

MAIDSTONE CHILLINGTON HOUSE CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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MAIDSTONE CHILLINGTON HOUSE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

1.1.1 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”.

1.1.2 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.

1.1.3 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.



St Faith's Street looking North West

1.2 Background to the Appraisal

1.2.1 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.

1.2.2 The most appropriate form for fulfilling these requirements is the production of a conservation area appraisal for each individual conservation area. English Heritage published an advisory booklet on the form which conservation area appraisals should take in February 2006, 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.

1.2.3 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.



St Faith's Street in 1899 showing the gatehouse to Brenchley Gardens

1.3 History of Designation

1.3.1 Maidstone Chillington House conservation area was designated by Kent County Council on 25 January 1974. Despite significant development in the area's surroundings, it retains the same boundary today.

2.0 GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The dominant features of this conservation area are Brenchley Gardens and Maidstone Museum, which originally comprised Chillington House and its orchards. The retention of historical layouts and features in this compact conservation area of barely two hectares is a notable survival and it is relatively

easy to picture what this area would have been like from C16 onwards. The original house is largely lost but the replacements and extensions constructed on the site through to the end of C19 are redolent of the style of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

2.2 There is a sense of the C20 crowding in and foreshortening any views with the Fremfils Walk development, McKenzie Court and Brenchley House dominating the southern, western and eastern boundaries respectively and the railway line forming a sharp break to the north. In some ways that all goes to heighten the sense of a harmonious and homogeneous pocket of land but which actually has far more variety than at first appears. St Faith's Street, the one street in the conservation area, has representation of architecture from the C16 to the present one but the mix and variety only add to the character and interest of the street scene.



The Museum Building from Brenchley Gardens

2.3 The museum and park are popular leisure attractions, at times resulting in a lively atmosphere while still retaining generally the calm of a public garden setting. The encroachment of historical and more modern urban development around the perimeter of the area presents a contrast with the green environment of Brenchley Gardens. Vehicle traffic is not particularly intense within the Conservation Area - the presence, however, of the A229 (Fairmeadow - an incongruous name now) along the western edge means that the sound of traffic is ever present. The sound of rail traffic also impacts the experience of Brenchley Gardens.

3.0 LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 Maidstone is the county town and administrative centre for Kent. Chillington House Conservation Area is situated in the north end of the town centre, just south of Maidstone East Railway Station. It is close to the east bank of the River Medway but separated from it by the A229 and the recently developed McKenzie House. The navigability of the Medway was an important factor in the medieval growth of Maidstone. The principal roads, of which St Faith's Street was one, all ran east to west connecting the town

to the river and its wharves. The site slopes slightly downward to the river so there would have been good views from Brenchley Gardens to the river and beyond. Maidstone town centre lies on a bed of Wealden clay, with bands of Atherfield clay and alluvium along the river edges. The highest parts of the Conservation Area, at its eastern side, are underlain by the Hythe Beds which produce the Kentish ragstone building stone from nearby quarries.

4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 This document provides a summary of the history of the northern part of historic Maidstone. The history of Maidstone is dealt with more comprehensively in the [Maidstone Town Centre Conservation Appraisal](#).

4.2 Archaeology

4.2.1 The earliest documentary evidence for settlement of the area first appears in Saxon charters of c 975 where it is named either as “de maides stana” or as “maegdan stane”, probably meaning either “the maiden’s stone” or “the people’s stone” – possibly a megalithic tomb which was used as a meeting place. By 1086 the Domesday Book entry is for “Meddestane”, and in 1159 the town is known as Maidestan. The first recorded use of the current spelling is in 1610.

4.2.2 The origins of settlement in this part of Maidstone are not fully understood and there has been little systematic archaeological investigation carried out in the town. Much of what is known has depended on chance finds, many of them in the 18th, 19th or early 20th Century, which were either never properly recorded or which did not benefit from the application of modern archaeological techniques.

4.2.3 There is one known Roman villa in the immediate vicinity located at The Mount just to the north of the Maidstone East railway line. Many other villas are known along this stretch of the Medway Valley. Romano-British finds were discovered during building operations during the 18th and 19th centuries. Two or more Romano-British urns were found in St. Faith Street circa 1850. Other discoveries in the area suggest the existence of an extensive cemetery in to the north of the present High Street, southeast of Chillington House Conservation Area. The known Roman road linking Rochester with the iron-rich Weald and the coast near Hastings was located just to east of the Conservation Area (Week Street/Gabriel’s Hill/Stone Street).

4.2.4 Evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the area is sparse but this is likely to be the result of the more fugitive nature of any archaeological remains. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was located in the area around the junction of Wheeler Street and Brewer Street to the east of the Conservation Area – several inhumation burials with weapons and jewellery dated circa 590-620 were found here in the 19th Century, so the implication is that there must have been some degree of settlement in the vicinity.

4.2.5 It is likely that land around Maidstone formed a royal estate by the 7th century, the centre of which was probably the area now occupied by the later medieval complex of All Saints’ Church and the Archbishop’s Palace which is now included in the separate All Saints’ Conservation Area. It was during the Saxon period that Maidstone acquired its present name.

4.3 Development History

4.3.1 The recorded history of Maidstone dates to the Domesday Book of 1086, which notes that the Archbishop of Canterbury held the manor of Maidstone with 25 tenant farmers, 21 smallholders and 10 slaves. By 1200 Maidstone was a recognisable town, but its focus had shifted away from the church/manor complex at the southern end of the modern-day town centre to the higher land on the north side of the River Len.

4.3.2 At this time, Maidstone was developed following a gridded plan, the main streets which developed being High Street, Earl Street and St. Faith's Street, the last of which lies within the Conservation Area. The northern edge of this 12th-/13th-century grid was probably marked by the second medieval church of St. Faith, a dedication often found attached to churches at the entrances to towns. The present church is a Victorian re-build but the original church is likely to have been founded prior to 1200 as it possessed burial rights, which were jealously preserved by mother churches such as All Saints' after that date.

