

Dartford Town Centre

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

October 2006



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1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Dartford is a town of considerable historic importance. The location and developing economy influenced the town's current form. The Roman, medieval and later history is still evident in the streets, buildings and spaces which comprise the Town Centre Conservation Area. This forms the core of the town in the 21st century and it is vital to the identity of the Borough.
- 1.2 Dartford Borough Council (DBC) commissioned the preparation of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Dartford Town Centre to underpin plans for the implementation of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme and other projects that will enhance the area's amenity value, reconnect areas of the town that are currently isolated and improve the economy of the Town.
- 1.3 The document is divided into three parts. The Appraisal provides a robust definition of character and logically argued boundaries. Part 2, the Management Plan, provides a framework of principles and recommendations in which the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area can be planned and delivered and change within the area managed from a position of understanding. Part 3 presents the results of the community consultation process.
- 1.4 This is a freestanding document. The recommendations in the Management Plan will support and feed into the policies within the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). The document has been subject to community consultation in accordance with the Borough Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.5 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been prepared by Dartford Borough Council, with Atkins Ltd.
- 1.6 Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated on 31 October 1980 and was reviewed on 25th June 1998, with boundary changes. A previous Conservation Area Appraisal, of March 1999 (Dartford Borough Council 1999) has been replaced with this updated Appraisal, adopted on 16th October 2006.

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND A CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN?

- 1.7 A Conservation Area Appraisal assesses and defines the qualities and what is special about a potential or existing Conservation Area. A thorough understanding of the architectural and historic interest and character is an important prerequisite to developing proposals that will deliver a sustainable future for the Dartford Town Centre and the Town as a whole.
- 1.8 Conservation Area Appraisals are the basis for devising policies and controls and assessing planning applications within the Conservation Area. They form supporting documents for policies within the local development framework and a basis for the development of management proposals. A robust Conservation Area Appraisal is

also required by funding bodies (such as the Heritage Lottery Fund) to allow for informed decisions to be made regarding targeted and informed improvements to a Conservation Area. Conservation Area Appraisals are recognised as the first critical step in the process of managing and conserving areas of importance.

- 1.9 Building on the understanding of character and interest defined in the Appraisal, the Conservation Area Management Plan presents a framework and proposals for the future management of the Conservation Area to deliver a sustainable future for Dartford Town Centre and the Town as a whole, while preserving and enhancing its architectural and historic value.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- 1.10 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including: Dartford Borough Council (DBC), Dartford Museum, Dartford Historical and Antiquarian Society, Town Centre Forum, Dartford and Gravesend Building Preservation Trust, North West Kent College, and the local residents and community of Dartford and especially its Town Centre.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

- 1.11 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with current English Heritage Guidance (English Heritage 2006).
- 1.12 A Conservation Area Appraisal (Part 1) is intended to define an area's character and appearance and its architectural or historic interest or significance. The boundaries of the area are defined by the extent of the area's character and the need for its preservation and enhancement.
- 1.13 To achieve a thorough understanding of the area's character, the historic growth, archaeology, economic development, the types of architecture and buildings that this gave rise to, historic associations and the changing layout of the town, the changing uses and activities that took place in it and their associated features are examined. The historic aspects have to be understood in the current context of the Town Centre including its economy, population, activities, traffic, community values, sounds, smells and atmosphere. In Dartford Town Centre eight distinct sub-character areas have been identified, reflecting historic and spatial variations. These together provide the Conservation Area with its distinct overall character.
- 1.14 The Management Plan (Part 2) first identifies the issues that affect the Conservation Area as a whole and its individual Character Areas. These generally relate to existing and emerging threats to the significances of the area and Character Areas and the need to address problems relating to uses, movement and enhancing the public realm.
- 1.15 The Management Plan then sets out a two tier series of recommendations, consisting of overarching principles to be applied to planning, conservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area. These principles will provide a framework in which the future of the Conservation Area can be managed, preserved and enhanced. Beneath these principles are a series of specific actions and projects to preserve and enhance the

character and significance of the Conservation Area and deal with particular issues, including changes to current designations.

- 1.16 In line with Dartford Borough Council's *Statement of Community Involvement* (March 2006), the document has been tested by consultation with the local community, via a questionnaire and public exhibition. The full analysis of consultation responses can be found in Appendix B and, where appropriate, this document has been amended in response to concerns and views expressed by respondents. Thus the work has the approval of and is relevant to the community and takes into consideration what the community considers to be the importance of the area, issues and the solutions to them.

2. Policy Context

NATIONAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The key statutes relevant to the identification, preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area are the National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002), the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This last Act places a duty on local authorities to review and designate Conservation Areas (Section 69) and to publish policies for their preservation and enhancement (Section 71).
- 2.2 The key national guidance relating to Conservation Areas is Planning Policy Guidance note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment). Other particularly relevant guidance is provided in Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (Archaeology and Planning).
- 2.3 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 54A) states that regard has to be made to the local development plan in the determination of planning applications and therefore the Local Development Plan includes a full set of local policies relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 2.4 At the time of writing the most recently adopted Local Plan is the Dartford Borough Council Local Plan, adopted April 1995. The most relevant policies relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas within the 1995 plan are B6, B7, B8, B9 and B10, with policies B11 and B12, relating to sites of archaeological importance, and policy B13, relating to shopfronts and advertisements, also being of particular relevance.
- 2.5 At the time of writing, the policies within the Local Development Framework (LDF) are being formulated in accordance with Dartford's Local Development Scheme (2005). The final LDF policies will include robust policies which implement the national guidance and reflect the particular qualities and concerns relating to the Borough's Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.

PART 1 - APPRAISAL OF CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

3. Summary of Context, Uses and Historic Development

LOCATION, CONTEXT AND USES

- 3.1 Dartford Town Centre is 15 miles from London, astride the Darent valley along the line of the former Roman road and pilgrimage route that crossed the valley from east to west. West Hill, Spital Street, High Street, Overy Liberty and East Hill approximately follow the road's alignment. The River Darent runs from south to north along the east side of the valley, so that most of the Town Centre lies on its west bank at the base of the valley. The Town's form and character have been largely dictated by its valley location in that the town was contained within the alluvial valley floor, between chalk escarpments, until the 18th century, except for St Edmund's burial ground at the top of East Hill. The geology of the area can be seen on Figure 1. There was also an important north-south route that provided access to the Thames, a major trade artery until the mid 20th century. The Darent was a source of power for its mills (with an additional channel added to provide more power) and the waterway acted as a transport route in its own right.
- 3.2 Today a busy collection of shops, bars, banks, building societies and estate agents is the dominant use of the ground floors of buildings to the east of Orchard Street and to the west of Bridge House (to the south of Holy Trinity Church). For the most part, the upper stories in these streets are used for storage and offices. To the west of Orchard Street uses are more mixed, with an increasing proportion of residential use further to the west. To the east of Bridge House there is a mixture of retail, residential and community uses at the bottom of East Hill, while the top of the hill is predominantly residential.
- 3.3 The buildings around Acacia Hall, to the east of its west boundary wall, are generally in residential, leisure, community, sporting or cultural use. Central Park contains recreational areas, gardens and the Library and Museum.
- 3.4 This distribution of functions and uses of the buildings reflects the staged historic development of the Town Centre to the east and west, with the greatest concentration of residential uses at the east and west ends of the area and with the greatest mixtures of uses in the earliest suburbs that became Town Centre locations over time, at the foot of East Hill and on Spital Street.
- 3.5 The population of the Conservation Area is relatively low considering its extent, owing to the high proportion of non-residential use and some upper storey vacancy. The residential population is mostly concentrated at the Conservation Area's east and west ends.

- 3.6 Most of the Town Centre has minimal traffic problems as a result of the operation of the ring road, with one-way traffic to the south of the Town Centre and two-way traffic to the north. The main points of traffic congestion are at the road junctions at the foot of East Hill and West Hill, where there will continue to be capacity problems in the future. A central pedestrianised area extends along the High Street, at the north ends of Lowfield Street and Market Place and on Bullace Lane, Bull's Yard and Bank Court.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 3.7 Figures 2-7 are a series of historic maps that chart the historic development of the town. Figure 8 shows the growth of the urban area of the town over time. This map also suggests the likely extent of medieval and post-medieval urban archaeological deposits.
- 3.8 Human activity in the wider area is known from c. 400,000 years ago and later Neolithic arrowheads have been found close to the centre of Dartford. The area may have been settled by the Iron Age, as pottery of this day has been found at West Hill.
- 3.9 The main east-west road in the Conservation Area lies along the route of Watling Street, the key Roman London to Canterbury road which forded the river Darent around the site of the current Town Bridge. Archaeological remains of the road was found at the foot of East Hill in 1897 and is thought to have run directly below Holy Trinity church, and parallel to and slightly north of the High Street. Its route is suggested by a slight rise in the ground to the north of the High Street, visible in Bull's Head Yard. Indeed buildings may have been sited here to take advantage of the solid base for foundations within the otherwise marshy ground to the north of the town.
- 3.10 Evidence of Roman occupation was found at the junction of Lowfield Street and High Street in 1973 and the remains of Roman buildings were found close to Spital Street in 1974. Other finds in Roman rubbish pits (including coins) have been made in the Town Centre. The evidence suggests a linear settlement, either side of the Roman road. In 1989 150 graves of a Roman cemetery on East Hill to the north of Darent Road were excavated (marked on the 1909 Ordnance Survey map, Fig.6), some of wealthy inhabitants. The number of important villa sites nearby verifies this. A modest 2nd to 3rd century villa, close to the Conservation Area was first discovered between the river Darent and Darent Road at Dartford in the 1890s and was excavated in 1979.
- 3.11 The area around the Conservation Area was inhabited during the Saxon period, with a number of important burial sites being found just beyond its boundaries. It is suggested that Dartford's earliest Saxon village was on the slopes of West Hill, with the focus of the settlement moving downhill, closer to the river and the church, built on the site of the later Holy Trinity Church in the later Saxon period.
- 3.12 By the time of the Domesday Book, in 1086, Dartford had evolved into a considerable settlement with a population possible between 600-800 people. This prosperity, and its important position on the chief route between England and the continent, may explain why William I retained the manor in royal hands. The sheriff of Kent accounted for the rent of Dartford Manor during Henry II's reign, but early in the reign

of John it was granted to the Earl of St. Pol (Normandy). Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I acquired the manor, receiving income from it until her death in 1291. From 1330 to 1613 the manor was united with Chislehurst. It was held first by the Earl of Somerset, then the Marquis of Dorset; Edward IV granted it to the Earl of Warwick and on his death in 1471, it was inherited by his daughter Isabel. In 1509 the Manor had reverted to the Crown, but in 1584 Elizabeth I granted it to Edmund Walsingham. Sir Thomas Walsingham conveyed Dartford to Sir Robert Darcy, whose father had leased the estates of the dissolved Dartford Priory.

