 and this current appraisal has been prepared in accordance with these guidelines. It is intended to identify the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural character of the conservation area, to analyse how they interact and impact upon one another and to explain how the area has developed into its current form. It will also seek to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the conservation area and sites and features which detract from its character and appearance.

The clear understanding of the conservation area's qualities which the appraisal produces will provide suggestions for future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual proposals may be assessed

## HISTORY OF DESIGNATION

Headcorn Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council 1977. Despite some development in the village and its surroundings it retains the same boundary today.



**Current conservation area boundary**

## **GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**



**View of the High Street looking east – the contrast between the northern and southern sides of the street is immediately apparent**

Headcorn Conservation Area has two distinct parts. There is the area centred on the High Street which is characterised by its high level of development. The second area, on the other hand, to the west of North Street and centred on the church still has the feel of a country hamlet.



### **Church Walk**

The eastern area, around the High Street, is a bustling, vibrant area which is the commercial heart of Headcorn with generally closely packed properties and little by way of green space. The exception to this is part of the southern side of the High Street. The street is wide particularly so at the western end and here are the usual urban issues of traffic and parking.

The western area by contrast is an area of quiet and narrow lanes and roads (some too narrow for vehicles) where the only significant functions other than housing is the church, a nursery school and the parish office. This is an area with large areas of green space and well established trees, of well tended gardens and a peaceful environment.



**Church Walk viewed from the churchyard**

## **LOCATION AND SETTING**

Headcorn is both a small market settlement and a parish in the Borough of Maidstone. The village is situated 13 km south east of Maidstone. It straddles the important A 274 road connection between Maidstone and Tenterden.

The village is located on a geological area known as the Low Weald. This is characterised by clay soils which do not naturally drain well. The main river close to Headcorn is the Beult which passes the village to the south and west before joining with the Medway further downstream. Headcorn is on the fringes of the flood plain of the Beult.

The area was originally cleared for the feeding of swine (on acorns from the Wealden forest). It has subsequently proved to be valuable agricultural land and this has been the basis of the economy ever since.



**A well-established hedgerow typical of the countryside around Headcorn**

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Archaeology**

There has been very little archaeological investigation carried out either within the conservation area or to the wider area. The oldest discovery in the vicinity was a Neolithic (4,000-2,500 BC) flint axe found in the bed of a local stream. A bronze palstave was found in 1994 at New House Farm.

New House Farm is also where evidence of a Roman presence was found in 1993 in the form of evidence of Romano-British farmstead.

There is some evidence of a medieval moated site close to Witherden Farm and another with a moat was found near Brook Wood Farm. The remains of what is most likely a medieval watermill and mill pond was discovered close to Moat Farm although this has subsequently been destroyed. Another probable medieval moated site was identified at Bletchenden. Wider afield An archaeological evaluation carried out at Ulcombe Road in 2018 found late bronze age, late iron age/Roman and late medieval features. There are also several medieval/post medieval moated sites within the vicinity. The Conservation Area itself contains numerous standing medieval buildings, all of which will be accompanied by archaeological remains. Groundworks within the Conservation Area boundary have the potential to impact on archaeological remains associated with both the prehistoric and historic settlement in the area.

### **Development History**

The name Headcorn probably derives from the existence of a fallen tree trunk possibly used as a bridge and belonging to Hydeca – Hedekaruna although this is not recorded in the Domesday Book. There is reference to the village in Domesday Monachorum (an ecclesiastical survey contemporary with the Domesday Book). By 1240 the settlement was known as Hedecrune and by 1610 this the name had morphed into Hedcorne.

The very earliest references to there being a settlement here are in charters made by Kings Wilfred and Offa (Mercian Kings in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Offa is the same ruler that instigated Offa's Dyke which separated Mercia from Powys. The settlement is likely to have grown up in a clearing (aka den) used by pigs who were driven from the northern parts of the county to feed there on acorns which were plentiful in the Wealden forest.

In 1239 King Henry III gave the den of Headcorn to the monastery at Ospringe close to Faversham. The monastery held its position in Headcorn until the institutions were dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1530s. During their time of tenure the monastery was granted a weekly market – to be held on Thursday – and an annual fair to take place on 29<sup>th</sup> June on the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul (later changed to 12 June). The markets took place at the widest part of the High Street close to the church and spilled over into what is now known as Parsons Meadow. The fair (known as Leanstock Fair) continued until it was closed down in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The ownership of any monastery property was passed to St John's College Cambridge in 1516 and remained with the college until it was sold in recent times with the Parish Council buying the Meadow and adjacent land.

The manor house (Rushford Manor) was found at the east end of the High Street. It was rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The building to the west of the church known as Headcorn Manor is neither a manor house nor a vicarage but was most likely built as the home of a wealthy yeoman.



#### **The building known as Headcorn Manor**

During the long reign of Edward III in the fourteenth century the Kentish system of governance known as Gavelkind gave rise to a pool of labour who were not required to work on land – this included migrant workers from Flanders who had pre-existing skills in cloth making. Through a process of proto-industrialisation weaving and broadcloth making activity developed, centred on Cranbrook, taking advantage of the local labour market. During this period Headcorn grew very wealthy and some notable houses were constructed by those who had become rich. Good examples are Shakespeare House and Cloth Hall both at the western end of the High Street.

There was a reaction to the uneven distribution of wealth and the exploitation of workers in the rebellion of Wat Tyler in 1381. Later in 1430 at least 80 men from Headcorn took part in Jack Cade's rebellion.

After the decline of cloth industry in the area which began at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Headcorn reverted to agriculture being its primary economic activity. While the industry thrived there were a number of cloth halls built in Headcorn. Usually and not surprisingly they were built in the Flemish style with their gable ends facing the street. The buildings combined a private house with an office and a warehouse. Two survive in Headcorn built late in this period of prosperity. They are the Cloth Hall on North Street and Shakespeare House on the south side of the High Street.



### **Cloth Hall and Shakespeare House**

In the post medieval period the agricultural activity was mainly concerned with arable farming and stockbreeding. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fruit and hop growing became predominant but by the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a return to arable farming. The pattern of small fields surrounding Headcorn reflects the layout which was established in the medieval period.

There were at least six bridges across the rivers around Headcorn. Stephen's Bridge (named after Archbishop Stephen Langton who may have ordered its building in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century) crosses the river Beult in Water Lane. This along with Hawkenbury Bridge (which is mainly in the parish of Staplehurst) which also crosses the Beult river are the most significant. Other bridges around Headcorn are Pell Bridge (now a footbridge over the Beult), Frank's Bridge which crosses the river Sherway, Kettle Bridge under which flows the Hammer stream and a bridge over the School stream in Moat Road.



### **Hawkenbury Bridge**

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Headcorn had four operating windmill. There is little known about two of these but the pair known as Black Mill and White Mill are better documented. Black Mill was built in the 1760's as a smock mill. That means the sails were attached to a cap at the top of the mill which could be turned into the prevailing wind. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century Black Mill and the steam mill beside it were redundant and it was demolished in 1910. White Mill, also a smock mill, survived longer finally being pulled down in 1952 having been built in 1819.

Interestingly although there are many examples of water mills in the villages around Headcorn there would seem to have been none of any significance in or around the village despite it lying beside the Beult river.

There are known to have been two forges operating in Headcorn in the 18<sup>th</sup> century – one was in Lenham Road at the junction with Ulcombe Road (demolished in 1965) and the other was nearby in Forge Lane and operated with two furnaces until 1932.

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century there were a number of inns operating within the village. The George Inn and the Kings Arms were both on the north side of the High Street. On the south side of the High Street two 15/16<sup>th</sup> century houses were being pressed into use as the Queen Adelaide (Shakespeare House) and the Ball and Chequers (now Chequers). There was also the Old Black Horse Inn in Wheeler Street which was demolished in the 1920's.



### **Chequers – formerly the Ball and Chequers**

There are a number of roads which converge at Headcorn. Among these there were several which were toll roads. There is still a toll house surviving on Smarden Road where it joins Wheeler Street. The position of the toll hatch on the north east side has been retained and is now a window.