4.3.3 The part of Maidstone now included in this conservation area was historically part of the Manor of Chillington. The town was at this time developing as a civic entity. Recognising this in 1559 a charter was given to the corporation to maintain the embankments of the Medway and ensure its continued navigability. The importance of Maidstone as a port was increasing at this time, and in the 1560s a new stone wall was built at Fairmeadow by the corporation, presumably to act as a quay. Exports via the river included stone, grain and cloth, many of these goods going to London. Timber was also shipped to Chatham Dockyard and cannon from the Wealden ironworks to London, Chatham and abroad.

4.3.4 In 1561, the estate passed from George Maplesden or Digons to Nicholas Barham, a Sergeant at Arms to Queen Elizabeth I. He was responsible for building the core of the present Manor House, although the long gallery is likely to pre-date his works. Chillington House was reported to be set in orchard gardens from medieval times. John Rocque's survey of Kent, conducted around 1760 illustrates the locations of Chillington House, its orchards, and St Faith's Chapel and Green. During the following three centuries, the house passed through the hands of a number of families and was much altered. However, the grounds were not changed significantly in character during the same period.

4.3.5 Maidstone as a town continued to grow commercially, resulting in significant population growth. By 1794, Hasted could estimate the population of the town at about 6,000, with 1,500 houses, although the town was not substantially bigger in area than during mediaeval times. This was to change radically within a few years. In the first national census of 1801, Maidstone had a population of 8,027. By 1831 this had doubled to 16,000 and Maidstone had become the largest and most important town in Kent, surpassing Canterbury.

4.3.6 The first half of the 19th century also saw important changes at Chillington House. In 1801, it was conveyed to the physician William Charles, who established a blanket and felt business on the premises. The manor then passed to his sons William Junior in 1832 and then Thomas in 1840, at which point the business was relocated. It was Thomas Charles who bequeathed his collection of antiquities, books and art to the town of Maidstone in 1855, a collection which became the Charles Museum. The Corporation of Maidstone then bought Chillington House in 1857 to house the collection. The museum was opened to the public in 1858 with wings added starting in 1868. In a little over half a century, the building had gone from domestic, to commercial and then on to public use. The building continued to be developed, and the collections expanded, over the succeeding years of the C19 with the Charles Gallery Wing being added on

St Faith Street in 1868 and then in the 1870's the west wing was built in two phases. In the 1880's the chapel, Court Lodge and observation tower were added. Further activity took place in the 1890's. Firstly, the East Wing was added (the Gatehouse to Brenchley Gardens was added at the same time) and then the Victoria Gallery and County Room were added.

4.3.7 In 1928 the Bearsted Gallery was constructed located to the east of the Bentliff Gallery providing additional space and wrapping around the gate house to Brenchley Gardens. The gatehouse, however, was irreparably damaged by enemy bombing during WW2 and was later dismantled. A further modification came in the 1970's when the large storage building was built butting up to the cloister and taking away part of the Gardens. In the same decade there was a serious fire in the western parts of the museum. Such was the damage that the repairs were not completed for almost a decade.

4.3.8 It was the task of a recent Masterplan which began in 2003 to finally reorder the west wings of the museum. Phase 2 was the construction of the new east wing. This was completed in 2012 and brought new public facilities and improved accessibility to many parts of the building. It also brought a fresh image with its modern design deploying glass and copper alloy shingles to contrast in texture and colour with the existing brickwork.

4.3.9 For further information on the history of Chillington House see the museum web site at [History of Maidstone Museum](#)

4.3.10 The orchards to the north of Chillington House and which supplied the manor house with produce also found a wealthy Victorian benefactor. In this case it was Julius Brenchley, author and traveller who also happened to be one of the principal contributors to the Charles Museum including funding part of the west wing. Julius purchased the orchard and laid out the gardens between 1871 and 1872 to the designs of Alexander McKenzie (an important and influential landscape architect who designed Finsbury Park and Embankment Gardens in London). He then handed them over to the Maidstone Corporation to act as trustees for the townspeople – the borough's first public park.

4.3.11 Art classes were initiated in the Picture Gallery of the museum in 1867 but quickly moved to dedicated premises in College Avenue where they remained until the school was given space in the Old Palace of Archbishops which had recently been acquired by Maidstone council. By the early 1890's it was clear that the school needed a purpose built home and therefore plans were presented to the council for an extension to the museum with the winning entry being by Albert Smith of Ruck and Smith. The building was designed as a continuation of the style set by Herbert Bensted for the Brenchley Gallery and Victoria Library. There the school remained occupying various outlying buildings until again in 1968 another move was undertaken to give the growing institution a modern purpose built facility on the Oakwood Park site. After that the now redundant building in St Faith's Street became the home of Kent County Council's Adult Learning Centre and so it is today.

4.3.12 The historic plan below shows the situation following the major interventions during the late Victorian period. The major alterations to Chillington House are evident as is the extension to provide the technical school. St Faith's Street still comprises mainly residential properties. The formal gatehouse to Brenchley Gardens is shown adjacent to the then new eastern extension to the museum while the gardens themselves are laid out pretty much as designed by Alexander McKenzie. The only significant changes (apart from the loss of the residential element to the new station at Maidstone East) are the small works

area in the north west corner and an additional entrance from Station Road. The works area was finally dismantled in the 1990's (only the tiny boiler house – a later addition – remains, unused and rather lost).



1897 Ordnance Survey Plan

4.3.13 The Royal Albion in St Faith's Street (originally built as 2 houses) is a remnant of C16 Maidstone and is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town. It is claimed that General Fairfax accepted the surrender of the local royalist troops in 1648 in this building. On the same street are the Sir John Banks alms houses. The six cottages were built in 1700 from a legacy left by Banks who served as the local MP having made a fortune in overseas trade.