- 3.13 The market is first mentioned in documents dating to the reign of Henry III (1216-72). It was held weekly and the house frontages would have served as shops, inns and permanent premises for Dartford's traders. The town was a well established corn market by the 14th century and a pedestrian bridge replaced the ford during the reign of Henry IV (1399-1413), a fragment of which was re-erected in Central Park in the 20th century. The market prospered from being on the pilgrimage route to Canterbury. The town also flourished as a deanery of the diocese of Rochester, was one of the venues for the bishop of Rochester's consistory court and was home to England's only community of Dominican nuns at Dartford Priory, to the north of the Conservation Area. By 1301 the town's population would have been between 800 and 1000.
- 3.14 The medieval town plan was largely 'L' shaped, with the main street extending westwards from the church to its junction with Hythe Street extending north towards the Thames. This plan survived into the post-medieval period and can be seen on the 1596 map (Fig 2). The market on the High Street formed the heart of the town and is depicted on the 1596 map as being relatively wide and partly filled with buildings; the narrow burgage plots are shown with typically urban buildings with their gables fronting onto the street. Beyond the west end of the High Street the houses are depicted with their roofs parallel to Hythe and Spital Streets. This arrangement reflects the economic pressure to build on the High Street and has dictated the subsequent development of the town. The High Street is still densely built up, with some properties retaining their narrow frontages, with the buildings extending back from the street. The medieval street pattern survives and the High Street also still forms a central open focal space into which the other, narrower roads feed. Hythe Street followed the curve of the river Cranpit, to the Creek wharves. Lowfield Street, extending south from the High Street existed in 1379. The primacy of the High Street is confirmed by the absence of Lowfield Street on the 1596 map. Bullis Lane (Bullace Lane) led north off the High Street just to the west of the church, St. Edmund's Highway led east out of town beyond the river and Overy Street ('over the river') lay across the river as a suburb.
- 3.15 Some modern facades on the High Street conceal medieval and Tudor timber-framed buildings, and only a few 15th century buildings survive in Dartford, including the Wat Tyler public house and 82 High Street (both on Bullace Lane) and the Coach and Horses, on Spital Street. Surviving earlier medieval buildings within the Conservation Area include Holy Trinity Church (which developed from c.1080). The former chapel or chantry dedicated to St. Edmund, stood at the top of East Hill, and the current park and burial ground on its site dominates the area. A leper hospital was situated outside the town on West Hill, within the Conservation Area.
- 3.16 Richer individuals established residences close to the Town Centre, particularly in and around Overy Liberty, along the east bank of the Darent and away from the main

focus of the settlement. However, some also constructed their homes in the Town Centre. John Martin, built a house at the junction of Lowfield and High Streets in the early 15th century, and Thomas de Luda built a mansion, known as Horsman's Place, south of the High Street in Lowfield Street, by the River Cranpit, in the early 14th century. Neither residence survives, although a Tudor fireplace believed to be part of Horsman's Place, was discovered in Lowfield St. The Grovehersts owned the early 15th century building that survives at 82 High Street.

- 3.17 Agriculture remained the main focus of the town's economic life. Fields, gardens, orchards, and vegetable plots, stretched right into the centre of town. There was, however, some agriculturally related 'industry'. A number of medieval grain mills stood on the river Darent, south of the Holy Trinity Church and there was a fulling mill at the foot of East Hill (and associated Tenter's Field), in use during the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509).
- 3.18 Extractive industries and lime burning, for the manufacture of mortar, plaster and fertiliser also developed at Dartford. Loam pits were exploited in 1344 and a brick and tile industry also developed. In 1445 the church wardens granted permission for a lime-kiln at Lurching-hole on Chalkdale (on the edge of the Conservation Area at the site of West Hill hospital) and chalk extraction has influenced the topography of the town with large pits on West Hill and Overy Street (see fig 4).

Post Medieval Dartford

- 3.19 The Reformation and dissolution of the Priory brought an end to Dartford's role as a stopping place for pilgrims. This and other economic developments changed the economy and character of the town, which gradually developed from an agricultural market town, to an increasingly important centre for more diverse trade, commerce and industry. In a survey of 1565-6, Dartford had 182 inhabited houses and 4 quays or landing-places accommodating 7 boats. By the late 18th century, Hasted estimated Dartford's population at 2,500 and he described the town as 'handsome, and wealthy with several good inns', some of which still survive from that period within the Conservation Area.
- 3.20 Henry VIII built a royal manor house on the site of the Priory (1541-44), which was a key feature just outside the town. The Manor House's West Gatehouse and remains of boundary walls survive outside the Conservation Area.
- 3.21 The High Street remained the focus for the Town Centre and the agricultural market was one of the most important for agricultural produce in Kent. In 1576 the old Market Cross was demolished and a timber-framed Market House, with its associated Shambles, was built, as indicated on the 1596 map (fig. 2). However, by 1769 the Market House was obstructing traffic and a new market hall was constructed, in Market Place. The 20th century single storey shops in Market Place provide some reference to the former market stalls, and this street's more open nature refers to a market place. The 19th century historian, Dunkin, noted in 1844 that it was still tucked away from the visitor's eye, off the High Street. Although the market had changing fortunes, by the end of the 18th century, stalls were once again set out in the High Street.
- 3.22 The pre-18th century Town Centre buildings appear to have been two and three storey structures, mostly timber framed and jettied and included a wide variety of

buildings including shops, inns, stabling, and town houses of the rising merchant class. From the surviving buildings it can be seen that the economic pressure for development on the High Street led to the construction of taller buildings there, generally buildings with three or even four storeys from the 18th century onwards (except for a number of 20th century two storey buildings). Those close to the Town Centre, on Spital Street, were of two storeys before the 18th century and were later of 2 to 3 storeys, while those further out of town were generally of two storeys.

- 3.23 West Hill and Lowfield Street (on the edges of the town) were the preferred sites for almshouse building and poor relief (Lowfield Almshouses, built in the 16th century and rebuilt 1889 on Lowfield Street; Twisleton's Almshouses, built in 1704 on West Hill; the workhouse also first built on West Hill in 1728 and later rebuilt in its current form in c.1838; and the Bridewell, built on Lowfield Street in 1720). Improvement of the environment for the people living in Dartford remained an issue throughout the 19th century, and efforts were made to address this under the 1814 Act 'for lighting, watching, and improving the town of Dartford' and the 1848 Public Health Act. With the foundation of the Dartford Gas Company in 1826, Dartford was one of the first towns to have gas lit streets, by 1827.
- 3.24 Dartford continued to depend on travellers and the first stage coaches from London to Canterbury around 1670, bolstered the trade of public houses and brought the establishment of a number of inns and stables, particularly on Spital Street and the High Street. Public houses and inns of the period included The Coach and Horses and The Royal Oak in Spital Street, The Bull and George Inn and posting house on the north of the High Street, the One Bell Public House on the corner of Lowfield Street and High Street, and The Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel, on the south side of the High Street. This large coaching inn was built in 1703. All but The Bull and George, demolished in 1981, and One Bell, demolished in 1966, survive.
- 3.25 16th to 17th century timber framed buildings include 57 Spital Street (The Royal Oak public house), the rear element of 24 High Street, and 1 and 3 and 5 and 9 Overy Street. Timber framed and weatherboarded construction persisted into the 19th century in the Conservation Area. Although this form of construction was common in industrial buildings it was more widely used in Dartford. North Kent was a major centre of brick production in the 18th and 19th centuries and the persistence of timber framed buildings clad with weatherboarding in this period reflected the availability of cheap Baltic timber which flowed into London along the Thames. Thus much of the Two Brewers on Lowfield Street, rear elements of Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel, some of the building elements on Overy Street, the rear gables of 33 and 35 High Street, the Zion Strict Baptist Chapel on Priory Hill and the small building behind Bridge House are all weatherboarded. A similar phenomenon has been observed in Deptford where cheap softwood from the naval dockyards prolonged the use of timber framing locally (Guillery 2005).
- 3.26 Merchants continued to build houses in the Town Centre, on the High Street and Lowfield Street. The Manor House of Charles, on the north side of High Street, was acquired by William D'Aeth in the 16th century (subsequently demolished, 1814); Horsman's Place, on Lowfield Street, was owned by John Beer 1551, and rebuilt by the Twisleton family in 1704 as a typical 18th century mansion (also subsequently demolished). Bank House, on the south side of the High Street, was built in the late 18th century, was later acquired by the Council in 1908 and survives as a prominent building. The pattern of building large houses on the urban periphery, also

established in the medieval period, continued into the 18th and 19th century. Their grounds both channelled and restricted the growth of the urban settlement. Examples of such buildings include West Hill House, Hill House on East Hill and, more centrally, the 18th century Bridge House, and the mid 19th century Acacia Hall, which stands on the site of an earlier mill owner's house. The grounds of Bank House and Acacia Hall effectively prevented urban growth to the south of the eastern part of the High Street and the area remained relatively undeveloped until the late 20th century, while the town expanded in other directions. A number of 18th century 3 and 4 storey buildings on the north side of East and West Hills, indicate early suburban residential expansion of the town to the east and west.

- 3.27 Dartford had already undergone an early mini 'Industrial Revolution' between 1500 and 1800, partly due to the reliable source of water-power offered by the Darent and Cranpit, and partly due to the proximity to the Thames and London. Small scale cottage-based textile industries, rope-makers, clock and watch-makers, etc. continued, with larger industries situated beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area to its north and south, along the river Darent. For example, upstream, to the south of the Town Centre was Sir Martin Frobisher's smelting works (1557), near modern day Powdermill Lane. Sir John Spilman's paper mill was founded nearby in 1588. By 1732 the site was a gunpowder mill. Towards the end of the 17th century another paper mill was erected. In 1790 there were only 4 gunpowder mills in Dartford, but within 20 years the town's powder magazines were the most extensive in England. The manufacture of gunpowder continued in Dartford throughout the 19th century and beyond. There were also mills nearer to the Town Bridge. Colyer's flour mill was owned by John Twisleton and the foundations of the Royal Victoria Mill (where a corn mill had operated from the early 18th century), which supplied Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle up to c.1880, still survive.
- 3.28 North of the Town Centre was an iron-slitting mill, one of the oldest founded in England in 1595; Workman, Brummell and Co established a large cotton mill in 1790 on the site now occupied by Glaxo-Wellcome. When this site was destroyed by fire, the Phoenix Mills, specialising in the grinding of corn and production of linseed, were erected here in 1797.
- 3.29 Other industries, particularly Dartford's breweries, were situated along Lowfield Street and Hythe Street. These included the Woodin family's 17th to early 18th century small-scale brewery between Lowfield St and the Darent, on land now occupied by Central Park (a brewery survived here until 1862) and the Tasker family Brewery in Lowfield Street which survived from 1700s until 1925 under various owners.

19th Century

- 3.30 The town and population of Dartford expanded due to the increased pace of economic and particularly industrial development (at the 1811 Census, Dartford had a population of 3,177; in 1851 it was 6,244 and by 1901, the population had risen to 18,643) and this industrial activity was key to the town's identity and growth throughout this period.
- 3.31 The 1860 Ordnance Survey map (fig. 4) shows that St. Edmund's Chartered Graveyard on East Hill dominated the eastern part of the town, where the Martyr's Memorial was erected in 1851, while the enlarged Union Workhouse and chalk pits characterised its western end. It also shows the Victoria flour mill near the Town

Bridge and the Breweries to the south of the High Street. To the west of Hythe Street, the brewery owned by James Miskin from the 1830s (demolished in 1939) is shown, as is the iron foundry, set up there by John Hall at the turn of the 18th-19th century, which harnessed the power of the river Cranpit. The foundation of John and Edward Hall's Dartford Ironworks established Dartford as an engineering town and stimulated other industries, including gas works, zinc mills, paper mills and cement works. Away from the railway line and the river, the establishment of John C Beadle Ltd, coachbuilders, boosted the motor vehicle industry in the town. Beadle's was established in 1894 in Lowfield Street, but moved to their now listed car showrooms and offices in Spital Street, built for Beadle by Frank Atkinson in 1910.

- 3.32 The railway (opened in 1849) also attracted industry and industrial workers to the town. 1851 improvements to Hythe Street were aided by the Railway Company, as it was the main approach to the station. The goods depot to the south of the station provided an alternative trading route to the river, encouraging local large scale factories to congregate around the station and ensuring that this area to the north of the town was the focus of sustained industrial activity throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1889 the Burroughs Wellcome & Co. pharmaceutical company (which became The Wellcome Foundation Ltd in 1924 and Glaxo-Wellcome in 1995) took over buildings to the north of the railway line and an additional factory was built alongside on Temple Hill in 1915. Throughout the company's evolution the manufacture of pharmaceutical products has played an important part in Dartford's history. Fabric printing works also appear on the 1860 map and this key industry survived in Dartford until 1939.
- 3.33 A number of administrative, religious and residential buildings were built in the Town Centre. These included the former National School on West Hill (1826), Kent House, the mid-19th century County Court, the Methodist Church (1844-45) on the north side of Spital Street, the single storey 1843 Police lock-up on West Hill, the terraces marked as Hall's Place and Prospect Place, both on Hythe Street, and various Horsman's buildings and other groups of cottages in Lowfield St, on the Ordnance Survey map of 1860. Gothic revival and Queen Anne influenced buildings also appeared at the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century, such as the rebuilt Lowfield Street Almshouses (1889).
- 3.34 Residential development, which had begun to creep up East and West Hills in 18th century, gathered pace with the expansion of industrial Dartford's population in the 19th century. While Overy St had been a focus of well-to-do residences in the medieval period, there was a movement of the middle-classes westwards, perhaps in a move away from the industrial parts of the town. The network of streets, which developed to the east beyond St. Edmund's Graveyard in the 1860s, already known as 'New Town' in 1869, provided housing for the increasing numbers of workers who had moved into the area to work in Dartford's industries. During the 1870s 'villas' appeared, presumably to attract commuters, many examples of which also remain in New Town. Schools, pubs and churches followed people up the hills – there were pubs in greater numbers to the East, reflecting the social and economic variation between the hills and the fact that the development on East Hill was more extensive. Comparison of the 1909 Ordnance Survey (fig. 6) with that of 1860 (fig. 4) indicates the extent of residential development to the east and west of the town in the interim period.