At that time the main means of long distance travel was the stage coach and three days a week the coach from Tenterden passed through Headcorn on its way to the George Inn on Southwark just south of London Bridge. There was also a horse drawn bus – until 1915 – which ran between Tenterden, Staplehurst, Biddenden, Town Sutton and Headcorn

In 1842 the possibility of train travel came to Headcorn. With the opening of the South Eastern Railway station in August of that year the village was connected to London

Tonbridge and Ashford. The arrival of the railway gave rise to burst of development in the village and began to break down the dominant role of agriculture as the source of economic activity. Despite this Headcorn has remained relatively small and has certainly retained intact its historic core and character.

### **Plan Progression**

There are plans available from a number of sources which give a picture of how the village has developed over time.

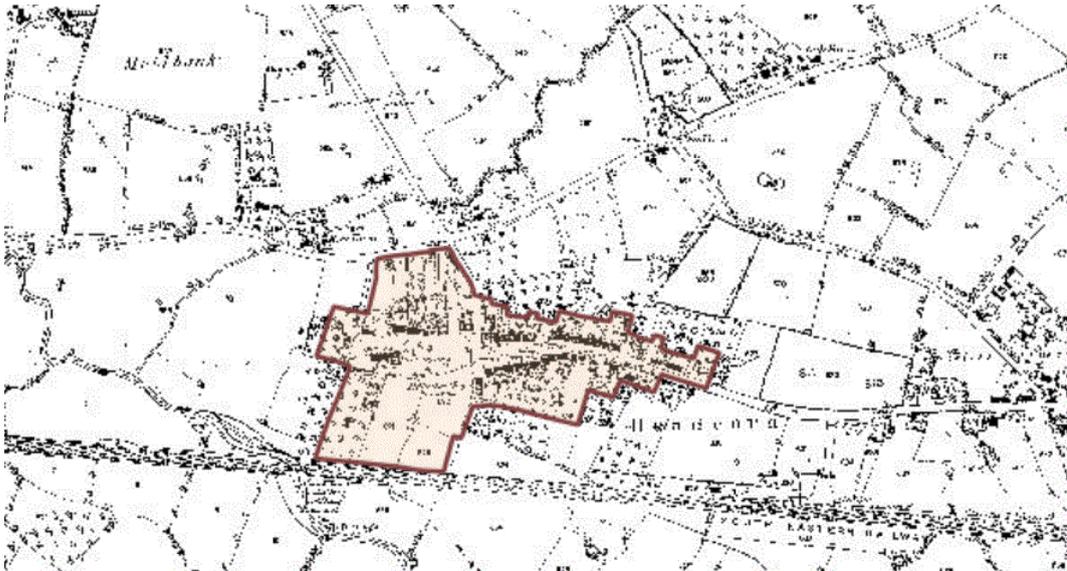


### **Plan from 1841**

The village at this time is pretty much the High Street along with its extension along what is now church walk (although North Street is already in existence). The pattern of fields is one of a patchwork of small plots which come right up to the rear of the properties lining the High Street. The line of the railway line (opened in 1842) is visible at the bottom of the map.

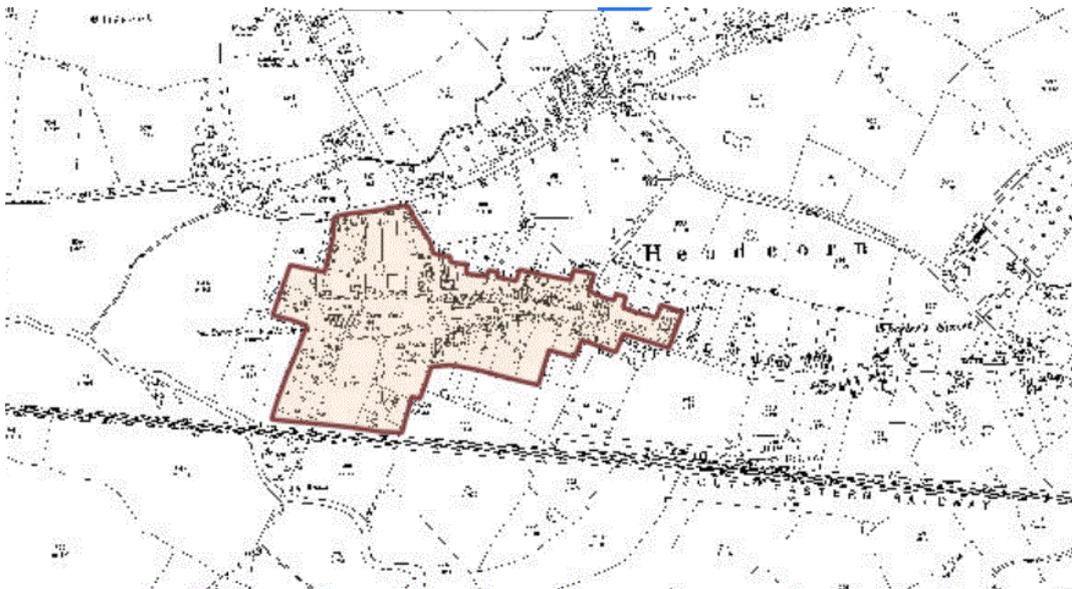


### **Detail of 1841 plan**



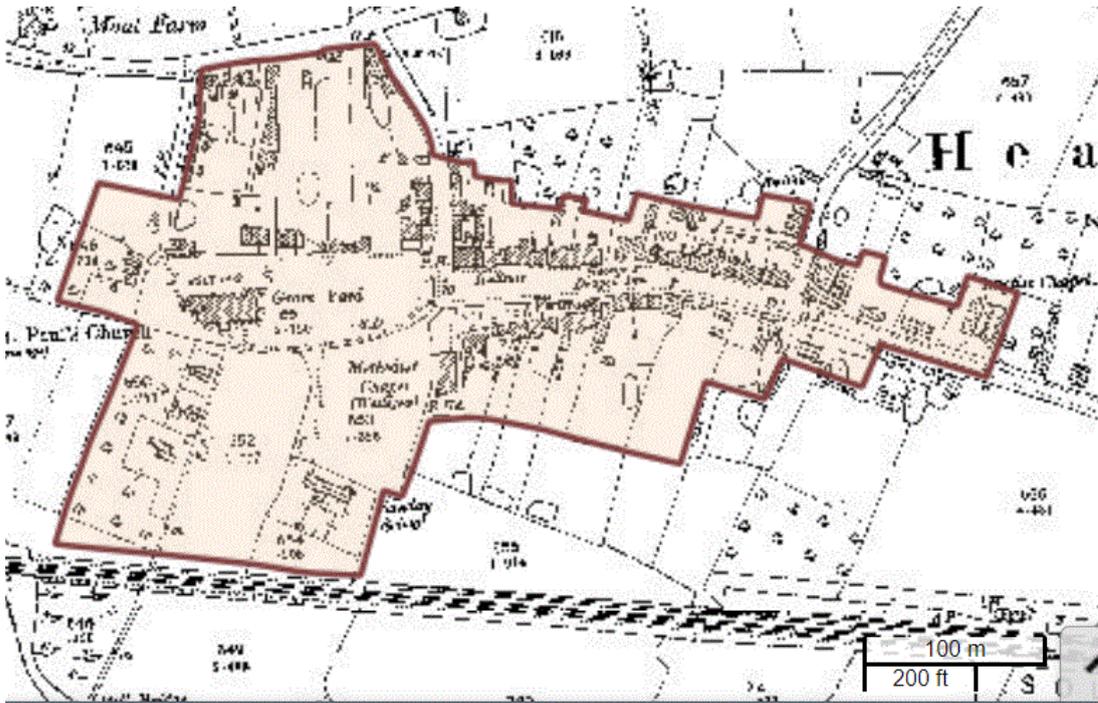
### Plan from 1886

This plan from 1886 although indistinct shows how little the village has grown in 45 years despite the arrival of the railway. The field pattern is very clear as is the number of orchards operating at that time