The Royal Albion St Faith's Street

4.3.14 The former library building (now serviced office space) was one in an explosion of library building in the 1960's hugely influenced by then current Scandinavian designs and focussed on light, airiness and space. Being completed in 1964 it predates the Libraries Act which compelled local authorities to provide *comprehensive and efficient* library services but is very much in that spirit.



The former library building St Faith's Street

4.3.15 At the junction of St Faith's Street and Fairmeadow is an interesting survival of the residential accommodation that was at one time much more prevalent in this area - even as recently as the 1880's. 60-62 St Faith's Street is a range of timber framed houses of uncertain date (most likely C17) and because of their elevated position these two storey houses are more dominant on the south west corner of the conservation area than they otherwise would be. The six gables under a tiled roof present a striking elevation to St Faith's Street. During their life time the houses have been used as a public house but now are returned to residential use. William Weaver, who was Lord Mayor of Maidstone in 1691 and 1701, lived here.

4.3.16 External pressures also had an impact on the area surrounding Chillington House. A direct railway line to London came relatively late to Maidstone due to opposition by Maidstone's Town Council and Lord Marsham of Mote Park. In 1844, Maidstone West was the first station to be built, located across the bridge from the bottom of the High Street. As this line connected Maidstone to Paddock Wood, this still did not provide a particularly direct route to London. Decades later, this was finally provided by the line to Maidstone East to the northeast of Chillington House's grounds. Maidstone East station was opened in 1874 and extended to Ashford in 1884. An important alteration to the streetscape resulted when Bone Alley was widened and formalised to become Station Road.

4.3.17 Other external pressures which would have altered the character of the area surrounding Chillington House were commercial. In particular, Maidstone's brewing industry – with origins in the mid 17th century – placed fairly large-scale production on the doorstep of Chillington House. In 1861, Ralph Fremlin bought the old Heathorn Brewery in Earl Street and built a new brewery complex in 1861. The scale of the brewery was huge and it extended across the whole block to St Faiths Street and became the largest facility of its type in Kent. Brewing it appears was the dominant industry in this part of Victorian Maidstone (indeed there was another brewery on Waterside (now Fairmeadow) along with a brass foundry and a grain mill. All these enterprises were located to take advantage of the easy access to the Medway and then to the markets in London

4.3.18 Innovation and development during the Victorian era led to a doubling of Maidstone's population. By 1901, it had increased to 33,516. In the following century, the growth of motorcar ownership made the town more accessible but brought with it the familiar problems of congestion, particularly as the town centre formed the crossing point of two major routes – the A20 and the A229. In 1926 the Medway Bridge was widened, and one-way traffic systems were introduced in the late 1920s. Allied to these, a new street was built diagonally between Earl Street and St. Faith Street (Museum Street), improving access between the commercial district and Maidstone East Station, the Museum, and Brenchley Gardens. Museum Street has now been lost - replaced by part of the Fremlin Walk development. The later 20th century widening of Fairmeadow as the A229 to the west of the Conservation Area dramatically increased the speed at which drivers could pass by the area and the volume of traffic, effectively cutting it off from the River Medway. The A229's construction also necessitated the removal of wharves and buildings in the area, including at least one brewery.

4.3.19 Maidstone did not escape from physical harm in the Second World War. Some of three notable examples of war damage occurred in Brenchley Gardens. St Faith's lost its pinnacles at this time and the late Victorian gatehouse sustained such damage that it had to be entirely demolished. However it was the late 20th century which saw the greatest impact on the historic character of the area surrounding Chillington House. In 1972 the Fremlins Brewery ceased production and became largely a distribution centre. This itself closed in the 1990s and paved the way for the development of the Fremlin Walk shopping development of the first decade of C21. The old brewery was entirely redeveloped except for the office frontage to Earl Street and the Victorian gateway opposite Pudding Lane. The development resulted in the loss of Market Street and Havoc Lane, sad losses to the medieval street plan of the town. Other 20th-century development has dramatically altered the streetscape of the area. Large-scale developments somewhat dominate the perimeter of the Brenchley Gardens, such as Brenchley House to the northeast and McKenzie Court to the west. Development plans continue even within the Conservation Area. The former library building – an interesting Modernist building has in recent times been the subject of several redevelopment plans.

4.3.20 The area today is important to the vibrancy of Maidstone by offering significant public amenity spaces. In addition to the green space of Brenchley Gardens, the museum, adult education centre, and library draw people to the area for educational and cultural pursuits. These provide a balance to the commercial pursuits which dominate nearby Week Street and Fremlin Walk as well as providing strong historical links to Maidstone's past.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER



View of Brenchley Gardens from the north east

5.1 The dominant feature of the conservation area is the space given over, in this very central location, to a public park. It is such a pleasant surprise to find in this otherwise densely built up part of Maidstone an oasis of calm. There is also a definite hierarchy in the importance of the existing buildings to the character of the area. In that regard Chillington House, now the Museum and Art Gallery, is the pre-eminent structure. Not only is it the most central of buildings in this rather eccentric conservation area but it also bridges the divide between the green of Brenchley Gardens and the hard landscape of the only street in the conservation area – St Faith’s Street. It is also the one building which has a direct relationship with the surrounding development by virtue of the nod in its direction given in the architecture of the new Fremlin Walk shopping centre. It is appropriate that this is a building which through its function encourages calm and reflective absorption in tune with the general air of the conservation area.