20th Century

- 3.35 Dartford's economy and Town Centre underwent dramatic transformation in the 20th century as traditional industries declined and the townscape was modernised and substantially rebuilt. The population grew to over 80,000 by the end of the century. Many white-collar workers commuted to London to work, taking advantage of the electric trains which ran from 1926.
- 3.36 Edwardian improvements to the Town Centre included electric street lighting and a tramway system. Public conveniences and drinking fountains were installed in Hythe and Spital Streets. The area south of the High Street was developed for public recreation and educational purposes, and the historic openness of this area of town maintained. In 1905 the Central Recreation Ground was opened on five acres of land bestowed upon the town by Lt. Col. Charles Newman Kidd, Chairman of Dartford Urban District Council and local brewer. When the Council bought Bank House and its grounds in 1908, its garden was added to the Central Recreation Ground, and the enlarged park accessed via Market Place from the High Street. Burroughs Wellcome leased Colyer's Mill and Acacia Hall for the Wellcome Club and Institute from 1898 and purchased these buildings and their grounds in 1924. The public library was built with the assistance of the Carnegie Trust and opened in 1916 next to Central Park.
- 3.37 Civic improvements in Dartford included an extension to the library to house the museum in the mid 1930s, the building of tree-lined Market Street in 1926 (to the north of the library building and Central Park) and the widening of the Town Bridge in 1922. The town received its charter in 1933, a programme of slum clearance and general town improvements ran throughout the 1930s and High Street businesses boomed following the earlier recession. National retail firms such as the Co-op arrived. The Co-operative movement had arrived in Dartford in 1888, but the present Co-operative building in Spital Street dates from 1935. The State cinema opened in Spital Street, adjacent to the earlier music hall and Gem cinema, in 1935. Some of these buildings can be seen on the 1932 Ordnance Survey map (fig. 7).
- 3.38 In c.1900, Dartford's traditional industries survived, including Dartford Gunpowder Mills, The Daily Telegraph Paper mills, Hall's, Burroughs Wellcome, Sharp's Baltic Saw Mills, Beadle's Carriage and Motor Works and Kidd and Sons Brewery (see OS 1909 map). However two world wars and economic decline brought closure to many of Dartford's industries. Although Burroughs Wellcome and Hall's survived, industrial decline continued throughout the century, especially in the Town Centre.
- 3.39 The post-war period brought radical change to the Town Centre. The cattle market, which functioned until the 1960s was demolished to make way for the Priory shopping centre in the 1970s. Concern about the obstruction caused by the markets on the High Street had seen Dartford's traditional Thursday market move to the cattle market before moving to the site of the Baltic Saw Mills. It then moved to the car park behind the Priory Shopping Centre. In the 1980s older buildings were demolished to make way for new road systems and The Orchards Shopping Centre, Copperfields, and the Orchard Theatre were also built. The High Street was pedestrianised, allowing the Saturday market to be revived there in 1981, many Victorian shopfronts were replaced and old Town Centre buildings reused as pubs and offices.

4. Character, Spatial Analysis and Special Interest of the Character Areas

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The phases and nature of the development of Dartford Town Centre has led to the eight areas of different character that comprise the Conservation Area. The Character Areas are shown in fig. 9. The character and spatial analysis are shown on fig. 10, West and East, and fig. 13, West and East.
- 4.2 This section describes each Character Area. Each description begins with a discussion of its special character, including spatial analysis, where appropriate. Elements that detract from the area's character are then briefly summarised. Where there is full discussion of these within Section 7 relating to issues, they are omitted from this section to avoid repetition. The special interest of the Conservation Area and its component parts is summarised in Section 5.
- 4.3 The key Listed Buildings and unlisted buildings and those that contribute to the character of the individual Character Areas are listed in Appendix A. Issues relating to the individual character areas are discussed in the relevant part of Section 7.

CHARACTER AREA 1- WEST HILL & HIGHFIELD ROAD (FIG. 10, WEST AND FIG. 13, WEST)

Character

- 4.4 This area forms the western gateway into the Conservation Area and the main influence on character is the pronounced slope of West Hill. The area developed along the historic east-west route into and through the town and this has led to some coherence in the built form. The buildings on West Hill largely front directly onto the pavement, the streets and spaces set back from West Hill are largely subordinate to or serve those that front onto the main street, and there are strong visual links with the main part of the Conservation Area to the east. Materials, including yellow brick, used in both the buildings and walling, with peg tile, pan tile and slated roofs further unite this area, as do the three large gothic revival buildings on Highfield Road and West Hill.
- 4.5 The peripheral location of this area led to intermittent, large scale and piecemeal development, with large buildings and groups of buildings producing different atmospheres. Much of its early development was of the type that made the area unattractive and unfashionable. Thus amongst chalk pits and other peripheral land uses, the Leper Hospital and institutional buildings related to poor relief and low status housing were built which in turn encouraged non-conformist religious and educational buildings, and the Magistrates' Court. These buildings form an essential part of this character area. The more wealthy inhabitants of this part of town lived at or towards the bottom of the hill and some way to the west beyond the western end of the Conservation Area.

- 4.6 These differences and breaks in atmosphere, which have varied relationships with the adjacent areas, can be seen between the upper and lower parts of West Hill itself, the quiet space around the Zion Baptist Chapel, the former Workhouse courtyard and the vicinity of Highfield Road, and have produced and are accentuated by the variations in the architectural form and style.
- 4.7 The principal space in this area is West Hill itself. The slope, the listed and unlisted buildings and walls, although varied, create the effect of a narrow gorge providing access to the Town Centre when approached from the west, with long views over the Conservation Area with Holy Trinity Church forming a distant focal point (see Plate 1). Thus, the brick walls on the north side of the former Police Station channel the eye down the hill from the west end of the Conservation Area and the hard edge that they provide anticipates the sense of enclosure further down the hill. The fact that the gable wall of 48 West Hill steps forward from the alignment of the sorting office creates a narrow gate into the narrowest part of West Hill. The sense of enclosure is created by the walls and buildings built on raised banks along the south side of West Hill and the fact that the listed former Workhouse buildings and 21-29 West Hill front directly onto the pavement. The tree between the Police lock-up and the Workhouse enhances this effect. The sheer face of the workhouse buildings forms the principal landmark within West Hill itself.



Plate 1 - View looking east from the western edge of the Conservation Area

- 4.8 The area at the bottom of West Hill, at its junction with Spital Street, opens up to the east of the former Congregationalist Church and 21 West Hill, both of which dominate this part of the area and feature in important views from the east that should be retained. The bow on the side of 21 West Hill is a major feature of the Conservation Area. Although the size of this space has been accentuated by the

construction of the road junction of West Hill, Spital Street and Highfield Road, which forms the ring road around the Town Centre, there was a space here historically, created by a gap in the housing on the north side of West Hill where the gardens of the former Westgate House extended to the street (near the current eastern side of the road junction) and by the fact that the Magistrates' Court and Highfield House were set back from the road to the south. This space is, however, too wide and creates a break in the character of the Conservation Area as a whole, exacerbated by the width of the road junction and the fact that the modern Westgate House is set back from Highfield Road North. The yellow brick walls near this junction enhance its character as they harmonise with the brickwork of the buildings.

- 4.9 While a considerable amount of traffic uses Priory Road, the area around the Zion Baptist Chapel on Priory Hill still retains a somewhat secluded character, an atmosphere which is enhanced by the use of weatherboarding, the large front gardens of the chapel and adjacent houses and the two storey buildings. There are interesting views of the former National School on West Hill to the south. This building's loggia, the fact that 31-35 West Hill are set back from the general building line and the relative quiet of Twistleton Court provide a break in the gorge-like character of West Hill and enhance the secluded character of the Zion Baptist Chapel.
- 4.10 Twistleton Court itself (the part of the former Workhouse facing away from West Hill) has its own enclosed character, with the tall buildings creating walled courtyards. Although the workhouse was not built at one time, there is a unity of style.
- 4.11 Highfield Road and the area around the Baptist Church are more residential in character. The buildings are generally of two storeys and represent the early suburban growth of this end of the town.
- 4.12 The south west extent of the character area is defined by the historic chalk pit, the sorting office and the modern housing of Trinity Gardens, while its north west side is defined by the raised ground of the former hospital and by the Victorian housing on the north side of Essex Road

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.13 The open ground on the north side of the road junction at the bottom of West Hill, to the east and west of Highfield Road North, creates a major break in character, despite the fact that there was historically a small gap in the housing at this point where the garden of the former Westgate House fronted onto West Hill. This poor quality space extends from 21 West Hill as far east as Westgate House.
- 4.14 The architectural style of current Westgate House jars with surrounding buildings and it is set back from the historic frontages on Spital Street and Highfield Road North. The gap to the west of Enterprise House also detracts from its character and interest. The sorting office in the setting of the Conservation Area detracts from the character of the adjacent part of the Conservation Area.

CHARACTER AREA 2- SPITAL STREET (FIG. 10, WEST AND FIG. 13, WEST)**Character**

- 4.15 Spital Street has the atmosphere of a connecting space between the High Street and West Hill. It also consists of a series of small, partly enclosed spaces, both quiet and vibrant, that have been created by the alignments and types of buildings and the area's location next to the High Street. It was one of the earliest suburbs that gradually became part of the Town Centre. This gradual urbanisation has produced a wide variety of buildings and spaces where building frontages step forward and back from the street and the narrow roads feed in to Spital Street from the north. The buildings are generally three storeys high (with some four and two storey buildings) and mostly flat fronted, which means that these spaces generally feel enclosed. There are houses set back from the street, such as 43 Spital Street, buildings with prominent facades set far back from the street, such as the rear portion of the Litten Tree (the former Beadles), buildings fronting directly onto the pavement, such as 45-51 Spital Street and areas where the building lines of groups of buildings are recessed or project from adjacent groups. This has created the appearance of separate, partly enclosed spaces along Spital Street, each with its own atmosphere. This effect is enhanced by the narrow roads leading into Spital Street.
- 4.16 One such area is the east end of the Spital Street. Here the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel on the High Street projects forward from the buildings on Spital Street creating both a sense of partial enclosure and anticipation of the High Street opening up as a large space extending an uncertain distance to the north. There is a vibrancy to this space created by the proximity of the High Street, the pedestrian movement through the Priory Centre and Copperfields.
- 4.17 Where the Co-op department store is set back from the adjacent buildings, the sense of enclosure is enhanced by the presence of Orchard Street and the fact that the view down that street is partly closed by a small workshops and the dog leg in the street. This space is quieter as the Co-op and former cinema produce less pedestrian activity and the view down Orchard Street is partly closed. There is a bus stop here. At the junction of Spital Street and Kent Road, where the Methodist Church and former County Court are set back from the street and the buildings opposite (44 to 50 Spital Street) are set forward, the space is livelier as the former court, the Litten Tree and shops attract more activity. There is also a greater sense of connectivity with the residential areas to the north. Either side of 44 to 50 Spital Street, the recessed frontages of the adjacent buildings create further variation and relatively quiet spaces and a similar effect is created by the recessed 53 and 55 Spital Street and the adjacent St James Place.
- 4.18 Recent localised pavement extensions to calm and channel traffic in front of the former State Cinema and in front of 46-50 Spital Street accentuate the character of these spaces.
- 4.19 The variety is further enhanced by the jumble of architectural styles and the mixed uses represented. Apart from the obviously gothic church and the older vernacular timber framed buildings, most buildings are classical, Art Deco or modernist in style. The mix of uses includes residential buildings (such as 1 St James Place and 43 Spital Street), public buildings, leisure facilities and shops.