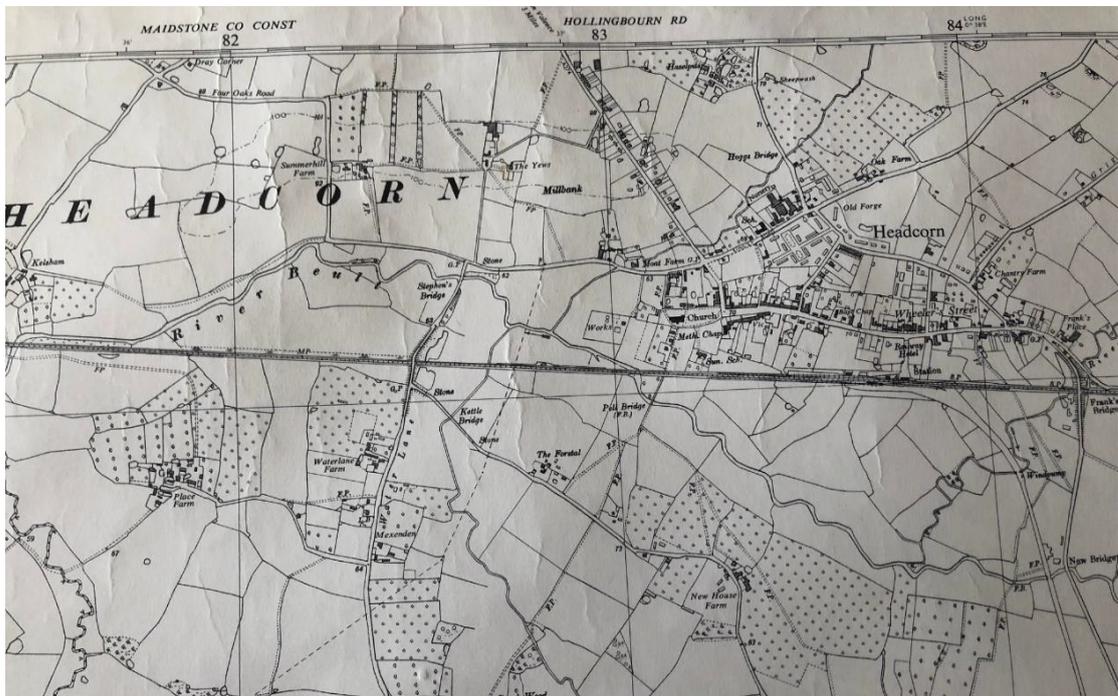
### Plan from 1908

Equally indistinct this plan from 1908 shows some growth in the village but still not a great deal. The field pattern remains largely unaltered except that most of the orchards have been absorbed into adjacent fields.



**Detail from 1908 plan**

It is very clear from this detail overlaid with the current conservation area boundary that the basis of the conservation is all in place by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Plan from 1930**

By 1930 the growth to the north is consolidated and there is some growth to the east but the amount of new development is still remarkably limited. Agricultural plots still occur right up to the rear of High Street properties.



#### Plan from 1960

This plan shows continued small scale growth mainly to the east and infilling between the High Street and Lenham Road



#### Plan from 1990

The period from 1960 to 1990 is perhaps the period of most growth in Headcorn. New development is generally to the north and east avoiding the worst of the flood plain. The central core of the village however – between the church and the station – remains consistent with and recognisable from earlier plans.



### **Plan from 2020**

This is the situation now. The core central area is very recognisable. The field pattern is also still based on numerous small plots – the lines of hedgerows are very clear as are the lines of trees where some hedgerows have been removed.

## **DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

### **High Street Character Area**

This area which includes the High Street, North Street and part of Forge Lane is generally characterised by its urban nature and bustling commercial activity.

The road for much of the length of the High Street is very wide and this sense of space is accentuated by the properties on the south western side being set back with spacious front gardens fronting the road. The street is wide enough at its western end to have a grass verge lined with mature trees. There is none of the sense of enclosure that is experienced in other High Streets around the county.



### **The western end of the High Street**

It is the width of the street which allows the rather heavy traffic to coexist with locals and visitors going about their business on foot without a feeling of congestion or that pedestrians are subservient to the motor car. In some ways the presence of vehicles, travelling at an average speed of just over 20mph, adds to the feel of activity and business.

The vista is also one that gives a sense of space since the western end of the High Street runs into the extensive churchyard of the church of St Peter and St Paul. The view along the High Street to the east is also extensive only being closed where the street curves and continues as Station Road.

The view is made up of a fascinating diverse mix of buildings with a wide range of styles and ages. The north side in particular has a strong urban structure, based on traditional burgage plots. The street on this side is virtually a continuous terrace with a few breaks to give access to the rear. There is huge variation in the form of shop fronts (though not many traditional examples survive) and in the roof forms. The unifying feature is the almost universal use of plain clay tiles on these roofs and often in tile hanging on the external walls. There are no large buildings here as the buildings tend to occupy the narrow plots of land that were established in medieval times.



### **The High Street looking east**

The south side of the High Street has a very different feel though the buildings are still packed together with only small gaps between groups of buildings but the plots are generally wider. Here there are private houses with large front gardens – very unusual in a High Street. There is a break in the houses where retail businesses take over and boldly advance to the back edge of the pavement. These are generally modern intrusions but it is still easy to imagine how the street would have looked before their arrival.

Where the building themselves do not form the plot boundary the prevalent treatments are hedging and wooden fences – often in combination. There is some use of brickwork and rarely metal railings.

The typical external materials used throughout this part of the conservation area are generally a mix of red brick (sometimes chequered or painted), white weatherboarding and tile hanging. These are the common materials though there is a certain amount of render and other materials. Roofs are almost universally red plain tiles – chimney stacks, where they exist, are generally fairly modest features in red brick.



#### **Examples of tile hanging, chimney stacks, roof tiling and weatherboarding**

Windows vary greatly in size and proportions but the pervading styles are Georgian multi pane or Victorian sash frames. It is impossible to identify a style of entrance doors as there is a huge variation in appearance of mostly modern replacements.

There is a very consistent building height throughout the village. Two storeys is the norm sometimes with attics. Single storey is rare. There are no real landmark buildings apart from the church and this means that the conservation area blends in really well with the rest of the village.

The parish council has been very careful to ensure that the streets are not cluttered with signage, lighting and street furniture. The result is successful as this element, so often intrusive, is very much in the background here. The lamp posts are a traditional style while other elements are simple and unobtrusive. That is apart from the war memorial which sits prominently at the widest part of the High Street – very much at the centre of things.

This is also quite a green village and conservation area with the churchyard so central and the mature trees which line the western end of the High Street and crowd into Days Green.

There is also a surprising number, for this urban setting, of hedges fronting building plots and of course there is often a view out of the village to the wooded countryside beyond.



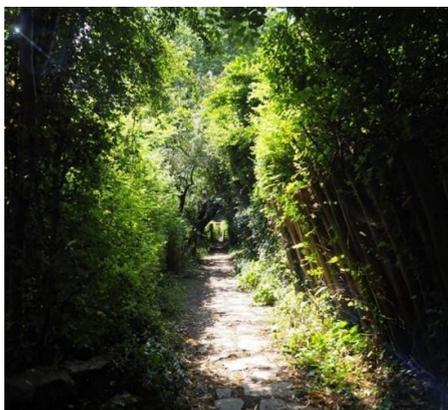
### **Hedges and Fences**

The High Street was resurfaced in 1986 using red/grey blocks on the carriageway and small paving stones or textured brick for the pavements. The surface has been well maintained and still looks smart 35 years later. Elsewhere the roads and pavements are generally tarmac.

### **Church Character Area**

This area encompasses Church Lane, Church Walk, Gooseneck Lane and part of Moat Road and the structures and land associated with these roads and paths.

The area has a much greener almost bucolic feel with a significant number of mature trees and numerous green spaces – the churchyard, Parsons Meadow (and the burial ground beyond) and the green between the arms of Church Lane. Church Walk and Gooseneck Lane are both paths too narrow for any traffic and therefore have a particularly calm feel. Only Moat Road has any real traffic – even here it is significantly less than the adjacent North Street.