5.2 St Faith’s Street has the feel of a substantial urban landscape with a predominance of hard surfaces. In the main the buildings rise up sheer from the back edge of the pavement. The buildings on the north side of the street generally have a large footprint. They run in a continuous line the length of the street with no relieving gaps between them and although they are hugely varied in architectural style yet the whole gives a strong sense of enclosure. There are, however, breaks in the frontage found to the Museum, the Adult Learning Centre and the Old Library but these spaces, recesses in the façade, have a sense of being private – indeed in two of the three cases there are heavy metal railings to separate these openings in the façade from the public domain. The railings to the Museum and Adult Learning Centre are fine examples in good condition of Victorian cast iron work.

5.3 The mix of buildings, building ages and materials is surprising given how unified the conservation area appears at first glance. This is probably because, and certainly at the eastern end of St Faith’s Street, the vista is dominated by the Museum. Even within this one building however, which is the result of several building programmes from C14 to C21, the materials deployed vary widely from timber framed structures with plaster infill, Ragstone, brickwork and metal cladding all represented. The overriding sense

at this eastern of the street, however, is of red brickwork and it used widely on the Museum, the Adult Learning Centre, the Alms houses and in very great quantities on the façade of Fremlin Walk which faces onto the conservation area. One element that is missing from the streetscape is chimneys and where one might expect to see good examples of brick stacks there are none in this view. There are, however some good examples, and one not so good, which can be seen from the Gardens.



View from the east end of St Faith's Street prior to the 2012 museum extension

5.4 The new east wing to the museum changes the dynamic of the street in a dramatic way. The new entrance it provides is not only one which allows virtually full accessibility into the museum but it shifts the centre of gravity towards Week Street from where it is easily visible. The form of the extension knits together many of the disparate elements of the museum which has seen piecemeal development over the years and tidies up the eastern edge. The golden box hints at many treasures within and ignites the interest of passers by. It is a bold and contrasting design which nonetheless draws upon its context and sits comfortably within it.



The new east wing to the museum

5.5 Further to the west along St Faith's Street the variety of building materials changes. The one continuous element is Ragstone which is used as the facing material for the raised pavement which runs all the way from the Museum to the junction with Fairmeadow although becoming increasingly prominent as the pavement lifts higher and higher above the road level which follows the natural contours. Above this wall the key building is the Old Library which is a typical result of the rush, which happened throughout the country in the 1960's, to provide libraries as centres of the community in new International style facilities intended to be light, airy and uplifting. This is quite a good example of its type and is constructed with acres of clear and coloured glass with an over sailing roof supported on angled projecting fins. Its immediate neighbour is a workaday C20 single storey building of white render which is occupied by a Skills Plus centre. This is the one of two buildings in the conservation where replacement is to be encouraged and the best that can be said for its architectural qualities is that it is small and low key.

5.6 Although outside the conservation area the element of the Fremlin Walk development opposite the Museum is significant in the streetscape. There is an attempt at an architectural link between the museum and the C21 shopping mall. It takes the form of a central domed feature aligned with the former entrance to the museum but it is wrapped in a rather awkward asymmetrical structure that leads the pedestrian away from the direct route so carefully conceived on the far side of the dome along a route that spills out onto St Faith's Street some way east of the Museum entrance – now not in use in any case. It does at least provide the one green space in the street in the form of a cultured garden so is significant in the streetscape of the adjacent conservation area. There is also a historical link in that the Battle of Maidstone 1648 saw the Parliamentary forces defeat the Royalist troops whose last stand was on St Faith's Green with the final cohort of Royalists taking shelter in and surrendering from St Faith's chapel. The new garden is called Havoc Square as a reminder that Havoc Lane which ran south from St Faith's Street was lost to the Fremlins Walk redevelopment. Havoc was a term used by commanders to release their soldiers from any constraints allowing them to



massacre, pillage and generally run amok. There is a plaque in the garden commemorating the battle in the square.

5.7 Surface materials

The materials used on the streets and paths are generally disappointing. Along St Faith's Street you will find almost every paving material on the market. There are concrete pavers of different colours and sizes, concrete paving slabs, black tarmac, red tarmac and even areas of poured concrete. The surface is punctuated with an array of uncoordinated access covers which add to the confusion. Rather sadly even the entrance courtyard of the Museum building is mostly covered with concrete slabs. There is a survival of some Yorkstone paving at the western end of St Faith's St in front of the properties at 60 – 62 which are now listed and act as a reminder of what might have been. Kerbs are universally plain concrete units.

Within the Gardens there is at least consistency but unfortunately it is the consistency of tarmac. This is a utilitarian solution which is so common we have come to accept it but the experience of the park would be enhanced by returning the paths to gravel (or bonded gravel) as it was when the grounds were first opened in 1872

5.8 Street furniture

The amount of street signage on St Faith's St is not so much that it creates a high level of visual clutter or concern. Nevertheless there is some tidying up which could be achieved and consolidation of numbers of signs onto fewer sign posts. Just outside the conservation area but highly visible from it there is a pole to support a camera which is possibly 200mm away from a lamp post. Both these useful things could be mounted on the adjacent wall but as it is the steel poles rise from the centre of the pavement at slightly different angles to the vertical their closeness emphasising the poor installation.

Double yellow lines make their intrusive presence known all along St Faith's Street while no parking signs give similar information.

5.9 Brenchley Gardens

The Gardens occupy much of the conservation area. The original design and layout (by Alexander McKenzie) is still largely apparent today. McKenzie espoused largely naturalistic park design using native planting. His serpentine path network, clumps of shrubbery and stands of native trees are still very much the experience found in the Gardens. Not much has been removed from the Gardens since their opening in 1872 (there has been the loss of the grand entrance gateway, to a WW2 bomb) but certain elements have been added notably the Centotaph and the toilet block – the former a positive visual asset the other not so much. It is significant that no active leisure facilities have been introduced and the Gardens remain a clear open space for wandering and meeting with views across the space to the back drop of the surrounding buildings.