- 4.20 Another important aspect of the area's character is its position on the main route into and out of the Town Centre and the fact that this makes the sense of enclosure only partial. The long views to the east, terminated by Holy Trinity Church, and west towards 21 West Hill and the Hill itself, are important in achieving this atmosphere. Other views of interest include that into the Conservation Area along Kent Road (closed by 50 Spital Street) and the distant views of the rear of the buildings on the south side of Spital Street from Highfield Road.
- 4.21 As with the building lines and architectural styles, the historic materials are very varied and enhance the variations in atmosphere. They include yellow brick for walling (generally laid in Flemish bond) and slate and occasionally pan tile for the roofs. Some are stuccoed, and there is also some use of stone, white brick, terra cotta and faience, as well as coloured glazed tiles.
- 4.22 There are a number of key buildings that enhance the character of the individual spaces or form landmarks. These include the Listed Buildings, The Co-operative department store (Plate 2) and, to a lesser extent, the former State cinema.



Plate 2 - The 1930s Co-operative Department Store on Spital Street

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.23 Features that detract from the character of Character Area 2 include a modern lamp post on Orchard Street, the Priory Centre frontage, 52-54 Spital Street, a two storey 20th century yellow brick building and Westgate House at the west end of the street and the space in front of it. The fact that the typical Conservation Area street lamps do not extend to the west of Kent Road detracts from the unified character of the area.

- 4.24 There are too many posts, bollard and lamp post types in this part of the Conservation Area.

CHARACTER AREA 3- HIGH STREET (FIG. 10, WEST & EAST, FIG 13, WEST & EAST)

Character

- 4.25 The High Street forms the principal central element of the public realm within Dartford and the buildings and plot widths retain evidence of every period of its development since the medieval period. Indeed the lines of the frontages and the proportions of the space have changed little since then. The width of the street and the architecture give the impression of an elongated square in which events such as the market are held. The pedestrianisation enhances this sense of a public space suitable for the major events of the Town.
- 4.26 The continuous, largely flat fronted hard edges that the buildings present onto the High Street form an essential part of the quality of the open space and its sense of enclosure. This is accentuated by the way that the other roads feed into the High Street. Thus, when approaching down Hythe Street the façade of the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel is at an oblique angle and provides a sense of anticipation of the High Street opening up ahead (see Plate 3). The same effect is achieved when approaching from the Overy Liberty to the east. From Lowfield Street, Market Place and Market Street the views into the High Street are closed by the classical facades of the High Street buildings. The size of these buildings and sense of the width of the High Street itself still provide a sense of approaching a large more important space. The northern approaches through Bullace Lane, Bank Court and Bull's Head Yard provide suddenly revealed views of the High Street.
- 4.27 The curved facades feature prominently in views into and out of the High Street area. The bow on 21 West Hill and the curve of the buildings at the junction of Hythe and Spital Streets dominate the views to the west. 37 High Street has a curved corner and views into the area from Central Park to the south towards the High Street feature the bow at the rear of number 43 High Street, a feature historically visible from the former gardens of Bank House. The curved roof of 55 High Street terminates the view to the south from the north end of Bullace Lane.
- 4.28 Another aspect of the approaches to the High Street from Spital Street and Hythe Street is the way in which the roads narrow to form gates into the High Street enhancing the sense of enclosure. Thus in Hythe Street the north elevations of numbers 9 and 18 act as a gateway (Plate 3, as above), while on Spital Street the side elevation of the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel fulfils the same function. Similarly the south elevations of 13 and 16 Lowfield Street which step forward from the frontages of the buildings to their south provides a gateway on Lowfield Street.
- 4.29 From within the main part of the High Street itself the views to the east are closed by the Holy Trinity Church. Views to the west are restricted by the side elevation of number 3 High Street (with its mural that enlivens the street) and by the buildings at the bottom of Hythe Street. The focal point of this view is of West Hill and the bow on the south elevation of 21 West Hill. From the south side of the Church and from parts of the High Street there are views of East Hill and Bridge House.

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- 4.30 Within the High Street itself there are three main clusters of buildings of interest and landmark buildings that confer specific variations in character in different parts of the High Street. At the eastern end of the High Street the Church is the dominant feature. Surrounding buildings, such as Bridge House, 80 and 82 High Street and 55 High Street are generally two storeys high and the contrast in scale with the church tower accentuates the primacy of the church. The High Street is particularly wide at its junction with Market Street and although there is a sense of enclosure at this end of the street the buildings and their relationship with the spaces retain their medieval scale.
- 4.31 The cluster of buildings at the junction of Market Place and High Street includes two 18th century Listed Buildings and several unlisted classical buildings. This part of the High street retains its 18th and 19th century character and retains a relationship with the hinterland to the south.
- 4.32 The third cluster of buildings of interest is at the western end of the High Street and show considerable variation in style and form. On the south side of the High Street the buildings to the east of Lowfield Street retain their medieval proportions. The demolition of One Bell public house has created a square at the intersection of the High Street and Lowfield Street and the facades of the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel and 3 High Street represent major landmarks. The difference in street furniture here creates a focal point where people congregate and pause. An interpretation board and mural enhance the quality of this space.
- 4.33 The south end of Hythe Street and the north end of Lowfield Street contribute to the special character of this part of the High Street. In the southern part of Hythe Street the narrow street emphasises the openness of the High Street and there is a continuation in the variety of architectural styles. The boundary between Hythe and High Streets is also undefined with the buildings on both streets forming continuous facades. The continuous classical flat building frontages at the north end of Lowfield Street continue the effect of the High Street building frontages, enhancing the sense of enclosure and the north end of the street forms part of the space around One Bell Corner. The fact that the Lowfield Street buildings are lower than some of those on the adjacent part of the High Street, emphasises the primacy of the High Street.
- 4.34 The buildings at the west end of the High Street are two to four storeys high and the architecture is varied, despite the dominance of classicism. Although the building frontages confer a unified form to the space the variety of architectural styles and building heights and widths create vibrancy and chart the history of the Town Centre.
- 4.35 The variety of architectural styles contributes to the vibrancy of the space and to the variations in atmosphere within the Character Area. The various styles also represent all periods of the Town Centre's development since the Norman period. Holy Trinity Church is partly Romanesque, but mostly gothic; there are timber framed buildings, classical buildings dating from beginning of the 18th century, with characteristic windows flush with the external elevation and either surviving overhanging eaves cornices or evidence that they once had them. Flat fronted classical buildings dating from late 18th century to the 20th century and some late 19th and early 20th century buildings show Jacobean revival, Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne Movement influences. There are weatherboarded elements at the rear of 33-35 High Street. There is some evidence that 17th to 19th century buildings have been refaced. This evidence is important as it adds to the interpretability of the High Street's history.
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- 4.36 Historic walling materials include yellow stock brick, red brick, stone, stucco and weatherboarding. Roofs have a peg and pan tile cover. These materials harmonise with those in the rest of the Conservation Area and provide a continuous link in character.



Plate 3 - The view of the High Street from Hythe Street, showing the sudden arrowing of Hythe Street to create a gate into the Town Centre

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.37 The substation and elements at the rear of the Orchards Shopping Centre at the north end of Bull's Head Yard detract from the character of the yard and produce an abrupt change in character.
- 4.38 The Orchards Centre's blue painted front elevation detracts from the character of the High Street, as the colours contrast with the traditional materials of the High Street. Its projecting porch diminishes the impact of the historic building line and the proportions of the High Street space. The modern façade of 21-23a High Street also detracts from the character of the High Street. These two buildings produce a slight break in character between the east and western parts of the High Street.

- 4.39 The 1960s shop at 47-49 High Street is out of scale compared with the other buildings at the east end of High Street and its style and colour also jar with the other buildings. It is also a prominent negative feature in many of the long views within the Conservation Area, especially when viewed from Darenth Road and East Hill (Plate 4). The adjacent building (51 High Street) also detracts from the character of the area.



Plate 4 - View to the west from Darenth Road

- 4.40 The brick paving of the pedestrian areas is not of historic interest, although it only detracts slightly from the historic character of the character area. The historic paving was very different (see below).
- 4.41 The location of the former Market House is marked by lighting and street furniture that detracts from the appearance of the area. There are several inappropriate modern street lights, although some types are appropriate to the character of the area or their particular location. Thus the modern lighting at One Bell corner is appropriate to the street design, while the imitation gas lamps between Holy Trinity Church and 82 High Street are also appropriate.
- 4.42 The number and variety of bollards detracts from the area and clutters the space.
- 4.43 The area at the north end of Bullace Lane provides a poor quality setting to the medieval lane.

CHARACTER AREA 4- LOWFIELD STREET (FIG. 10, WEST, FIG 13, WEST)**Character**

- 4.44 This Character Area lies on the southern edge of the Town Centre and so contains buildings that are typical of their central location (such as 18-36 Lowfield Street) as well as buildings that have a more out of town character, such as numbers 33-39.
- 4.45 The different periods represented in the buildings means that the area is varied in character. The buildings are mostly two to three storeys high and are classical, Arts and Crafts, modernist and Art Deco. The Art Deco buildings are concentrated on the west end of Market Street, which was laid out between the World Wars.
- 4.46 The Priory Centre does not respect the historic building lines and there is consequently a break in character on the west side of Lowfield Street. The Listed Buildings are therefore out on a limb to the south and there is an abrupt change in character to the south and west of the Almshouses.
- 4.47 Historically the buildings fronted onto the pavement along the length of Lowfield Street. Although this pattern has been broken, the line of the building frontages of 33-43 Lowfield Street continues that at the north end of the street and is itself continued further south along the street where the houses are generally of two storeys.
- 4.48 The historic views to the east out of the area towards East Hill and Acacia Hall are marred by the club house adjacent to Acacia Hall.
- 4.49 Views from the west of the yellow brick rear elevations and varied roofs of the buildings on the east side of Lowfield Street are of interest.
- 4.50 The mostly weatherboarded Two Brewers has thematic links with other weatherboarded buildings in the Conservation Area.

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.51 The Priory Centre is set back from the original building frontages on the Street, which leaves the two Listed Buildings isolated.
- 4.52 The modern buildings immediately behind the two Listed Buildings and the road and pavement immediately to the south of the Almshouses (numbers 41 and 43) detract from the setting of the Listed Buildings.

CHARACTER AREA 5- MARKET PLACE AND CENTRAL PARK (FIG. 10, WEST & EAST, FIG 12 WEST & EAST)**Character**

- 4.53 This area includes much of Central Park, most of Market Street and part of Market Place. The characters of the Park and Market Street are very different. The Park retains its historic character and evidence of its various historic phases. The formal north end reflects its civic history from 1916 onwards. To the south of the Library, specimen trees and its landscaped character refer to its history as the garden of Bank House. Its south end reflects the openness of the former 1905 recreation

ground and the mill pond and trees on its east side refer to the former industrial uses of the Darent.

- 4.54 Market Street, on the other hand, was deliberately cut through between the park and the High Street in the 1920s and largely divides Central Park from the High Street. It has developed little character of its own, although the trees and views provide some of the lost linkage in that they preserve the visual links between the Park and the rear of 33-45 High Street. The views of the rear of Bank House and of the bow on the rear of 43 High Street were visible from the former gardens of Bank House and should, where possible be maintained and maximised. Market Street is a largely hard surfaced open area fringed by buildings that define the space. It is a poor space consisting of a small bus station and car parking spaces.
- 4.55 The single storey 1920s and 1930s buildings refer to the market function that moved to this part of the town in the late 18th century. Views from this space to the east towards East Hill and Acacia Hall are marred by the club house at Acacia Hall. Views to the west take in the rear elements of 18-36 Lowfield Street. The views of the upper parts of the northernmost of these buildings form part of the historic character of this part of the area. Views to the west are diminished by the multi-storey car park that dominates the horizon. Long views into the park from the north include specimen trees and plantations that form part of the character of the Park and of the adjacent space.
- 4.56 Unlike in the rest of the Conservation Area the predominant material is red brick and there are unusually two single storey shopping parades.