**A lane close to the church**

The style of architecture is more unified in each block with the best example being Church Walk which is composed largely of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century cottages although some at the eastern end have been refaced in later centuries. Those properties in Moat Road which fall within the conservation area are almost equally homogenous even though there is a span of 200 years in their ages with numbers 1 and 2 having been there since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and Dylan House built towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even so there is a common theme with much use of white weatherboarding within a row of country cottages largely with large verdant front gardens. On close inspection the houses or pairs are quite individualistic but do have a character that unifies them.

At the centre of this area is of course the church of St Peter and St Paul. It has its origins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century but really settled on the current layout when the west tower was added at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The church and its surrounding spaces establish a true sense of peace and quiet for this while area – a huge contrast to the bustle of the High Street so close by.



### **The Church of St Pater and St Paul**

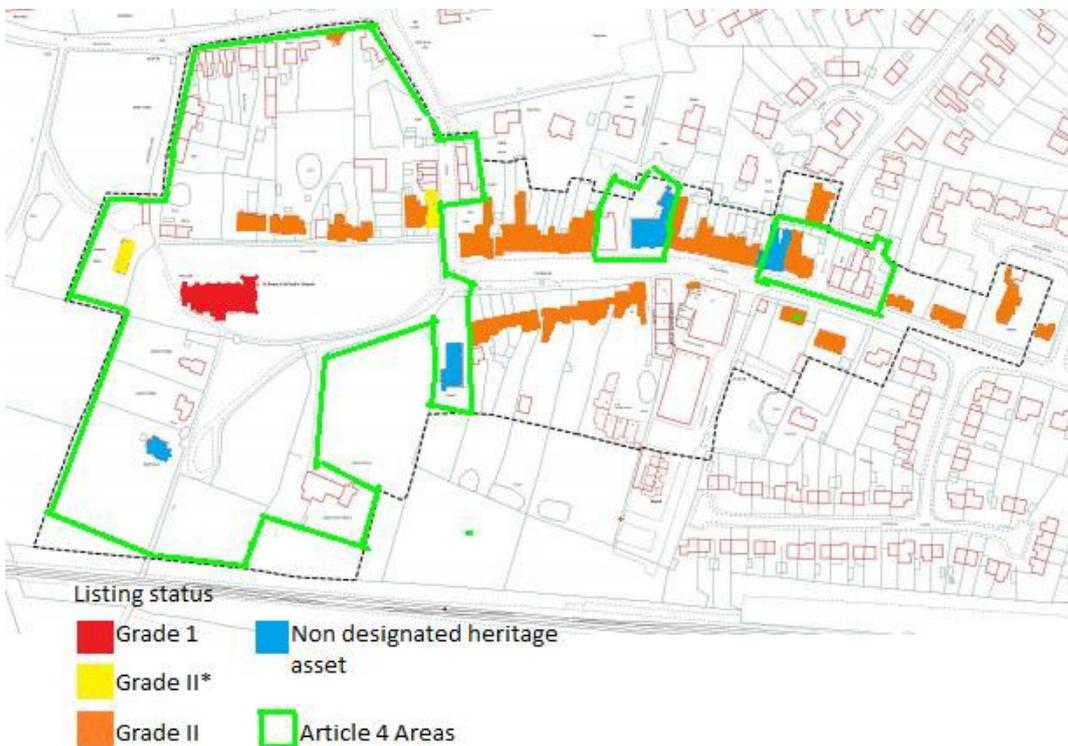
The materials used for construction in this area are a limited palette the most common materials being weatherboarding and tile hanging on timber frames but there is some brickwork in evidence and some exposed timber frame and plaster – notably to the house known as Headcorn Manor. Roofs are, of course, almost universally red plain tiles. As a contrast to all of this there is the church which under its plain tiled roof is constructed as a fine example of the use of Bethersden (not a true marble but a hard limestone that will take some polish) marble.

Windows and doors have no discernible generally applicable style of fenestration or external doors and the variety that is evident adds to the charm of this part of the conservation area.



### Doors and Windows in the conservation area – the good and the not so good

The height of buildings is generally two storeys – more consistently than in the High Street character area. Occasionally there are rooms in the roof but these tend to daylighting by roof lights rather than dormers.



Plan showing distribution and level of listings in the conservation area



**Development in these areas would seriously impact the setting of the conservation area**

### **AUDIT OF ASSETS**

A detailed description of the significant buildings and sites within the conservation area follows. These descriptions are based on examination from the street and historic map analysis. Buildings have not been examined internally or from non-public viewpoints.

Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value, historically or architecturally, to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:

- Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
- Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily
- Neutral – buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary. Replacement developments should be designed to enhance the conservation area
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character where re-development would be advantageous.

| Asset   | Status                               | Description   | Value     |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Church of St Peter and St Paul                    | Grade I<br><a href="#">1049057</a>   | Largely constructed in C14 with an early use of 'perpendicular' features. Some C13 elements survive. It was restored in C19 by Clarke and then Hills. Largely built using Bethersden marble. Rightly listed Grade 1   | Essential |
| Headcorn Manor<br>Gooseneck Lane                  | Grade II*<br><a href="#">1060835</a> | A glorious C15 2 bay Wealden house with a two storey oriel window. Although so called it was never the manor house being built either as a parsonage or by a wealthy merchant as his own house  | Essential |
| 1-5 Gooseneck Lane                                |                                      | Row of Victorian cottages or possibly out houses to Beult Cottage. Single storey in brick with plain tiled roofs – heavily restored except Beult Cottage which is 2 storey with tile hung first floor and C20 porch in stretcher bond   | Positive  |
| Glebe, Church and Heron Cottage<br>Church Walk    | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060834</a>  | Originally a C17 (or perhaps earlier) house now row. Timber framed with channelled render to left side of ground floor. First floor largely tile hung with some fishscale tiles to right gable  | Essential |
| 9 and 10 Church Walk                              | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060833</a>  | A C16 house now pair of cottages. Ground floor English bond red and grey brickwork – first floor weatherboarded. Plain tiled roof   | Essential |
| Petite, Bless and Weavers Cottages<br>Church Walk | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060832</a>  | Unknown original construction date but façade refaced C19. Largely Flemish bond red and grey brickwork – some tile hanging at first storey . Steeply pitched plain tile roof  | Essential |
| 1,2,3 and 4 Church Walk                           | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060831</a>  | C16 or C17 house now row of cottages. Façade refaced C18/19 with English bond red and grey brickwork to ground floor and tile hanging to first floor. Plain tiled roof  | Essential |
| Cloth Hall<br>North Street                        | Grade II*<br><a href="#">1344312</a> | Late C15 cloth hall with many later alterations. It was built as a centre for trade and quality control for the local weavers.<br><br>Timber framed with exposed close studding at first floor. Frame infilled with plaster or brickwork and some tile hanging. Steeply pitched plain tiled roof. Relatively modern | Essential |

|                              |  |   |          |
|------------------------------|--|---|----------|
|                              |  | ground floor extension to front with 3 bow windows and low pitched plain tiled roof.  |          |
| 1-4 North Street             |  | Row of 4 C18 simple cottages – 1 room width. Possibly timber framed with Flemish bond brickwork. Grey headers. All windows are C20 replacements. Plain tiled roof. Front doors set on back edge of pavement | Positive |
| The White Horse North Street |  | Prominent undistinguished Victorian public house built in brick with plain tiled roof with deep oversailing eaves. Very plain C20 additions to south. The main elevation is a mass of signage               | Neutral  |



|                              |  |  |          |
|------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| Culpepper Court North Street |  | Relatively large block of flats set well back from street. Some attempt at modulating the façade to reduce appearance of bulk and some use of vernacular detailing   | Neutral  |
| The Chalet North Street      |  | Possibly C18 timber framed house now shop. Brick facing to ground floor and weatherboarding above. Inappropriate modern shop front and poorly detailed pentice roof. | Positive |