Brenchley Gardens looking east towards Brenchley House



Extract from the Map of the Town of Maidstone 1884 (Tootell)

5.9 The northern edge of the Gardens, and the conservation area is defined by a substantial Ragstone and brick wall which was erected at the time the Gardens were first laid out. It forms a visual break, so that the railway cannot be seen from the park although it can still be heard, and a suitable backdrop fronted with shrubs and trees. To the east along Station Road and again forming the boundary of the conservation area the extent of the Gardens is defined by a low brick wall surmounted by relatively simple metal railings. These allow views into the park from outside the conservation area but also views out to a row of inoffensive and architecturally neutral commercial buildings. Providently there is a continuous row of mature trees along this stretch which hold the attention rather more than the buildings opposite. The eastern side is at the top of the rise up from the river and is the highest point in the gardens.

5.10 The western side of the gardens is confronted by a recently constructed five storey apartment block just beyond the conservation area boundary. When the Gardens were first created this area was occupied by some industrial buildings which made use of the wharves on the Medway river. They were fairly low lying affairs and from the higher ground of the Gardens there were long views to the west over the river and to the countryside beyond. Now the modern development blocks those views entirely but that is not entirely a bad thing. The view has changed from being a rural idyll to now consisting of a number of industrial sheds backed by the urban spread of Maidstone. The effect of this large building in close proximity does give a feeling of enclosure and almost secrecy to the gardens



Brechley Gardens looking south to Chillington House

5.11 The southern side of the Gardens is the most interesting from the point of view of combining architecture and landscape and is the side which is most often photographed. Forming a picturesque backdrop to the green space is Chillington House (Maidstone Museum). This rambling historic structure forms a scenic enclosure and seals off the park from St Faith's Road. Further east on the same flank St Faith's Church performs a similar function. The Ragstone garden wall and chapel of Chillington House makes a strong architectural link to the church where the walls are entirely Ragstone. Between the House and the Church is a wide path which connects to and provides the main entrance from St Faith's St. Here was the site of the magnificent gateway sadly lost through bombing in the Second World War. It is

unfortunate that the courtyard garden, once fully a part of the park was made private and is now used as a car park. The 1999 report to the LHF put forward a proposal that this area should become a formal garden. Any opening up the courtyard would help to link the Gardens more closely to the Museum.

5.12 Located in the courtyard presently are the part columns which are remnants of Boxley Abbey (once a large and important monastery and a place of pilgrimage in its own right). These are significant relics and they are currently located out of public view within the courtyard adjacent to where the bins are stored. They should, at least, be accessible and have a degree of interpretation.

5.13 The north side of the Gardens are dominated by the Rag stone and brick wall which is part of the original construction though not part of the original design. It was built in response to the development of a railway and station just beyond the Gardens to avoid views of and noise. The station building are just visible but more prominent is the new construction on Royal Engineers Road. Care needs to be taken in any proposal for development on the car park site to avoid impacting on the sense of privacy within the Gardens.

5.14 The interior of the Gardens closed in by the surrounding large buildings is a miniature Arcadian world. Meandering paths belie the order and organisation of the plan and all around are mature trees of countless varieties standing in neatly trimmed areas of grass. There are flower beds which add colour but are used in a very restrained way. There are also local focal points which have mostly been brought to the park subsequent to its original layout. These are largely found towards the north and east of the site. The largest is the bandstand – the one original structure surviving. Once this would have been a hugely active venue for public events but now is quiet, in tune with the rest of the park, and seems to be a draw for local school children. The next most significant probably is the Cenotaph designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and constructed in 1921 this monument to the fallen in war is recognisable as a miniature reworking of the Cenotaph in Whitehall. The other points of interest around the Gardens are a stone pinnacle from the roof of the original House of Commons which survived the devastating fire and was given to the park through the work of the local MP. There is also the plinth of a statue of Daphne and Apollo so much the subject of vandalism that the figures had to be removed to safety. Lastly in this area is one of the town's old water conduit heads now relocated here and protected by a fine brick semi domed structure. This feature does require some attention as currently it is in danger of being overwhelmed and damaged by the ivy growing over the roof.

5.15 Apart from the paths disappointingly being surfaced with black tarmac the furniture is in good order – the seats in particular are well maintained and of an appropriate design.



The original gate house to the Gardens destroyed in WW2

6.0 Approaches and views

6.1 The approaches to the conservation area are all from the south or east - the north and west being cut off by a high wall and a modern development respectively. The routes all lead from the commercial areas of Week Street and Fremlin Walk so that the striking aspect of arriving in the conservation area is the abrupt drop off in the number of people present in the area. Since the conservation area is surrounded by dense urban development there are no views of it as one approaches which makes the sudden arrival in a place of calm all the more dramatic. There is relatively little traffic on St Faith's Street which adds to the sense of peace and tranquillity.

Being surrounded by major developments there are few views in or out of the conservation area which gives it the rather insular character of a secret room in a sprawling mansion. There is a strong sense of enclosure and of being hidden from the wider world.

There are views within the conservation area. From the junction of St Faith's Street and Station Road one can take in the whole form and layout of St Faith's Street. The church of St Faith is also visible behind its screen of mature trees and there are glimpses of Brenchley Gardens in the near distance. There are also views across the Gardens which is what Alexander McKenzie intended. There is the possibility of carrying out some careful removal of individual trees which would open up the views even more and would be closer to the original design intent. Any such plans would need to be approached with caution as at present the trees do largely screen out McKenzie House and in any case the longer range views which Alexander McKenzie would have appreciated are no longer open countryside.

7.0 AUDIT OF ASSETS

7.1 A detailed description of the main 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.

Properties have been assessed according to their value to the Conservation Area's character. They have been graded as follows:

- Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high historic or architectural interest or townscape function, must be retained.
- Positive - buildings/sites which make a positive contribution 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.
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character and where redevelopment would be advantageous.