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.57 Market Street is currently a poor quality space with little historic character. Although the open space provides a visual link between the park and the historically related High Street buildings, its surfaces and use as a car park provides a break in character between the Park and the High Street.
- 4.58 The car park to the west of the park detracts from its character, as do the former adult education centre and buildings immediately adjacent to the car park to its west.
- 4.59 The Thames Water pumping station adjacent to the play area in the park detracts from the park's character.

CHARACTER AREA 6- ACACIA HALL & ITS ENVIRONS (FIG. 10, EAST, FIG 12, EAST)

Character

- 4.60 The character of the area is secluded, created by the contrast between this area and the activity and traffic of the High Street, Overy Liberty and East Hill. The area is bounded by walls, buildings, fences, railings and tree plantations which contribute to the seclusion. The relative inaccessibility of this area has preserved fragile features, such as trees, bridges and ponds, that would otherwise have disappeared over time. The restricted views are therefore part of the character of the area. Lawns and tree plantations form an essential part of the area's character.

- 4.61 Architectural style and materials provide a consistent theme in this area. The three main historic buildings with masonry walls (Bridge House, Acacia Hall and the Stables) are built in yellow or brown brick, in a classical style and are of high local importance. Boundary walls are also yellow brick (except for the Kentish ragstone parapet wall of the Town Bridge) and there are some railings beyond the east end of the bridge's parapet. There is also a prominent weatherboarded building, associated with the former milling activity that sits on a brown brick plinth. The form, materials and industrial historic associations of this building are all of local interest.
- 4.62 The views of the Darent foot bridge, willow trees and the elevations of Acacia Hall and Bridge House are important elements of the area's character, as are views north along the river from the club house to Bridge House.
- 4.63 The views into the area from Darenth Road, Overy Liberty and East Hill are dominated by Bridge House, the weatherboarded gable of the mill building, Acacia Hall and the Stables with their prominent cupola (see Plates 5 & 6).
- 4.64 Views of East Hill and its tree screen contribute to the secluded and almost rural character of the area.



Plate 5 - View south west towards the Acacia Hall Character Area from Overy Street



Plate 6 - View towards the Acacia Hall Character Area and specifically the stables

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.65 A small park on the east bank of the Darent is separate from the rest of the area and is a poorly used space.
- 4.66 The club house adjacent to Acacia Hall detracts from the character of the area and detracts from the views from the east and west.

CHARACTER AREA 7- OVERY STREET & LOWER EAST HILL (FIG. 10, EAST, FIG 13, EAST)

Character

- 4.67 The group of buildings at the base of East Hill, the north end of Darenth Road and the south end of Overy Street form an isolated historic fragment, separated from the historic areas on the west side of the river by the major road junction and the late 20th century flood defences on the River Darent. The construction of the new road to the south of Overy Liberty will enhance this sense of severance.
- 4.68 The buildings at the base of East Hill and on Overy Street are varied in character and generally front directly onto the pavement. They are visible from Character Areas 3 and 6 (Plate 7) and form an important part of the view from St Edmund's burial ground and the upper parts of East Hill. The north gable of 17 Overy Street is an important element of the view from the north (see Plate 8). Views into the area from the west are of considerable importance and the yellow brick Victorian villa on Overy Street forms part of the setting of the Listed Buildings. 29 East Hill and 1 Darenth Road (one building) are especially prominent in views down the hill from the east as

well as from the west. The views towards Bridge House, Acacia Hall, the stables and the weatherboarded mill building in Character Area 6 provide some context to the Listed Buildings and unlisted buildings of interest.

- 4.69 A tree on the east side of the river provides some linkage between Overy Street and the main part of the Conservation Area as do the railings on the north side of the town bridge.
- 4.70 Materials provide a unified theme to the character of the area. The walling is generally of yellow brick with some red brick. The timber framed buildings materials are generally rendered although there is some weatherboarding. The roofing is largely slate and peg tile.



Plate 7 - View of some of the Overy Street Listed Buildings from the Overy Liberty



Plate 8 - The north gable of 17 Overy Street

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.71 The tall three storey 20th century element at the rear of 21 East Hill is a landmark building and is of no historic interest. The heavy traffic on Home Gardens, Hanau Bridge and East Hill detracts from the character of the area and inhibits pedestrian movement. These wide roads provide a break in character and compromise the setting of the Listed Buildings. The area around the remains of the Victoria Mill and the waterway that powered it are currently poor quality areas that are largely cut off from the parts of the town to the east and west, although they have considerable potential for interpretation and leisure and amenity provision.

CHARACTER AREA 8- EAST HILL (FIG. 11, MAP B, FIG. 12 MAP B)

Character

- 4.72 St Edmund's Burial Ground is a quiet grass covered space surrounded by low walls on three sides. The chest tombs, trees and paths that run at angles to the edges of the space break up the burial ground itself and give it a slightly unkempt, rural appearance, reminiscent of a country churchyard. This character is vulnerable as the space is dominated by the housing to the south east that is built at a higher level (Plate 9) and the roofs of the housing on Great Queen Street are clearly visible from the space.
- 4.73 Views towards and past the burial ground from the east and south east are dramatic as the battered retaining walls form major landscape features (Plate 10). On descending the Hill there is a sense of enclosure and anticipation as the buildings at

the foot of the hill and the town are gradually revealed. This is enhanced by the retaining walls on either side of the road. The gorge like quality of the road at this point is similar to the effect on approaching the town from West Hill



Plate 9 - View from St Edmund's burial ground to the south east



Plate 10 - View of St Edmund's burial ground from the south east

Buildings and Features that Detract from Character

- 4.74 The houses built against the northern boundary of the burial ground detract from the appearance of the burial ground.

5. Summary of Special Interest

5.1 The key characteristics that form the special interest of the Conservation Area are summarised below.

- ◆ The Conservation Area preserves evidence for the staged growth of the Town Centre and the hierarchy and various functions of its component character areas over time.
 - Character Area 3 represents the medieval core of town, with the High Street as its principal space. The building frontages, historic plot widths, the presence of high quality buildings of many periods and the quality of the space reflect this. The three main historic building clusters form distinct groups of interest. The evidence of the Roman Road in Bull's Head Yard is of interest.
 - Character Area 7 represents an early suburb over the river and parts of the river itself, which was a major trade route and a focus of the town's early and later industry. Regionally, the Overy Street buildings form an important intact 17th century group representative of suburban vernacular housing of the period.
 - Character Area 2 represents an early suburb that was gradually subsumed into the Town Centre, creating varied plot widths, building types and orientations and varied frontages, which have created many slight variations in character and individual partly enclosed spaces along the length of Spital Street, in contrast to the High Street which forms a single well defined space.
 - Character Area 4 represents a medieval suburb that developed away from the main east-west axis through the town. The juxtaposition of almshouses (a peripheral building type) and Town Centre buildings reflect this. The Art Deco buildings on Market Street represent the creation of a 1920s and 1930s route past the High Street. The disjointedness of Character Area 4 reflects its economic decline in the 20th century.
 - Central Park, in Character Area 5 represents both the gardens of the higher status High Street properties that restricted urban growth to the south east and the growth of civic amenity provision in the form of the Library and recreation ground (established in 1905) that grew into the main open space within the Town Centre. The mill pond survives as part of the Town's industrial heritage. Features within the park represent important aspects of the Town's history, such as the medieval bridge arch, the war memorial and the location of the mill pond.
 - Character Area 6 represents both a surviving high status suburban house in its grounds (Acacia Hall), a town house (Bridge House) and evidence of the Town's industrial past.
 - The varied buildings and spaces of Character Area 1 preserve the types of activities and institutions that were attracted to the edge of Town.

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- Character Area 8 includes the burial ground, a Saxon and medieval satellite development and evidence of 19th century residential suburban expansion. It contains an important monument and chest tombs. The walls of the burial ground are major landscape features.
 - ◆ The Conservation Area preserves important evidence of the Roman road and evidence of the medieval street pattern.
 - The main east-west route forms the main road axis through the Conservation Area. The line of the Roman road may be evident in Bull's Head Yard and it survives as archaeological remains. High Street, Hythe Street, Lowfield Street, Bullace Lane and Overy Liberty preserve the medieval and early post-medieval character of the town through the survival of the street pattern and street widths (especially the wide High Street). This character is also represented by the survival of many of the narrow medieval High Street burgage plots and through the buildings that survive from the period, including the timber framed 15th to 17th century houses, on Bullace Lane, the narrow fronted buildings that may retain elements dating to this period at 11 and 15 High Street and at the rear of 24 High Street (facing onto Bull's Head Yard) and the medieval Holy Trinity Church. The early buildings on Spital Street (numbers 17a and 57) also survive from this period, and their wider plot widths and orientation with their long axes parallel to the street indicate their edge of town location.
 - ◆ The green spaces have heavily influenced the growth of the town.
 - The historic arrangement whereby the presence of two important houses and their gardens restricted urban growth to the south east of the High Street and the fact that Central Park grew from these and from an early 20th century recreation ground, has meant that the green area effectively extends into the heart of the town, has created quiet areas with varied and contrasting character to other parts of the town and is of historic interest in its own right. There are strong visual links between Central Park and of the High Street buildings' rear elevations.
 - ◆ There are important historical and visual links between the sub character areas of the Conservation Area.
 - This arises from the fact that the town grew from its central area, the High Street, to the east and west along the line of the already existing east-west road. This has created long views along the streets to the east and west (uniting Character Areas 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8).
 - ◆ The Town Centre's appearance, atmosphere and important views are heavily influenced by the fact that it is situated in an alluvial valley between two ranges of hills.
 - The view framework within the Conservation Area is dominated by the views of and from East Hill and West Hill, with Holy Trinity Church, St Edmunds burial ground and the tree screen on East Hill dominating views from the west and The bow on 21 West Hill and the former workhouse buildings dominating
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views from the east. There are also dramatic views of the Town Centre from Darenth Road and the lower parts of East Hill. Fig. 11 shows long views of importance.

- ◆ The Conservation Area preserves important evidence of the Town's industrial history.
 - The remains of mills and mill related buildings, such as the surviving elements of the Victoria Mill, the small weatherboarded building to the south of Bridge House, the mill pond in Central Park and the waterways themselves that provided Dartford's industries with power, all preserve important industrial evidence.
- ◆ There is a high concentration of buildings of architectural merit and historic interest within the Conservation Area. Some are grouped together which contributes to the creation of distinct variations in character and scale
 - These include 32 Statutory Listings of Buildings and features, some of which are formed by more than one building. There are also a number of buildings that would qualify for inclusion on a local list. There are some groups of Listed Buildings. These and individual Listed Buildings often have group interest with nearby buildings of local interest. The groups are listed below:

Table 5.1 - Groups of Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings

Well Defined Groups of Listed Buildings	Unlisted Buildings of Interest in the Group
Workhouse (front and rear ranges) Police Station	Workhouse chapel National School
Zion Chapel	Linden Cottage, 1-2 Priory Hill, workshop behind 29 West Hill
21-29 West Hill Twisleton's Almshouses	Former Congregationalists Church National School
53-55 Spital Street Royal Oak (57 Spital Street)	1 St James Place and gas lamp 45-51 Spital Street
County Court Methodist Church Beadles (Litten Tree)	43 Spital Street 44-50 Spital Street
17a High Street (Coach and Horses)	Former State Cinema, Co-operative Department Store
Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel	3 High Street and other buildings around the junctions of Lowfield Street, Hythe Street and the High Street
33 Lowfield Street (Two Brewers) Lowfield St Almshouses	35-39 Lowfield Street
44 High Street 45 High Street	43 High Street 33-35 High Street

Well Defined Groups of Listed Buildings	Unlisted Buildings of Interest in the Group
Holy Trinity Church 80 High Street 82 High Street Bridge House	
Acacia Hall Bridge House	Stables Weatherboarded building south of Bridge House
Library	
War Memorial and formal gardens	
1-17 Overy Street	2 East Hill
14 and 16 East Hill	2 East Hill 21 East Hill 29 East Hill and 1 Darenth Road
St Edmund's Church yard Martyr's Memorial	

- ◆ There is a wide variety of buildings of various periods and styles throughout the Conservation Area, some of which are distinctive to the area
 - Although there are variations in the architectural styles of the buildings between Character Areas, there are common architectural themes throughout the Conservation Area. The churches are all largely gothic (with the exception of the Zion Chapel and the Norman parts of Holy Trinity Church); the 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings are generally of two storeys with jetties, although some have large panels between the timbers while others have closer studding. The early 18th century brick buildings that formerly or still have overhanging eaves cornices are confined to the High Street, although there are later buildings of this form elsewhere, such as the 19th century Acacia Hall. The early 18th century buildings typically have characteristic red brick dressings and timber eaves cornices. It is likely that other High Street buildings had similar frontages (especially where the roofs were steeply pitched) and that these were later re-fronted to accord with the fashion for flat fronted buildings that arose from the London fire regulations of 1709. There are many flat fronted classical buildings throughout the area, dating to the late 18th century to the 20th century, although these are mostly concentrated on the High Street and at the north end of Lowfield Street. There are also a number of 19th century classical buildings with overhanging eaves.
 - The use of weatherboarding on timber framed buildings in the late 17th to 19th century buildings is of particular interest in a region renowned as a centre of brick production, and reflected the availability of Baltic softwood from the Thames trade, and examples of this form of construction appears throughout the Conservation Area. The 19th century church buildings and the Dartford National School on West Hill (1826) are generally built in the gothic style. There are many late 19th century to early 20th century buildings which display Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne movement influences. These buildings tend

to have red brick facades with gables (occasionally shaped) fronting onto the street. Some buildings (most notably the library) show Edwardian baroque influences. The Art Deco buildings are situated on Spital Street and on Market Street (created during this style's heyday). There are few, if prominent, modernist buildings.