|                           |                                     |  |           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
|                           |                                     | Original windows to first floor. Needs some attention  |           |
| 1 and 2 Moat Road         | Grade II<br><a href="#">1187069</a> | C18/19 Cottages timber framed and weatherboarded. Plain tiled hipped roof. Adjoining entrance doors  | Essential |
| Bryher House<br>Moat Road |                                     | Modern house brick built stretcher bond with concrete pantile roof and discordant colour tile hanging at first floor. uPVC front door  | Negative  |
| Mytton House              |                                     | A Victorian brick built house with an overpowering extension. The extension has a slate roof which carries across the face of the original building as a pentice roof. 2 over large dormers to extension | Negative  |
| 3-7 Moat Road             |                                     | A row of late Victorian cottages built in brick with weatherboarding to upper storey. Steeply pitched roofs with plain tiles. In keeping with nos 1 and 2  | Positive  |



|                                    |                                     |  |           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Former Kings Arms<br>High Street   | Grade II<br><a href="#">1372096</a> | C18 or possibly older built as an inn but now a shop. Right hand return gabled section now a house. Façade fully rough rendered in grey except house which has regular pattern of red and grey brickwork | Essential |
| Former Village Shop<br>High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060841</a> | Largely C16 timber framed shop row and dwelling Ground floor painted brickwork first floor tile hung with bands of varied red  | Essential |

|  |                                     |  |           |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
|  |                                     | tiles. Rather discordant C20 shop fronts and fascias   |           |
| The Institute + 15 –<br>19 High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1039865</a> | Built 1866 as public building and house row. The Institute was aimed at edifying the local residents. Elevations red and grey chequered brickwork with plain tiled roof. Curved or flat segmental arches over first floor windows. C20 shop fronts and signage. Listed for group value | Essential |



|   |                                     |  |           |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 21 – 25 High Street                     | Grade II<br><a href="#">1344345</a> | C18 or earlier shop row. Ground floor red brick Flemish bond with first floor weatherboarded. Roof plain tiled. Some original windows at first floor. C20 shop fronts. Substantial decorated brick stack to right of centre  | Essential |
| 27 High Street                          |                                     | Rebuilt in 20 <sup>th</sup> century replacing an earlier building this property does not relate to its neighbours. It takes up several plot widths has large window openings and a shallow pitch slated roof. Given the eclectic mix of buildings along the High Street, however, it fits in better than it should | Neutral   |
| The George and Dragon<br>29 High Street |                                     | This Victorian public house is a riot of gables and applied half timbering, bay and oriel windows, balconies and tile hanging. It is perhaps the most striking property, at first  | Essential |

|                     |                                     |   |           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------|
|                     |                                     | glance, in the street and is something of a centrepiece within it. NDHA   |           |
| 31 High Street      | Grade II<br><a href="#">1372126</a> | Likely C18 House and Shop. Weatherboarded first floor over red brick ground floor. Plain tiled roof hipped to right.  | Essential |
| 33 – 37 High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060842</a> | No 33 early C17 or possibly earlier, 35 and 37 C19 likely around older core. No33 timber framed with painted tile hanging to first floor. 35/37 red brick Flemish bond. Plain tiled roof hipped to street for No 33 | Essential |
| 39-41 High Street   | Grade II<br><a href="#">1039879</a> | Built partly in C18 and partly C19. 39 has a weatherboarded upper storey over a brick faced ground floor. 41 has a brick ground floor with exposed studs and plaster infill above. Plain tile roof                  |           |



|                     |                                     |  |           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 43 – 45 High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1344307</a> | C19 Shops and dwelling. Ground floor rendered first floor red brick Flemish bond. Slate roof   | Essential |
| 47- 51 High Street  |                                     | The history of these three properties is not clear. It appears that 51 was originally 2 properties following the line of the burgage plots but at core these would seem to be mid to late Victorian buildings which have been subject to alteration in later years | Positive  |

|                     |                                     |  |           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 53 – 57 High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1054691</a> | C18 House and Shops largely chequered red and grey bricks. There is a section of wall in the gable end where mathematical tiles have been used   | Essential |
| 1 – 5 Forge Lane    | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060837</a> | C15 altered C19 and C20 Formerly house but now a row of cottages. Red brick to ground floor upper floor close studding with plaster infill exposed at No 5 otherwise covered with weatherboarding. Plain tile roof | Essential |



|                             |                                     |  |           |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 59-63 High Street           |                                     | Victorian row incorporating an earlier inn with stables. Constructed in brick with a grey slate roof. 65 has a clear break in the brickwork with 67 though they appear to be contemporaneous |           |
| 69 High Street              | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060843</a> | Built as two cottages in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century but converted into a single house. Red and grey chequered brickwork to ground floor tile hanging above. Plain tiled roof               | Essential |
| Manor Cottages High Street  | Grade II<br><a href="#">1367141</a> | C16 timber framed barn converted in C18 to residential use. Painted brick to ground floor with bands of plain and fishscale tiles to first floor. Very steep hipped roof                     | Essential |
| Baptist Chapel Station Road | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060812</a> | Built 1819 with red brick and slate roof at right angle to and set back well from road. Gable effectively forms a triangular pediment  | Essential |

|  |                                     |   |                      |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Rushford Manor<br>High Street  | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060846</a> | Originally listed as Headcorn Manor this Georgian house with its red brick ground floor and tile hung first storey was built around the turn of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century is probably on the site of the original manor house.   | Essential            |
|  |                                     |   |                      |
| Manor Farmhouse<br>High Street   | Grade II<br><a href="#">1344309</a> | C18/19 Georgian facing to earlier house of 2 storeys and attic. Mix of brickwork and mathematical tiles to facades  | Essential            |
| 36 High Street   |                                     | Small single storey flat roofed retail unit. Appearance of a temporary building and in very poor condition in contrast to its neighbours  | Negative             |
| 30-34 High Street  |                                     | Modern large retail unit with some attempt at vernacular detailing and material selection. Important generator of trade and activity in the street scene. Wraps around an interesting early C20 building – the projecting winch cover of what was Foremans store has been incorporated into the new building,. Site was formerly a National school for girls and boys | Neutral              |
| 28 High Street   |                                     | Modern era office/retail building. Attempt to incorporate vernacular features but overall a disappointing building  | Neutral-<br>Negative |
| Post Office No 26<br>High Street   | Grade II<br><a href="#">1054015</a> | C17 house now shop and accommodation. Timber framed with brick ground floor and weatherboarding or tile hanging above. Victorian canopy to front elevation  | Positive             |



|                                  |                                     |  |           |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| The Old Vicarage<br>High Street  | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060845</a> | This is a substantial and simply detailed vicarage (now house) over two storeys and attic. Built in red brick with plain tiled roof  | Essential |
| Chequers<br>High Street          | Grade II<br><a href="#">1054005</a> | C15 hall house with later cross wing. Much restored in C19 For many years it was an inn called the Ball and Chequers. Close studded timber frame to oversailing section of first floor – elsewhere timber frame with plaster infill  | Essential |
| Shakespeare House<br>High Street | Grade II<br><a href="#">1344308</a> | 16 <sup>th</sup> Century house with a steeply pitched roofed cross wing restored C20. Timber frame with plaster infill. Principal hub of cloth weaving (carried out in the high ceilinged first floor) in Headcorn during C16/17. On the decline of the trade became an inn – the Queen Adelaide now a house | Essential |
| 6 – 18 High Street               | Grade II<br><a href="#">1060844</a> | 18/19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage row. Two storey brick or brick and tile hanging - listed as a group  | Essential |
| Methodist Chapel<br>High Street  |                                     | This fine building - brick built and symmetrical in form sits well back from the road but makes a splendid end stop to the High Street. NDHA   | Essential |
|                                  |                                     |  |           |



|                           |  |   |          |
|---------------------------|--|---|----------|
| Book House<br>Church Lane |  | Conversion of two earlier cottages into one house with work carried within the last 50 years. Likely to have been accommodation related to the church | Neutral  |
| Walnut Cottage            |  | Another conversion of two former cottages based around a late Victorian construction  | Neutral  |
| Beult Cottage             |  | Actually a large house taking out part of an orchard. Built very late in 19 <sup>th</sup> century has some fine fish scale tile hanging NDHA          | Positive |

## APPROACHES AND VIEWS



### Views looking towards Headcorn from the top of Tong Bank (Headcorn is not visible)

The area around Headcorn, known as the Low Weald, is an area of long gently undulating slopes with few significant hills. The views above are taken from the top of one the most pronounced of these hills – Tong Bank – bank perhaps being a better description than hill. Since Headcorn is at the bottom of one of the slopes and at river level there are no viewpoints from a distance of Headcorn but the images above show the fields and hedgerows which make up its setting.