Address	Listing	Description/Comments	Value
Brenchley Gardens St Faith's Road	Unlisted (included in the Kent Gardens Trust Survey of Amenity Parks & Gardens)	Designed by Alexander McKenzie and laid out in 1872 this was the first public park in Maidstone. It has largely retained its original layout with minor changes to planting beds and additional monuments incorporated. The fine gate house was destroyed in WW2.	Essential
The Old Water Conduit Head, Brenchley Gardens	Listed Grade II 1273902	Originally erected on Stone Street and set into a stone pier placed in a modern brick arch in its current location in 1891	Essential
Plinth for Daphne and Apollo statue, Brenchley Gardens	Listed Grade II 1273877	A stone statue of Daphne and Apollo, mostly likely from the 19 th century. Statue now removed to storage to protect from vandalism. Plinth remains in place.	Neutra
Finial from the House of Commons Debating Chamber, Brenchley	Listed Grade II 1086396	Limestone octagon finial dating from ca. 1834, which originally crowned the main wall of the House of Commons Debating Chamber. Domed top with crenellated band between	Essential

Gardens		first and second stages. Set on stone plinth. Presented to the people of Maidstone following the bombing of the Debating Chamber in 1941.	
Royal West Kent Regimental War Memorial, Brenchley Gardens	Listed Grade II 1086395	A cenotaph of Portland stone designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and erected 1921. Wreath and inscription at sides. Set on steps. 2/3 copy of Whitehall Cenotaph, Serves as an important terminal focal point in the gardens	Essential
Public Conveniences, Brenchley Gardens	Unlisted	c1970 brick built, low mono-pitch roofed construction in northeast corner of gardens. Includes new entrance to gardens and additional asphalt paths. Obscures views of Sessions House Currently closed to the public	Negative
Bandstand, Brenchley Gardens	Unlisted	1872 One of very few structures included in the original design concept by Alexander McKenzie.	Essential
St Faith's Church Station Road	Unlisted	1872 Loosely coursed Ragstone to all elevations with some free stone dressings. Tower to south of west front. Modern extension to west front of uninspired, somewhat inappropriate design. Side aisles with clerestory windows to nave. Roof to aisles slate and to nave clay tiles. Projecting eastern apse.	Essential
60, 62, 62a St Faith's Street & 1 Nelson's Yard	Listed Grade II 1222871	Two-storey, timber-framed houses with plastered fronts. Tiled roofs with six gables to St Faith's Street. Mostly casement windows No. 62 contains a bresummer overhang with brackets. More recently used as a public house but now returned to residential accommodation	Essential
Pavement and Embankment Wall Outside 60 & 62 St Faith's Street	Listed Grade II 1336190	Ragstone stone wall of approximately 3 metres high with stone steps. Some Yorkstone paving still intact.	Essential
Skills Plus Centre	Unlisted	Single storey flat roofed commercial building	Negative

St Faith's Street		with white rendered main facade	
Maidstone Central Library St Faith's Street	Unlisted	c1960 good example of the active period of library building in the early 1960's	Neutral
Maidstone Adult Education Centre St Faith's Street	Unlisted	1894 Formerly the School of Science and Art now run by KCC as an Adult Learning Centre. Designed in the style of adjacent part of Chillington House	Positive
Maidstone Municipal Museum & Art Gallery (Chillington House) St Faith's Street	Listed Grade II* 1222803	Originally a house with an Elizabethan core built by Nicholas Barham, who acquired the manor in 1561. Major restoration in 1875 with more recent additions and alterations. Multiple wings of different ages. St Faith's Street range is red brick on Ragstone plinth with 3 projecting 3-storey wings; other wings of red brick or timber-framed and ragstone. Mostly mullion and transom windows with diamond leaded panes. 19 th -century stone gate piers to front. C21 copper faced extension added in south east corner	Essential
Wall & Gate Piers to Rear of Chillington House St Faith's Street	Listed Grade II 1086375	A stone wall with two square stone gate piers, located to the Brenchley-Gardens side of Chillington House	Essential
2 Columns from St Faith's Chapel Boxley and 1 Column From Boxley Abbey St Faith's Street	Listed Grade II 1086376	3 sandstone octagonal columns from the mediaeval period. Moulded capitals. Located alongside the wall and gate pier listed above.	Essential
The Royal Albion Inn (19-23 Havock Lane)	Listed Grade II 1086347	C16 Timber-framed houses of 2 storeys and attics. Now a publichouse. First-floor overhang on a bresummer. Ground floor is weather boarded and painted brick; first floor rendered. Tiled roofs. Half-hipped gable, hipped dormer. Coved eaves cornice. Most windows are sashes with one modern public-house window to ground floor.	Essential
Sir John Banks	Listed Grade II	Built in 1700 by John Banks. Two-storey	Essential

Almshouses (29-39 [odd] St Faith's Street)	1222767	almshouses in red brick Flemish bond. Brick string course. Pediment over centre of the building with replacement inscription (original located in Maidstone Museum). Wooden modillion eaves cornice. 12 timber-framed casement windows painted white. Plain batten doors.	
Pavement Opposite Nos 29 to 39 (odd) St Faith's Street	Listed Grade II 1336188	A narrow pavement of granite spars built ca. 1700.	Essential



Sir John Banks Alms Houses St Faith's Street

8.0 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

8.1 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.

8.2 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

8.3 There are no Article 4 Directions currently in force in the Chillington House conservation area.

9.0 PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS AND GUIDANCE

9.1 This is a contained and well cared for conservation area where problems of dereliction, dilapidation and disuse are not generally apparent. The analysis carried out in Sections 2.0 and 5.0 of this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for redevelopment and scope for this 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 constitute an enhancement of the existing situation. Only two small sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so these are the only locations where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There would also appear to be little if any scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of the conservation area. The design style of any replacement building is not predetermined. In this conservation area with a mix of building types and styles the focus will be on a high quality response to the existing context rather than there being a requirement for a particular appearance. This is clearly demonstrated in the recent modern extension to the Museum.