- ◆ The line of the building frontages generally follow the same pattern throughout the Conservation Area.
 - With the exceptions of the properties at the top of East Hill, Highfield Road, Spring Vale North, parts of West Hill and the area north of West Hill around Twisleton Court and the Zion Baptist Chapel, the buildings of the Conservation Area generally present hard edges to the pavements. This tends to create a sense of enclosure, especially where the roads are not straight.
- ◆ The use of traditional materials across the Conservation Area contributes to a consistent character and appearance.
 - The predominant material in the Conservation Area is yellow stock brick, although there is some use of brown brick. The walling is generally laid in Flemish bond. Red brick is used on some 18th and many late 19th to early 20th century facades and there are some buildings with yellow or brown brick with red brick dressings. There is also occasional use of white 'gault' brick, that harmonises with the yellow brick. The classical and most of the gothic influenced buildings have brickwork laid in Flemish bond. Other historic walling is rendered and there is some weatherboarding. Stone is occasionally used as decoration, with only one example of its use as a general cladding material (the Co-operative department store). There is some use of decorative terra cotta and faience and decorative glazed tiling appears on some buildings. Most roofs are slate covered. Other historic materials include peg tile and pan tile.
 - There is little historic paving, with only a small area at the rear of 29 West Hill retaining a historic irregularly paved area of mixed bricks, pebbles and other stone fragments. There is a small area with some stone paving in front of Holy Trinity Church. Many of the granite kerbs are of interest and should be preserved or reused where possible.
- ◆ Although the survival of historic street furniture is rare in the Conservation Area, surviving examples contribute to the area's distinctive atmosphere.
 - Street furniture includes various historic lamps. The more recent Conservation Area street lighting provides a typological link between the different parts of the Conservation Area, which enhances its sense of place, although this lighting only extends part of the way along Spital Street, is absent from West Hill, and does not extend to the East of the High Street.
 - Other features in the public realm that are of interest, are guards stones, or 'glinters', which prevent damage to corner brickwork from vehicles (Plate 11) and fire cock marks, which are cast-iron plates bearing the letters 'FC' and a

distance in feet from the nearest source of water to extinguish flames (Plate 12). The use of bollards makes reference to the fact that posts were traditionally used to mark the pedestrian areas at the sides of urban street, although the Conservation Area has too many bollards.



Plate 11 - Guard Stones and a Bollard on the High Street



Plate 12 - One of the Fire Cock Marks that Appear on a Number of Buildings

6. Boundaries

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 There is a duty placed upon Local Authorities to review the boundaries of their Conservation Areas from time to time and the guidance makes it clear that the boundaries of Conservation Areas have to be justified and argued logically. Since the designation of the Conservation Area in 1980 its boundaries have been reviewed twice. The first review was in 1998, and resulted in the boundaries shown on fig. 14. The proposed boundaries resulting from the review that was undertaken for this Conservation Area Appraisal are also shown on fig. 14.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE CURRENT BOUNDARIES

- 6.2 Generally, the boundaries of the Conservation Area are defined by the limits of the surviving historic character of the buildings and spaces and by the need to preserve this character and appearance. The boundaries generally follow the limits of the Town Centre before its expansion in the late 19th century, with the addition of Central Park, which was historically not built-up, had important links with the Town Centre, and played an important role in shaping the Town's expansion in the 19th and 20th century. Areas of late 19th century suburban housing that are included within the boundaries are either within the setting of sensitive parts of the Conservation Area, such as the housing at the top of East Hill and on Great Queen Street, on Mount Pleasant Road, on Highfield Road and Highfield Road North, or link buildings on the periphery to the main part of the area, such as the housing around the Baptist church on Highfield Road.
- 6.3 Beyond the boundaries the town is either modern in character or characterised by late 19th century to early 20th century speculative two storey housing.
- 6.4 44-48 West Hill are included in the Conservation Area as the gable wall of 48 West Hill forms a narrow gateway into the Conservation Area with the listed former Workhouse buildings opposite.
- 6.5 The buildings at the north end of Highfield Road and Spring Vale North includes the earliest phase of large scale suburban housing development in this part of the town, includes the 1865-1867 gothic revival Baptist Church, which thematically forms part of a group of gothic revival buildings at this end of the Town Centre and provides context to the yellow brick Magistrates' Court. The building to the south of the court (1 and 3 Highfield Road, is earlier than the court building. The inclusion of the Victorian semi detached yellow brick houses on the south side of Summerhill Road provides context to the gothic revival church and the court. The cottages at 13 -15 Spring Vale North date to the 1860s and are among the earliest buildings built around Highfield Road.
- 6.6 The street frontages of the Priory Centre are included due to their location on the main streets of the Town Centre.

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- 6.7 The boundary follows the break in historic character around the two Listed Buildings on Lowfield Street. Although the buildings to the rear of the properties fronting onto Lowfield Street are of no interest, the properties behind those on the east side of Lowfield Street are highly visible from Market Street and the need for any new development to preserve and enhance the character of the surrounding features within the Conservation Area is a strong argument for their inclusion.
- 6.8 The boundary takes in the boundary of the historic areas within Central Park. These include the boundaries of the former gardens of Bank House, the current boundary of the more formal part of the park at its northern end, including many interesting specimen trees, and much of the former recreation ground, dating to 1905, from which the public park grew. The southernmost extent of the Conservation Area represents the southernmost extent of the original recreation ground. The Conservation Area boundary extends eastwards from the eastern edge of the former recreation ground and follows a path to encompass the former location of a mill pond that supplied power to the former mill downstream. The boundary encompasses the gardens of Acacia Hall and the tree screen that contributes to its enclosed character. It excludes the more modern sporting facilities. The Vicarage is included as well as the adjacent channel that powered the former Victoria Flour Mill.
- 6.9 The historic buildings on Darenth Road are included. The boundary includes the tree screens and housing form part of the historic views from the west and to protect the setting of St Edmund's burial ground. The boundary encompasses the buildings that overlook the burial ground on East Hill and Great Queen Street. The boundary extends across the modern Home Gardens to protect the setting of the Listed Buildings and includes a prominent tree between Overy Street and the River Darent. Incorporating this modern space allows for the protection of important views towards both Overy Street and the Church and enhancement of the poor quality space.
- 6.10 The Conservation Area boundary includes the setting of Bullace Lane and the backs of the historic properties on the north side of the High Street.
- 6.11 At Hythe Street the north end of the Conservation Area follows the north boundaries of numbers 9 and 18 which act as narrow gates into the Conservation Area. The boundary includes the Copperfields development, which harmonises with the Hythe and Spital Street buildings and which extends to Spital Street. The Cloisters, an imitation Elizabethan red brick development is included. The fact that the boundary steps slightly to the north around The Cloisters partly protects views on and of the approaches along Orchard Street and Kent Road. The boundary extends northwards to take in Enterprise House, a building of local architectural and historic interest that is currently out of context and over Highfield Road North to include 6 Essex Road. This northern extension protects the road junction to the south from further erosion of character.

Part 2 - Management Plan

7. Issues

7.1 Issues, relating either to the Conservation Area as a whole or to the individual character areas generally concern

- ◆ aspects that diminish or detract from the character of the Conservation Area that need to be addressed, relating to buildings, uses or the public realm
- ◆ economic and social issues
- ◆ problems relating to movement and connectivity

ISSUES RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION AREA AS A WHOLE

Vacancy

7.2 There is a degree of ground floor vacancy in the properties on the southern side of the High Street, to the east and west of its junction with Market Place, and on the south side of Spital Street. Where there is ground floor vacancy it is mostly temporary and new uses are proposed in many cases.

7.3 The upper floors on the High Street, Hythe Street, Lowfield Street and Spital Street are generally used as offices or for storage related to the ground floor uses, although some of the upper floors are vacant. There are also problems of access to upper floors that in some cases preclude uses that do not relate to the ground floor activities. Few of the upper floors on these streets are residential. Increased use of the upper floors of the Town Centre buildings would make the Town Centre more vibrant and stimulate the economy further.

Low Residential Population and Balance of Uses

7.4 The population of the Conservation Area is relatively low considering its extent and residential use is generally confined to the periphery. The 2001 census included statistics for areas that extended beyond the current Conservation Area boundary. These show that an area extending from the junction of West Hill and Spital Street, in the west, to Bridge House in the east and extending as far south as Heath Street and as far north as Westgate Road had a population of only 228. The population of the east end of the Conservation Area is mostly concentrated on Great Queen Street. At the west end of the Conservation Area the census area that includes much of West Hill has a population of 258, although half of this area consists of residential housing outside the Conservation Area.

7.5 The low population derives from the high proportion of non-residential use buildings and the use of upper floors for offices and storage. The Town Centre buildings sometimes have poor access to the upper floors. The low population means that especially the High Street and the north end of Lowfield Street can be relatively quiet when commercial premises are not open, where more diverse activities in addition to the existing bars, would enhance vibrancy. There may be an opportunity for purpose-built residential accommodation on the potential major development site on Lowfield

Street. This would considerably increase the population and diversity of activities within the Town Centre. However, property owners within the High Street and the north end of Lowfield Street Town Centre should be encouraged to create more diversity in upper floor uses, including residential uses where appropriate.

Colours and Materials

- 7.6 The Conservation Area Appraisal indicated the traditional materials used within the Conservation Area. These include yellow and 'brown' stock brick, and red brick for the brick walling, with textured brick in some of the mid-20th century buildings. The roofs are generally slated, or have a pan or peg tile cover. Other materials include stone (brown sandstone, Portland stone and brown oolitic limestone), faience, terra cotta and some decorated glazed tiling, used sparsely. Window frames are timber sashes and occasionally casements or iron or steel framed casements on later buildings.
- 7.7 A number of mid to late 20th century buildings and repairs of older buildings employ colours and materials that are inappropriate and jar with the traditional materials and colours. These include the light brown brick used in a number of mid 20th century buildings such as the façades of 21 to 23a High Street and 52 Spital Street (Plate 13).



Plate 13 - Inappropriate light brown coloured brick appears on a number of buildings

- 7.8 Some shop fascias and buildings have colour schemes that clash with the finishes on the surrounding historic buildings. Examples include the green 1960s office block on the High Street and Market Street (Plate 14) and the Orchards Centre, which is painted bright blue (Plate 15). Plate 16 shows another High Street example of an inappropriately brightly coloured shop fascia.