### Maidstone Road as it approaches Headcorn



## Principal Views approaching and within Headcorn

### Approaching Headcorn from the North – 2 and 3

Travelling along the A274 Maidstone Road is an interesting experience as it follows an unusually straight line for some four kilometres on its way from Sutton Valence. For much of its length across very gently undulating terrain the road is lined with established hedgerows and beyond that a patchwork of fields put to a variety of uses. There is no hint or view of the village ahead until the outskirts are reached. Headcorn puts out long fingers of development, from what is otherwise a compact urban area, along its approach roads. Accordingly the road begins to pass between rows of suburban style houses and bungalows from about a kilometer outside the main body of the village and some distance before the roadside sign that announces the boundary of Headcorn

The road continues still with hedges lining the route even in this now urban setting – it is notable how many hedges, with many fine examples, there are in Headcorn and this road has its fair share. The buildings are continuous, low profile and setback from the road until the boundary of the conservation area is reached (final image of the sequence above) where the White Horse public house sits on the back edge of the pavement. Were it not for the traffic lights at the junction with Moat Road there is still little clue as to what lies ahead and so close along the High Street.

**Moat Road – approaching Headcorn from the West – 1 and 4**



**View of the approach to Headcorn along Moat Road**

This in many ways is a more interesting approach to Headcorn. The lane meanders along its

route though stays broadly parallel to the slope to the north. It passes through some very picturesque countryside until the hedges, so much a feature of this area, appear as Headcorn comes closer. There is a momentary change in elevation as the road crosses the School river – though it's easy to miss - and then after a final bend the outskirts of Headcorn come into view. Approaching from this direction there is very little development along the road and the traveller is straightaway close to the centre of the village without passing through a hinterland as is found on the Maidstone Road. The first sight of Headcorn is the charming, mostly, row of cottages close to the junction with North Street. This arcadian approach to the town has remained as a gentle introduction to the village for nearly two centuries. It is an important set of views, that would at one time have also been found travelling along Maidstone Road, and are worthy of protection both from development and invasive street furniture and signage.

### Approach to Headcorn from the south east – 5, 6 and 7



View of the approach to Headcorn from the East

The approach to Headcorn from the east has some of the characteristics seen in the journey along Maidstone Road. There is first the attractive countryside – with hedges – and then a long rather dull hinterland. There are some points of interest along the way which make this journey possibly more interesting than that along Maidstone Road. Firstly there is the bridge across the river Sherway and then after a few bends in the road the former toll keepers house (listed at Grade II) comes into view and then a little further on the Old Barn which is a listed (Grade II) timber framed barn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The approach continues through a seemingly never ending hinterland until the nadir of Station Road appears and all form breaks down with an open car park on the left and a filling station on the right. It's just as well that the conservation area is just around the corner. On reaching the conservation area it is noticeable that the prominent features are the winch canopy on what is now a supermarket and the George and Dragon pub.

Continuing on the final element of the approach is the closure of the vista by the very fine church of St Peter and St Paul. The contrast between the two character areas is also very apparent from this view as one looks past the bustling activity of the High Street to Church Row and the church as the fitting end stop.

This is an important set of views and it is important that the finer elements of the approach are conserved and the elements that detract improved as opportunities present themselves.

#### **Views within Headcorn – 8 and 9**

There are two more significant views from within the conservation area. Firstly the view from the extreme western end of the High Street looking east. This view takes in the major part of the commercial core of the village represented by the northern side of the High Street where nearly all the buildings are listed. It also encompasses the contrasting southern side of the High Street which has in this view a collection of residential buildings including Shakespeare House and Chequers each one set back from the High Street and with substantial gardens fronting the street.

Secondly there is the view from the covered gateway into the churchyard looking out over the Church character area. The contrast with the adjacent High Street could hardly be greater as the view takes in Parsonage Meadow, the churchyard (with the church as its backdrop) and Church Walk – a very arcadian perspective.

#### **ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS**

The character of conservation areas can suffer significantly from the cumulative impact of 'minor alterations' which can be carried out to single dwelling houses as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order without the need for planning permission. Such alterations can include replacement windows and doors and re-roofing using inappropriate non-traditional materials.



### **Accumulation of electronics boxes on the front elevation**

The Local Authority can seek to bring such minor alterations under planning control by the use of Directions under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order. Article 4 directions can increase the public protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. They are not necessary for works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments as listed building consent and scheduled monument consent would cover all potentially harmful works that would otherwise be permitted development under the planning regime. However, article 4 directions might assist in the protection of all other heritage assets (particularly conservation areas) and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets, including listed buildings

There is an Article 4 Direction in place for the principal parts of the Conservation Area – only a small less historic area is excluded.

### **PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE**

The Headcorn Conservation Area is of considerable historic and cultural interest. It has many listed buildings and many properties that have maintained a continuing use for a significant amount of time. Despite its historic importance it has not become fossilised and remains a vibrant and viable local centre. The Parish Council have recognised that to maintain its relevance there has to be development and an enlargement of the built up area beyond the conservation area. It is also recognised that this development must be controlled to protect the nature of the historic core and the contact with open countryside. Listed and unlisted buildings make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation area and in many cases are essential to it. Within the conservation area modern developments and redevelopments have not resulted in any serious loss of character, most being discretely sited or of inoffensive design and largely built of appropriate materials. In fact, the major agent of character loss has not been redevelopment but the cumulative impact of individual relatively minor alterations such as inappropriate siting of external electrical equipment and wiring, replacement windows and doors and even changes of roofing materials and works carried out to the boundary treatments with little strategic focus and a lack of awareness of heritage integrity and value.



### **Inappropriate replacement windows and doors**

Headcorn is, despite the comments made above, generally a well-cared for village and problems of dereliction; dilapidation and disuse are rare. The analysis carried out in Sections 3, 6 and 7 of this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for works and development for which the scope appears to be very limited. Those buildings or sites which are assessed as 'essential' or 'positive' will not normally be considered appropriate for demolition or redevelopment. Proposals for the redevelopment of 'neutral' sites will be required to match or to enhance the existing condition. Few sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are not many where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There is little scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of, and view lines across, the conservation area. The design style of any replacement building is not predetermined. In this conservation area the focus will be on a high quality response to the existing context rather than there being a requirement for a particular appearance.

The character of Headcorn seen today is at least in part set by the consistent use of a generally limited range of materials used on mostly small-scale buildings. It is important that any future proposals for development or works should respect this. There are a few single storey buildings – most being two or three storeys and accordingly developments of less or more than two storeys will generally be considered to be inappropriate while there will be a base line of high quality and contextually positive design. Conversion/extension of single storey ancillary buildings may be considered acceptable.

The loss of character is likely to come about through lack of maintenance or inappropriate repairs or replaced components rather than through any larger scale of intervention for which there is little scope. It is in the public domain that attention is most needed since so many agencies have a call on this resource and the actions of just a few of the many property owners can subvert an otherwise consistent and reasonable policy. Further erosion of the quality of the streetscape needs to be avoided and opportunities taken to reverse some of the harmful practices that have taken place in the past. The focus needs to be on the use of appropriate shop fronts, signage and advertising of retail and commercial premises.

There is also a high risk that the setting of the conservation area and views into and out of it will be adversely affected by ill-judged or inconsiderate changes to facades, boundary

treatments and signage. Of particular concern are the number of fine and established hedges that line the approach roads and give a strong character to these routes into the conservation area. They are comparatively high maintenance but their contribution to the setting of the core of Headcorn is fundamental.