9.2 The loss of character if it happens 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. 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 surface materials and street furniture to unify the former and using a more suitable material and reducing the clutter.

9.3 The current boundary of the conservation area is still valid in terms of the area and assets it encloses. It should be a consideration, however, that since St Faith’s Street is so important to the setting of the conservation area that more of it should be included to encourage a more positive attitude towards the setting of the historic and significant buildings which line its northern side.

9.4 There are some interesting buildings at 12 – 16 St Faith’s Street including a C16 timber framed and jettied survival. These three buildings are currently outside the Conservation Area but contribute to it and should be considered for inclusion. There are also some Victorian warehouse buildings on Station Road which are significant in the setting of the Conservation Area and should also be considered as part of an extension proposal

9.5 The open space and greenery offered by Brenchley Gardens is one of the main drivers of character and is immensely important in the experience of this conservation area. The Gardens are well looked after and the nature of the maintenance is appropriate in terms of the understanding and continuation of this historic asset. There are, however, areas which could be improved upon. Removal of the 1960’s WC block is the most obvious improvement (it is now closed to the public) but there are other positive changes that could be made such as the re-surfacing of the paths and the thinning of the trees to add to the quality of the views across the space. A stronger link to the Museum would be made if the courtyard car park could

once again be landscaped – possibly as a formal garden as recommended in the 1999 report. The Gardens have generally retained a gentle Arcadian feel and visitors seem to expect contemplation, quiet conversation and undisturbed rest. It is important that the Gardens continue to provide a recuperative environment. It would be appropriate that all works are planned to manoeuvre the park towards its original form as set out in the 1999 report by Land Use Consultants.

9.6 Future Actions Summary

- Encourage redevelopment of Skills Plus building
- Work towards improvements in the surfacing and street furniture of St Faith's Street
- Remove the WC block in Brenchley Gardens and reinstate original plan
- Adjustments to the surfacing and planting in Brenchley Gardens towards restoration of the original layout
- Possible boundary change to include more of St Faith's Street
- Maintenance of the conduit enclosure to clear ivy and graffiti
- Opening up of the courtyard as a formal garden and better visibility for the columns salvaged from Boxley Abbey



View of Brenchley Gardens for the Northern entrance

CHILLINGTON HOUSE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 Introduction

1.1 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.

1.2 Recent guidance from English Heritage (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016) 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.

1.3 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 listed buildings); 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

1.4 This Management Plan for the Chillington House conservation areas sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 9.0 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal, and outlines the proposals for boundary changes as also suggested by the Appraisal.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 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).

2.1.2 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.

2.1.3 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 courtyard to the museum – currently used as a car park could become a formal garden

2.1.4 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.

2.2 Local Policy

2.2.1 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.

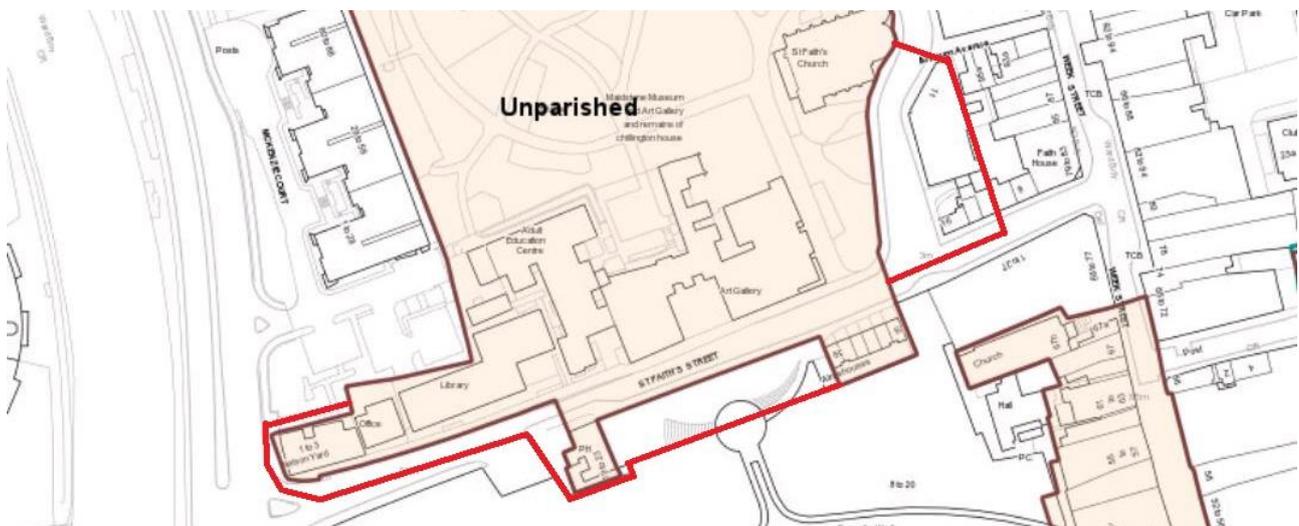
3.0 PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES



The range of buildings suggested for inclusion into the Conservation Area

3.1 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. There is a small extension to the boundary to be considered which would bring more of St Faith's Street into the conservation area. It would be expected that this would modify the thinking within the various agencies who have a stake hold within the street to have a more positive attitude towards particularly street furniture and surface materials and their impact on the setting of the adjacent buildings to the north.

3.1 A further adjustment to the east of the existing boundary would bring in two groups of building that have an impact on the Conservation Area. Firstly 3 listed historic houses – 12-16 St Faith Street which form an interesting group in their own right. Secondly a group of warehouse buildings (converted to offices) which, while historically not of great importance nevertheless provide a neutral backdrop to the Conservation Area and it would be useful to have an involvement in any redevelopment proposals which may be brought forward.