Plate 14 - Office block at 47-49 High Street, its scale and colour detract from the character of the Conservation Area



Plate 15 - The bright blue High Street frontage of the Orchards Centre. Its porch breaks forward from the historic building line intruding on the historic space of the market place and breaking the flat fronted character of the facades



Plate 16 - A brightly coloured High Street shop fascia

- 7.9 There is a tendency towards the use of UPVC to replace traditional timber window frames. These are noticeable on Spital Street, East Hill, Hythe Street and the High Street. This can be prevented through the application of Article 4 directions.

Preservation of Fragile or Vulnerable Features and Materials of Interest

- 7.10 There are a number of fragile elements within the Conservation Area that form an essential part of the character, need to be preserved, and that are susceptible to gradual removal. These include the fire cock plates (cast iron plates on some of the buildings indicating the location of former water sources for extinguishing fires, see Plate 2). These date to the beginning of the 20th century. Granite guard stones (Plate 1) that protect the corners of some buildings and narrow vehicular passages are also vulnerable to removal.
- 7.11 Tuck pointing is vulnerable to removal and repointing, as is lime mortar pointing. The inappropriate use of cementitious mortar to point relatively soft brick is a problem throughout the country and needs to be addressed in Dartford to preserve the historic brickwork, especially in the case of the soft red brick used in many late 19th to early 20th century building facades. Weatherboarding is also vulnerable to poor maintenance. The fact that it was also usually applied using softwood makes this material more vulnerable. Regular repainting is important.

Poor Connectivity and Movement

- 7.12 There is currently poor connectivity between the railway station and the High Street. The pedestrian route is not legible from north to south although there are signs in the High Street that indicate the route to the north

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- 7.13 There is also poor visual and physical connectivity between the Acacia Hall Character Area and Overy Street and Lower East Hill. The only current route is through the north end of Character Area 6 and there are few visual connections between Acacia Hall and Central Park. Although the lack of connection has historically dictated the development of these areas' different characters, it has left Acacia Hall and the area to its south isolated within the Town Centre and unable to fulfil its economic, social and amenity potential. Its isolation also diminishes appreciation of its heritage value.
- 7.14 Much of the river bank is also not accessible.
- 7.15 The 20th century development in the areas to the south and (to a lesser extent) north of Spital Street, to the south of West Hill, to the north of the High Street and to the west of Lowfield Street largely turns its back to the Conservation Area, with some largely unused spaces forming the service access to the uses on the main streets. The quality and diversity of uses in these spaces and physical access routes to and from the main streets should be encouraged.

Insufficient Interpretation of the Heritage Assets

- 7.16 The heritage of the Conservation Area is rich and there is considerable potential to educate residents and visitors on the history and development of the town and on other topics such as architectural or industrial history. Interpretation adds to the public appreciation of the development and historic importance of a place. Interpretation can also assist well-being objectives by informing people about local resources, groups and facilities, such as museum and other exhibits. There is currently some interpretation of the heritage assets of the Conservation Area within the public realm. A successful example is at One Bell Corner, on the High Street, where the intangible heritage of the Conservation Area (local stories) is presented.
- 7.17 In Dartford interpretation may also enhance connectivity by indicating routes through the town to other heritage assets and spaces of interest. An example is on the route from the footbridge on Home Gardens to the north end of Bullace Lane or to Bull's Head Yard.
- 7.18 Interpretation measures are listed in section 8.

Maintaining and Enhancing Views

- 7.19 The views identified on figure 10, West and East, as being of importance connect the heritage assets, form part of their interest and link the spaces to form an essential part of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Building Envelopes

- 7.20 The historic building frontages heights, roof lines, string course heights, parapet, window proportions and building depths together form an important aspect of the Conservation Area's character and interest. Where new development does not respect the adjacent historic buildings there is an adverse impact on the historic character. An example is the porch of the Orchards Shopping Centre that breaks forward from the largely flat fronted hard edges that the High Street facades present to the street. The hard edges define the principal space of the High Street and

preserve the medieval layout. The porch compromises the historic arrangement (Plate 15). Similarly the 1960s building at 47-49 High Street is too tall relative to the nearby buildings. The Priory Centre's street frontages are set back from the general building line of Lowfield Street partly breaking the Link between the buildings at the north end of the street and the Listed Buildings to the south.

Fascias and Advertisements

- 7.21 There are a number of oversized shop fascias that detract from the character of the Conservation Area and the buildings on which they are applied. An example can be seen at the south end of Hythe Street (Plate 17). As can be seen in this example the fascia rises above the fascia cornice and obscures the first floor window sills, disrupting the architectural effect of the building and the terrace as a whole. Appropriate design guidance combined with controls, such as Article 4 directions would be appropriate.



Plate 17 - Oversized shop fascia at the south end of Hythe Street

Lighting

- 7.22 There are too many different types of street light, especially those that date to the mid to late 20th century. The various types of lighting create disconnection within the Conservation Area between the areas with different street lights. There has been an attempt to rectify this by the insertion of lighting specifically intended for the Conservation Area. This type is shown in Plates 18, 19 and 20 and there are three variants of these to serve the various types of location. These lights only extend partly through the Conservation Area. They do not extend westwards beyond Kent Road on Spital Street and do not extend further east than the High Street, although they do extend considerably beyond the Conservation Area Boundary on Lowfield Street.



Plate 18 - The most common type of lighting used in the Conservation Area, for lamp posts at the sides of roads.



Plate 19 - The pattern of the Conservation Area street lights that are attached to buildings



Plate 20 - Where the lamp is freestanding in a large space and is lighting both sides of the lamp post the Conservation Area lamp posts have two lamps.

Bollards

- 7.23 Currently pedestrian areas are defined using blue painted bollards. There are too many of these which clutter some areas especially at the western end of the High Street (Plate 21). There are several types of bollard. Historically, before the pedestrian areas at the sides of roads were paved, timber posts distinguished these areas from the carriageway. Historic photographs of Dartford at the beginning of the 20th century show that posts and rails were used along the gutters on Overy Liberty (Boreham & Harris, 29). However, the many photographs of the period show that the use of bollards was minimal (see plates Plate 24 and 25) in the Town Centre.



Plate 21 - Bollards at the west end of the High Street

Paving

- 7.24 The currently pavements are generally paved with concrete blocks of various sizes with tarmacadam road surfaces and granite kerbstones. In the pedestrianised areas of the High Street, Lowfield Street, Bull's Head Yard and Bullace Lane the roads and pavements are paved with brick of various types (Plates 11, 22 and 23) laid in patterns that delineate the distinction between the former roadway and pavement. This scheme does not make reference to the historic paving, which was very different from this, and does not enhance the historic character of the area. Historic photographs indicate that the Town Centre's pavements in the early 20th century were generally paved with large, probably stone blocks laid perpendicular to the street and in a staggered fashion, with probably granite kerbstones. The road surfaces varied between being unmetalled, having areas of granite setts and bricks in the centre of the road, where there were tram lines, and at the sides of the road between unpaved areas, and having a full covering of granite setts.



Plate 22 - The current brick paving in Market Place showing the current method of marking the distinction between the former road and pavement in the pedestrianised area.



Plate 23 - Current paving in the pedestrianised roadway in the High Street, indicating the plates marking the Town Trails



Plate 24 - The High Street, showing the historic probably stone block paving in 1909

Railings

- 7.25 There are areas of railings next to the Zion Baptist Chapel; in Central Park; to the south east and east of Holy Trinity Church; on the Town Bridge and on the perimeter of the small garden to the south of the Town Bridge's parapet. Railings in Central Park and in the small garden to the south of the Town Bridge's parapet are particularly elaborate and should not be replaced with those of a different pattern. There is evidence of a line of former railings between the Library and the War Memorial in Central Park. If not reinstated the empty mortices showing their former location should not be removed, to aid interpretability.
- 7.26 Historic photographs of the south aisle of Holy Trinity Church in 1905 show relatively plain cast iron railings with pointed arrow finials. This pattern would be appropriate where new railings are proposed.



Plate 25 - View of Holy Trinity Church's south aisle in 1905 showing the relatively simple historic railings

Listed Buildings

- 7.27 Alterations to Listed Buildings are covered by established legislation and a system of controls. The settings of Listed Buildings are more vulnerable to development. The protection of the settings of Listed Buildings by retaining all elements in their setting that contribute to their character and appearance as well as the Conservation Area's character and appearance will preserve the Listed Buildings' character and interest.

Implementation of Planning Controls

- 7.28 Several of the issues identified in this section, especially those relating to the gradual erosion of historic character, have arisen from the current lack of clear published design guidance, from the fact that there were previously resource issues relating to the enforcement team and that there was a related shortfall in proactive and consistent application of planning powers and that breaches to planning regulations in the Town Centre have not necessarily been targeted in a systematic way in the past. Article 4 directions have been applied sparsely within the Conservation Area. There are currently Article 4(1) Directions in place relating to 31, 33 and 35 West Hill and outside the Conservation Area on West Hill. Where applied, Article 4 Directions have succeeded in preventing the erosion of character. However, the Direction for 31, 33 and 35 West Hill was put in place in 1983 and there has been no updating of the application of Article 4 Directions in response to changing threats and circumstances.
- 7.29 In recent times, the enforcement team has been strengthened, with additional members of staff with administrative support, and enforcement is being given an increasingly high priority by the Council. Quarterly Development Control reports to

elected members aim to be as transparent as possible about performance, clearly categorising breaches, and prioritising how these will be dealt with. Unauthorised alterations to Listed Buildings are considered to be within the top priority category. Enforcement action is being taken in the Town Centre Conservation Area - a number of complicated cases have recently been positively resolved and appropriate shop front designs ensured.

Specific Issues for Individual Character Areas

- 7.30 Where actions specific to individual character areas are recommended they are included in this section rather than in section 8 to avoid repetition.

West Hill, Character Area 1

- 7.31 There is considerable traffic congestion on West Hill. As this is the only direct route from the west this is difficult to avoid, although work is ongoing to identify solutions to traffic management issues in the town. The ring road alleviates problems to the east.
- 7.32 Any improvements to the space to the east of 21 West Hill should not obscure views of its side bow from the High Street.
- 7.33 The building plot immediately to the west of Enterprise House, on Essex Road is vacant. The building's west elevation is designed to be joined to another building and a new building on the site is recommended. Any new building has to respect the design and detailing of Enterprise House and its west elevation should harmonise with the yellow brickwork that characterises the buildings and walls in this area.
- 7.34 The north side of the road junction at the base of West Hill is a poor quality space and creates a major break in character.
- 7.35 Westgate House detracts from the character of the area. Replacement of Westgate House with a building that respects the historic building lines should be encouraged.
- 7.36 There is a small area of paving at the back of 29 West Hill that is paved with a mixture of stones, brick fragments and other rubble. This surface is similar to other historic paving (all now gone) in the lower status areas of the town and should be preserved as a rare survival.

Spital Street, Character Area 2

- 7.37 There is poor access to and from the south of the Character Area, although this was the case historically.
- 7.38 The rear areas of the properties on the south side of Spital Street are empty and could be improved.
- 7.39 The Conservation Area lighting should be extended westwards (see above)
- 7.40 22-26 Spital Street's frontage should be replaced with a design that enhances the Conservation Area and the former Gem Cinema behind retained.

- 7.41 The rear elements of the Co-operative Department Store are not of interest although the stone clad elements are of considerable local historical and architectural interest.
- 7.42 The two storey shop/workshop towards the south end of Orchard Street, which faces towards the former State Cinema on Spital Street, currently obstructs Orchard Street. It is, however, of interest and adds variety to the built form of the Character Area and the Conservation Area in general, as the only building of its type.
- 7.43 The line of bollards at the east end of the street aligns with the front wall of the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel. This does not refer to the line of earlier building frontages as the Hotel was always set slightly forward from the adjacent buildings on Spital Street and they therefore serve no historic function.

High Street, Character Area 3

- 7.44 There is poor connectivity to the north, and the buildings outside the Conservation Area to the north of the High Street turn their backs on the High Street Buildings. Both of these issues are discussed above.
- 7.45 On Bull's Head Yard and Bank Court there should be windows and doors to the yards. The jettied building on Bull's Head Yard has blocked openings that the owners should be encouraged to re-open.
- 7.46 The porch of the Orchard Centre intrudes on the principal historic space of the town, detracting from its character. Its colour scheme also detracts from the character of the area.
- 7.47 There are too many bollards and posts within this Character Area. Bollards are discussed above. There should be a reduction in the number of posts by identifying their uses and reviewing the need for retention.
- 7.48 The presence of the former Market House is currently marked by a change in the colour of the paving and a cluster of street furniture (Plates 26 and 27). The street furniture here clutters the street and restricts the open character of the High Street. It is recommended that this cluster of street furniture is removed or extensively reduced. A difference in the paving and an interpretative board are appropriate ways of marking the former Market House.