#### **Fine hedges contrast with chicken wire as a boundary treatment**

The current boundary of the conservation area is still valid in terms of the area and assets it encompasses. There are a couple of adjustments that could be made to the boundary to recognise an area planted as a copse adjacent to the burial ground extension and to incorporate the manse to the Baptist church. While the copse is not a development it does add to the creation of a peaceful and reflective character to this part of the conservation area along with Parsons Meadow and the churchyard.

Trees and landscape are significant contributors to the feel of Headcorn and the quality of the environment. There are many well established specimens including some on the High Street.. Trees play an important part in the visual quality of the village as it is approached from any direction and are a key feature throughout the village, in the meadows adjacent to it and around the churchyard.

The central area of the High Street was repaved in the 1970s so that the concrete block paving used for this exercise has done very well given the amount of traffic that uses the A274. It is however looking tired and it may be time to consider replacing the pavers and possibly adjusting the levels, which would give a small ramp up to the paved area which would enable it to operate as a shared surface.



**A green path in the Church Character Area**

# CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69 of the 1990 Act also imposes the duty on the local authority to determine from time to time whether any further parts of the borough should be included within a conservation area.

Recent guidance from Historic England (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2019) suggests that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas should take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy setting objectives for addressing issues and recommendations for action arising from a previously published conservation area appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for their implementation. Such a strategy is generally given the title of a conservation area management plan.



### High Street – north side

It is important to note that a conservation area management plan cannot introduce entirely new planning objectives. Instead it will need to refer to the original legislation; to government guidance (mainly National Planning Policy Framework for heritage assets); to the adopted local plan policies; and to the emerging Local Development Framework. It can interpret established legislative provisions and planning policies and explain how they will be applied within the conservation area to ensure its preservation and/or enhancement. If any particular issues are identified which do require new policies to be drawn up, the management plan can indicate these and set a programme for their development as part of the Local Development Framework process.

This Management Plan for the Headcorn conservation area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 11.0 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal, and outlines any proposals for boundary changes as also may be suggested by the Appraisal.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Policy**

National policy and advice regarding conservation area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is available to at the link given below ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)).

Paragraph 186 of the NPPF points out that the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas . Paragraph 185 sets out the benefits that accrue from preserving the historic environment whether it be the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental advantages, the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution or the opportunities arising from an understanding of the intrinsic character of a place.



The Historic England guidance document ([Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016](#)) refers to the importance of keeping the boundaries of existing conservation areas under periodic review to ascertain whether any changes are required.

The document suggests that designation of a conservation area in itself is unlikely to be effective without the formulation of specific policy guidance, and reminds local planning authorities of the duty imposed on them by Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and for these to be submitted to a ‘public meeting’ in the area. Paragraph 4.16 points out that such proposals cannot realistically seek to prevent all new development and should instead concentrate on the controlled and positive management of change; indeed, it is suggested that there may be instances where redevelopment will be a means of enhancing character.

## Local Policy

Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2017.

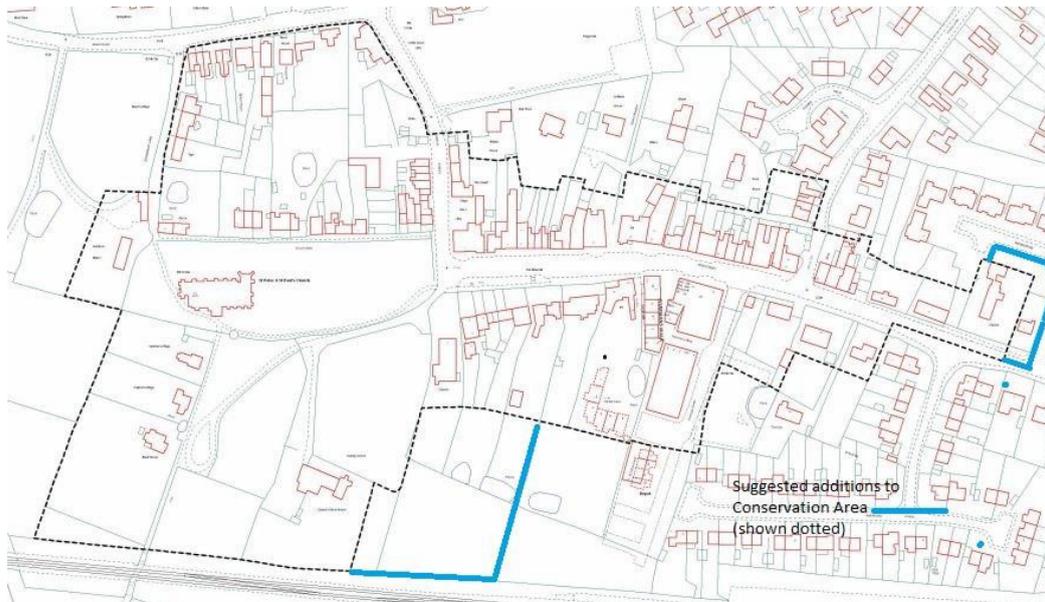
(<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/local-plan-information>) A supplementary planning document to cover conservation areas has not yet been produced but there will be specific reference to heritage assets in the reviewed Local Plan due to be published in 2022. While this Management Plan indicates how national and local policies will be applied in the on-going management of the conservation area, it is not in itself a planning policy document but Local Plan policy DM4 refers to conservation area appraisals and management plans as supporting documents so they are material to planning considerations.



**Glebe, Church and Heron Cottage Church Walk**

### **PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES**

The Appraisal above records that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. It is recommended that in two areas the boundary should be extended as shown below. It is further recommended that the area subject to Article 4 direction should be rationalised and aligned with the conservation area boundary.



**The present conservation area boundary – proposed extensions indicated in blue**

## **PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

### **Planning Considerations**

Sensitive and responsive management of development is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas or the approaches to it. To this end, the Council will adopt the following principles when dealing with planning applications within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.

The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the further guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and any subsequent revisions, additions or replacement government guidance.

The Council will apply the relevant policies from the Maidstone Local Plan 2017 until such time as these policies are replaced by a future Local Plan or by policies in the emerging Local Development Framework.

The Council will require all planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough document setting out the reasons for the development, explaining how the design has been evolved and showing how it will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area; it should also cover any access issues which exist. There is guidance on preparing a Design and Access Statement produced by CABE (CABE was merged with the Design Council in 2011) (<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-and-access-statements-how-write-read-and-use-them>). In some cases a separate Heritage Statement will also be required. Historic England have published guidance on this aspect in 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>). The Maidstone web site gives advice on the content of a planning application – see [validations checklist](#).



### **High Street – south side**

Applications must be accompanied by clear and accurate drawings showing the proposed development in detail and illustrating how it fits in to its context. Drawings should clearly indicate materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of proposed buildings. Site plans should accurately depict the positions of trees on or adjacent to the site and show clearly those which will need to be removed and those which will be retained. Where trees are affected by the proposals the application should include a survey by a professional arboriculturist to comply with current British Standard BS5837, 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations'. It should also include details of any proposed works to, and methods for protecting, any retained tree. Photographs and other illustrative media are encouraged. Any applications which fail to provide adequate detail will not be validated.

Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.

The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications within the conservation area or affecting its setting.

The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether or not it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused. The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high quality contemporary design, subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail and materials of local tradition. The council encourages the use of the pre-application process which ensures that planning officers are aware of a proposal at an early stage and can give advice to ensure the

appropriateness and quality of any design. See [pre application guidance](#).

In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and in this Management Plan. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being 'essential' to the character of the conservation area, and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as 'positive'; buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstances; the redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context. Conservation Area Consent will not normally be granted to demolish buildings in the absence of an approved scheme of redevelopment.

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 states that the conservation area is appropriate for minor residential development as set out in Policy H27 – normally this would be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that it is appropriate within the context of the conservation area and will not harm its special character. It is considered that the scope for new developments within the conservation area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the following

New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the conservation area – these include:-



- Red/grey stock bricks
- White painted brickwork
- Clay plain Kent peg tiles for roofs or tile-hanging – consider using tiles on vertical faces
- Painted timber windows
- White stained weather boarding
- Black cast metal rainwater goods and pipework

In the case of red stock bricks and tiles it will be important for them to be made of Wealden clays or clays of similar geological formation. Any material selected will be required to be demonstrably used widely on nearby buildings.