Plan to show possible extension to conservation area boundary (shown in red)

4.0 PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Planning Considerations

4.1.1 Sensitive and responsive management of development pressure is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas. 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:-

4.1.2 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.

4.1.3 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.

4.1.4 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](#).

4.1.5 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 registered.

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

4.1.7 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.

4.1.8 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](#).

4.1.9 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.

4.1.10 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 considerations in addition to those set out in point 4.1.8.

4.1.11 Development should respect the differing spatial forms of parts of the street in the conservation area. Space between buildings as well as the character of the buildings themselves and the streetscape and views across the Gardens contribute to the overall character of the conservation area and the setting of its buildings.

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

Red stock bricks.

Rag stone

White lime render

Clay plain tiles for roofs or tile-hanging.

Painted timber windows.

4.1.13 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.

4.1.14 Buildings should respect the predominant scale, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 3 storeys in height (although attic accommodation may be acceptable).

4.1.15 Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, whether or not they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

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

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

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

4.1.19 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.

4.1.20 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.

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

4.1.22 Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be metal railings. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

4.2 Enforcement Strategy

4.2.1 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.

5.0 ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

5.1 Buildings in Disrepair

5.1.1 This is currently not a significant issue in the Chillington House 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:

5.1.2 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 day's notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

5.1.3 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.

5.1.4 '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.



The toilet block in Brenchley Gardens

5.2 Trees

5.2.1 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.

5.3 Traffic Management

5.3.1 The impact of traffic within the conservation area is not a critical factor. The most convenient routes for traffic generally skirt the conservation area and through traffic is not heavy. There seems to be a self imposed restraint on vehicles on St Faith's Street that restricts speed certainly in comparison to the speeds witnessed on Fairmeadow. There may nevertheless be a benefit in instigating a 20 mph speed limit to ensure that as many drivers as possible observe a sensible driving speed.

5.4 Reinstatement of Original Features

5.4.1 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 or materials and discordant surface finishes. The Council would like to see a process of reversal where this has happened though it 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.

5.5 Public Realm Improvements

5.5.1 It would be beneficial to replace the tarmac paths in Brenchley Gardens with gravel or bonded gravel paths. This would be a step towards reinstating the original design to the gardens and would soften their feel.

5.5.2 There needs to be some maintenance to the conduit enclosure to remove graffiti and ivy.

5.5.3 Guided by the 1999 report a certain amount of tree thinning would open up views across the gardens and would also be material in a process to return to Alexander McKenzie's design intent

5.5.4 The modern toilet block is an ugly interruption to the otherwise Arcadian atmosphere in the gardens. The building is the first thing that meets the eye on entering Brenchley Gardens from the north and it sets a discordant tone. The building is no longer open to the public and its present function could be relocated to allow its removal and a scheme based on the 1999 report put in its place which would significantly improve the entrance into the Gardens from the north east corner.

5.5.5 The Appraisal above makes a recommendation that the courtyard to the rear of the Museum – currently a car park – should be made into a garden for public use. The Museum's Conservation Plan refers to a wish to open the courtyard to public use. It would be a very positive outcome if a better future for the Boxley Abbey columns were to be incorporated into the proposals for the courtyard.

5.5.6 There are improvements to be made in the surfacing along St Faith's Street. Ideally this would be a programme to install York stone slabs to the pavements and remove double yellow signs from the roadway to be replaced by suitable signage. In the meantime where maintenance is carried out a move towards a consistent surface finish would be an improvement

5.5.7 The number of signposts could be reduced and their positioning improved all of which would have a subtle but material effect on the street environment and the setting of the buildings on St Faith's Street.

5.5.8 The garden on the southern side of St Faith's Street, part of the Fremlin Walk development has taken on a significant role in the streetscape opposite the original entrance to the museum. It presages and makes a link, with the garden to the south of the church, to Brenchley Gardens.

5.5.9 The improvements to St Faith's Street would be better coordinated if more of the street and part of Station Road were to be included within the conservation area.

5.6 Article 4 Directions

5.6.1 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 would bring to the Chillington House conservation area is minimal as non residential buildings have very limited permitted development rights. There is only one residential building in the conservation area and as this is listed it is protected in any case.

6.0 REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES

6.1 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.

7.0 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Traffic management and street signage	Liaise with Kent County Council to determine approach	Heritage, Landscape and Design Team (HLD) Kent County Council
Reinstatement of original features	Liaise with individual building owners and encourage reinstatement as part of ongoing maintenance	Development Management
Enhancement of Public Realm - Gardens	Liaise with Parks and Open Spaces Dept and integrate with park management plan	HLD Parks and Open Spaces Team
Boundary Changes	.	HLD Head of Planning Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee



60 to 62 St Faith's Street

REFERENCES AND CONTACTS

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Libraries of Light Alistair Black

Historic England Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA

customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Kent County Council (Heritage Conservation Group) Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14

Email: heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk

Maidstone Borough Council (Heritage, Landscape & Design), Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ.

Email: PSTechnical@maidstone.gov.uk

Professional Bodies

The Arboricultural Association, The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3DL T: +44(0)1242 522152 Email: admin@trees.org.uk

Institute for Archaeologists, Miller Building, University of Reading, Reading RG6

6AB. T: 0118 378 6446 Email: admin@archaeologists.net

Landscape Institute 33 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QG T: +44 (0)20

7299 4500 Email: mailto:mail@landscapeinstitute.org

Royal Institute of British Architects 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD T: +44 (0)20 7580 5533 Email: mailto:info@inst.riba.org

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, RICS Contact Centre, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry
CV4 8JE T: +44 (0)870 333 1600

Email: <mailto:contactrics@rics.org>

The Institution of Structural Engineers, International HQ, 47-58 Bastwick Street, London, EC1V 3PS, United
Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)20 7235 4535

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) South East branch SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY info@spab.org.uk

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