Buildings should respect the predominant scale, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 3 storeys in height.



#### **Generally building heights do not exceed two storeys**

Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. All substantial trees within the conservation area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size.

The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the conservation area.

In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:-

Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).

Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale and design.

No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Depending on circumstances, dormers should either be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof or, in the case of smaller or shallower roofs, a flat lead roof above a traditionally detailed cornice. They should not appear crowded together or be located too close to hip or gable lines. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.

Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same provisos as dormers in relation to numbers, position and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used.



Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.

Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be hedging, low brick walls or wooden open fencing. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

Shop fronts and signage should respect the character of the conservation area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature

### **Enforcement Strategy**

Unauthorised development may seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area as well as causing other problems. The Council is therefore fully committed to using its powers under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to serve enforcement notices, where expedient, to allay breaches of planning control. [Section 9](#) of the Act sets out the relevant offences. Parallel powers to serve listed building enforcement notices regarding unauthorised works to listed buildings also exist by virtue of Section 38 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and these too will be used to their full. In suitable cases the Council may also exercise the legal provision to seek a prosecution for unauthorised works to a listed building or the unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building.

## **ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **Buildings in Disrepair**

This is currently not a significant issue in Headcorn Conservation Area. However, there are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to significantly adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area or to endanger the future of a listed building. These powers are:

Urgent Works Notices (Section 54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such notices can be served in respect of any vacant building or, with the prior approval of the Secretary of State, a vacant unlisted building whose preservation is considered important to the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Works specified can only be the minimum necessary to make the building wind and weathertight and are thus essentially temporary in nature. The owner must be given at least seven days notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

Listed Building Repairs Notices (Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These can only be served in respect of listed buildings. Full and permanent repairs can be specified. If an owner fails to commence work on the specified works within 2 months of the service of a Repairs Notice, the Council may start compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to the building; no other recourse is made available by the legislation.

'Untidy Site' Notices (Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such a notice can be served in respect of any land (including a building) which the Council considers to adversely affect the amenity of the surroundings. The necessary steps to remedy the condition of the land and building need to be set out in the Notice and at least 28 days given for compliance. Failure to comply is deemed an offence and is punishable by a fine.

### **Trees**



Trees are identified as important contributors to the character of the Conservation Area. All trees in a Conservation Area with a stem diameter generally above 75mm at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and six weeks formal prior notice to the Council is required for any proposal to cut

down or carry out other work to such trees (a Section 211 Notice). Anyone who carries out unauthorised work to protected trees is likely to be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine. There may also be a duty to plant a replacement tree of appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as can reasonably be done. This duty may also apply if the tree has been removed because it was dead or dangerous.

### **Traffic Management**

The impact of traffic within the conservation area is a critical factor. The build-up of traffic and congestion at peak times can be significant. This is partly due to the success of Headcorn at retaining its vibrant and viable core and therefore access to the centre should continue to be encouraged while reducing the number of cars involved. This might involve parking provision on the fringes of the centre and more control of parking in High Street

### **Reinstatement of Original Features**

There are examples, though thankfully not too many in the conservation area of damage caused to the character of the conservation area caused by injudicious alterations to properties. Such alterations include re-roofing in inappropriate materials; replacement windows and doors of inappropriate design, signage or materials and discordant surface finishes. The Council would like to see a process of reversal where this has happened. This can only be by persuasion as there are no provisions to enforce reinstatement where the alterations are covered by permitted development. Nevertheless the Council will encourage property owners to reinstate traditional forms and materials as part of ongoing maintenance. It should be noted that since 1989 when the Article 4 Direction came into force there has been a requirement for owners of most properties to seek planning consent for all but the most minor of alterations to buildings within the prescribed zone.

### **Public Realm Improvements**



#### **The block paving to the central area of the High Street**

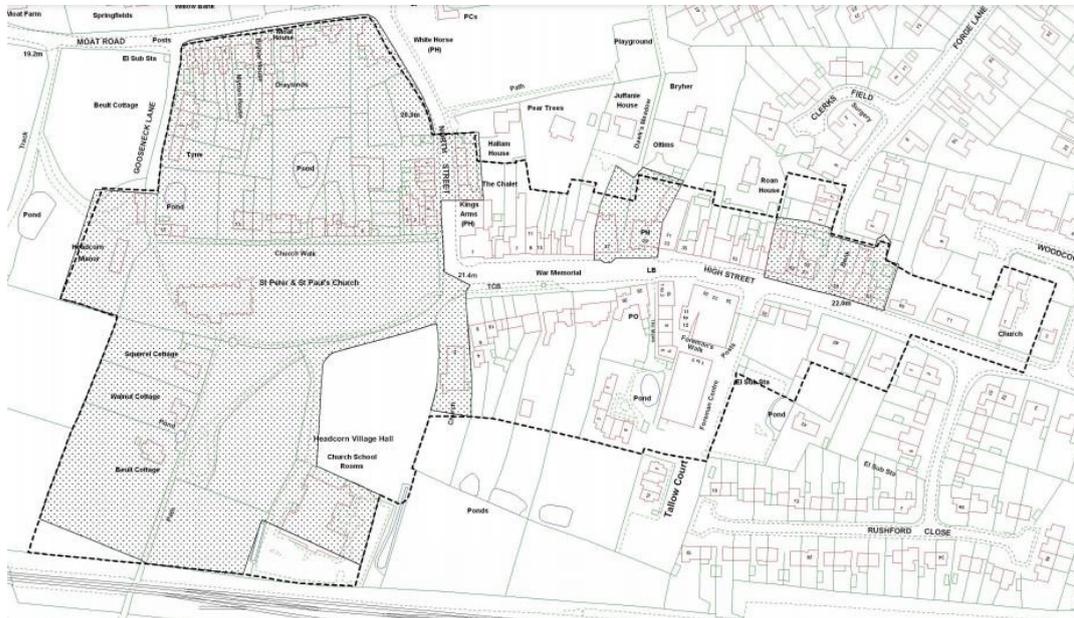
Re-surface the central part of the High Street and consider introducing a raised 'table' to create a large shared surface

Parking controls in the High Street and vicinity to avoid it being used for all day parking

Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings

Measures to ensure that property owners outside the conservation are encouraged to maintain and plant new hedges

#### Article 4 Directions



**Plan showing the conservation area and zones where Article 4 Directions apply**

The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions to withdraw permitted development rights. The individual permitted development rights which can be removed are limited to specific classes of development. Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is given in Department of the Environment Circular 9/95, which states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where firm evidence exists that damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area is likely to take place or is already taking place because of the exercise of such rights. The additional level of control that an Article 4 direction brings to the Lenham Village conservation area is minimal useful but limited as non-residential building have very restricted permitted development rights and most of the residential buildings are in any case listed and therefore subject to more stringent controls.

Since 1989 there has been an Article 4 Directions in place in Lenham

#### **REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES**

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed after an appropriate period of not less than five years and any required amendments will be incorporated.

## ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

| ISSUE                               | ACTION   | RESPONSIBILITY   |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Street Furniture/building frontages | Improve quality and consistency of shop fronts, signage and lighting   | Maidstone Borough Council<br>Headcorn Parish Council                 |
| Traffic                             | Parking restrictions to High Street and vicinity<br><br>New parking provision walkable distance from the High Street to encourage visitors | Maidstone Borough Council<br>Headcorn Parish Council<br>KCC Highways |
| Inappropriate modifications         | Take steps to encourage reversal of inappropriate modifications carried out to buildings and frontages                                     | Maidstone Borough Council<br>Headcorn Parish Council                 |
| Shared surface                      | Resurface the central area of the High Street and from a shared surface to create a better experience for pedestrians                      | Headcorn Parish Council<br>KCC Highways                              |
| Boundaries                          | Review conservation area and Article 4 boundaries  | Maidstone Borough Council<br>Headcorn Parish Council                 |



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| Pernille Richards               | 2021             | History on our doorstep – a walk in Headcorn  |           | Ella Martignetti |

### USEFUL CONTACTS

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