Plate 26 - View from the west of the change in paving and street furniture to mark the former Market House



Plate 27- View from the east of the change in paving and street furniture to mark the former Market House

Lowfield Street, Character Area 4

- 7.49 There is an abrupt change in character behind the Listed Buildings on Lowfield Street and on the main road immediately to the south of the Lowfield Street Almshouses. The southern part of the Character Area is partly isolated from the main part of the Conservation Area to the north. There is little of the historic character left within the setting of the Listed Buildings except for the buildings within the Conservation Area to their north east. The historic line of the building frontages on the western side of Lowfield Street continues at the north end of the street (north of the Priory Centre, which is set back from the historic building line) and to the south of the Conservation Area. Any redevelopment of the Priory Centre should attempt to re-establish the historic building lines. Similarly, any development on the potential major development opportunity site on the eastern side of Lowfield Street should, if practicable, extend to the Lowfield Street pavement at its north end to preserve the historic building lines and contribute to the setting of the Listed Buildings. The subway to the south of the Almshouses provides poor quality pedestrian access from the south.
- 7.50 Views of the rear of 14-28 Lowfield Street (on its east side) from the east are important. The multi-storey car park dominates the skyline and detracts from the views from the east.

Market Place and Central Park, Character Area 5

- 7.51 Maintaining the visual connection between the park and rear elevations of the High Street properties, especially 43 High Street, is important to maintaining evidence of the fact that the north end of the park was the garden of Bank House. This link also preserves evidence for the lack of urban development to the south of the High Street, east of Lowfield Street.
- 7.52 The car park, ruined buildings and spaces to the west of the north end of the park detract from the character of the Conservation Area. However, the views from Market Street and Market Place towards the roofs of 20-28 Lowfield Street are of interest and any new development should protect this view.
- 7.53 There are opportunities for enhancement within Central Park. The former feature at the southern end of the Conservation Area that stood in the middle of the 1905 Recreation Ground (see fig. 6) could be reinstated. This could be a bandstand or another, more modern major feature. There needs to be good pedestrian access between the former mill pond on the River and the grounds of Acacia Hall, where the mill that this pond supplied was located. Interpretation of this feature would also better connect the various parts of the park. The distinction in character between the more enclosed formal and landscaped northern parts of the park and the more open southern parts should be maintained as it reflects the fact that they developed very differently, the northern part as private gardens and the southern part as a municipal recreation ground. There is scope for the reinstatement of a bandstand or other polygonal feature to the south of the library and for interpretation relating to the relocated medieval bridge span.
- 7.54 Currently the adult education building adjacent to the Park (on the potential major development opportunity site, on the eastern side of Lowfield Street) overawes the Park. This should be removed. Alterations to the pattern of plantation within the park

need to take into account historic planting patterns and tree locations and indeed this approach should be applied to any alterations relating to tree coverage elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Historic maps and photographs can supply considerable evidence of historic arrangements and their selective reinstatement can enhance the historic character. However, the historic value and character of some of the more recent plantations should also be celebrated and features of interest should not be removed to 'restore' an earlier scheme.

Acacia Hall, Character Area 6

- 7.55 The main issue relating to this area is its lack of connection to adjacent areas. Improvements to connectivity need to take account of the settings of the Listed Buildings and historic walls and features. Any demolitions should be to the minimum necessary extent. Projects to provide better connectivity between this character area and the park and the area over the river should avoid compromising the character of the area and its important features, where practicable. Wholesale removal of tree screens to the south should be avoided as views of the modern buildings to the south east would detract from the area's character.
- 7.56 The small garden on the east bank of the River Darent is isolated and vandalised at the time of writing. This needs to be better integrated with its surroundings, while maintaining historic features of interest. Its location adjacent to historically important features should be exploited for interpretative purposes.
- 7.57 The Club House in Acacia Hall detracts from the character of the area and features in, and detracts from, the views from the east and west.

Overy Street and Lower East Hill, Character Area 7

- 7.58 The Conservation Area lighting needs to be extended in this area.
- 7.59 There are too many bollards, too close together in this area. Alternative methods of traffic management should be pursued, where possible.
- 7.60 There is a break in the historic character of the area to the west of Overy Street, between the Listed Buildings and the church. Linkage is provided by a tree and the railings that extend over the Town Bridge.
- 7.61 The gap to the north of the Listed Buildings on Overy Street provides views of the historic retaining walls against the hill and preserves views of the north gable of 17 Overy Street (Plate 8). Development here should not be encouraged. However, if unavoidable it should be designed and executed with materials, and in a form that are sympathetic to the Listed Buildings and the Victorian villa to the north and should be built with some separation from the Listed Buildings to preserve the views from the north.

East Hill, Character Area 8

- 7.62 The roofscape of the buildings on Great Queen Street forms an important part of the setting of the burial ground and should not be altered. The buildings to the south east on the south side of East Hill dominate the burial ground and these should not be replaced with larger buildings or buildings that are higher than the tree screen.

- 7.63 There is considerable scope for interpretation measures within the listed burial ground, although these should not compromise its quiet and secluded character.
- 7.64 Many of the chest tombs within the burial ground are in poor condition and sensitive repairs are required.
- 7.65 The trees on the Hill provide a major component of the views of interest from the Town Centre and West Hill. If trees are to be removed the appearance of a screen should be maintained by retention of a proportion of the trees. There should be no further removal of yellow brick retaining walls on the hill as they form part of the character of the Conservation Area.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Recommendations are presented below. The issues discussed above as well as the principles of current good conservation practice. Recommendations are divided into two categories. There is a series of overarching principles that, if adopted, would provide a framework in which proposals for future development affecting the Conservation Area can be assessed. The principles provide the opportunity for a sustainable future for the Conservation Area. Below the principles are a series of proposed projects and actions that together form a management action plan. These consist of medium and long term proposals that address the issues and implement the solutions in line with the principles.
- 8.2 These principles and management action proposals are not listed in order of priority.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- OP1** All development will preserve and enhance the character and interest of historically significant spaces within the Conservation Area.
- OP2** New construction, buildings and extensions will not overawe the historic buildings in terms of colour, scale and massing and will respect building frontage lines.
- OP3** All development will protect the setting of the Conservation Area including the key long views identified above (in Fig. 11).
- OP4** 'Above the shop' uses should be encouraged and access to the upper floors of buildings with ground floor shops improved.
- OP5** Where practicable locally and nationally significant buildings will be the subject of interpretation measures. Interpretation measures will aim to maximise community and visitor appreciation of the local architectural heritage and local history.
- OP6** New building frontages will respect the massing, window, string course and parapet lines of adjacent buildings that contribute to the character and interest of the Conservation Area.
- OP7** Shop fascias will respect and be subordinate to the architectural design of the buildings on which they are applied and should preserve the historic integrity of the building. A shopfront design guide should be developed and enforced.
- OP8** There are areas within the Conservation Area that have developed separately from adjacent areas and have evolved with differences in character. Where these areas are to be linked in the future with roads, paths or sight lines, these new connections should not diminish the distinct historic character of the individual areas.
- OP9** New buildings, facades and extensions to existing buildings should be built using good quality architectural design.

OP10 There will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings and features that are Key to, or contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area. These are mostly itemised, but not exhaustively surveyed, in Appendix A.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Local List

8.3 It is recommended that the Council establish a local list and include policies within the Local Development Framework for the protection of the buildings and features included on it from demolition and from the removal of elements that detract from their character and setting. If appropriate, Article 4 directions could be considered to protect threatened elements of these buildings where the normal course of permitted development is deemed to threaten their interest.

8.4 Items that should be considered for inclusion on the local list are listed below. It is possible that on further inspection three of the timber framed or possible timber framed buildings may merit consideration for inclusion on the statutory list.

Milestone outside the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel (Plate 28)

3 High Street (Plate 29)

1a Hythe Street (Plate 30)

43 High Street, with its prominent rear bow (Plate 31)

Enterprise House, Essex Road (1902)

The former Congregationalist Church (Plate 32)

The former National School, West Hill (1826)

Stables at Acacia Hall (19th century)

Bridge at Acacia Hall

The Co-operative Department Store's Spital Street and Orchard Street façades, 19-33 Spital Street (Plate 4)

The medieval bridge arch, re-erected in Central Park between the first and Second World Wars

The Malt Shovel public house (c.1673) is presumably not listed, despite its 17th century date, as it survives in a relatively altered state. However, it should be locally listed.

The surviving ground floor elements of the former Victoria Flour Mill

8.5 Further research should be undertaken into the origins and age of 43 Spital Street to establish whether it is of interest. It may date to before the 1838 Tithe Map, and may be considerably earlier.

8.6 There should be an interior inspection of 11 and 15 High Street to establish whether these buildings retain enough of their historic features to merit inclusion on a local or even on the statutory list.

- 8.7 The rear timber framed elements of 24 High Street. Internal inspection will establish whether this building warrants consideration for statutory listing.



Plate 28 - Milestone next to the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel



Plate 29 - Bank building at 3 High Street



Plate 30 - 1a Hythe Street



Plate 31 - 43 High Street, with its prominent rear bow



Plate 32 - The former Congregationalist Church

Design Guidance

- 8.8 It is recommended that comprehensive design guidance should be developed to guide builders, developers and designers as to the most appropriate form and materials for use in the Conservation Area and its Character Areas. Guidance should not be too prescriptive but should encourage sensitivity to the specific variations in architectural and historic location and character within the Conservation Area. It should be wide ranging in its scope and needs to cover appropriate scale, proportions, massing, building lines, materials, roof lines, window types the public realm, advertising and other facets of design highlighted within this document.
- 8.9 Design guidance should include detail such as the appropriate materials for repointing (ie. mortar that is more permeable than the masonry units), replacing weatherboarding and other aspects of good conservation practice including the need for maintenance, regular repainting of timber.

Connectivity and Movement

- 8.10 It is recommended that better signage is installed on the northern approaches to the High Street, especially near the north end of the pedestrian bridge over Home Gardens, at the base of the steps at its southern end, near the clock tower at the south east corner of The Orchard Theatre and on the northern approaches to Bull's Head Yard, as the route is currently not legible. The signage should consist of signs and interpretation boards. The northern end of Bank Court should also be opened up to provide alternative legible access.

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- 8.11 There should be pedestrian access between the garden of Acacia Hall and the area of Central Park to the south of the Library and between Acacia Hall and the site of the former mill pond to the south. There should be signs indicating the route between these areas. There should also be better access between the area of the former stables in Acacia Hall and the gardens near the site of the former Victoria Flour Mill.
- 8.12 North-south paths along both of the waterways in the Conservation Area would enhance public access (both intellectual and physical) to the industrial history of the waterways and their economic role in the development of Dartford as well as to the natural waterway assets.
- 8.13 Measures need to be considered to make the small park over the river from Bridge House, to the south of Overly Liberty, more accessible and visible from the surrounding areas. There needs to be public access from Acacia Hall which would increase public appreciation of the character of the area and make the space more attractive to users and less attractive to vandals. It can also form a stopping point in the link between suggested heritage trails and can be a space where there is an interpretation board highlighting the riverside features (including the former Victoria Flour Mill's remains).

Advertisements and Shop Fascias

- 8.14 It is recommended that a shopfront design guide should be developed to guide the design of shopfronts on buildings within the Conservation Area. In addition to the encouragement of good design the guide should be supported by robust policies relating to the control of shopfronts within Conservation Areas within the LDF and supporting documents.
- 8.15 Advertisements are best controlled through the Advertisement Regulations.

Maintaining and Enhancing Significant Views

- 8.16 In order to maintain the views buildings and features should not be built that obstruct them. Height and massing also need to be considered especially with regard to maintaining and enhancing the strategic views shown on Figure 11. Protection should be through good design and through the encouragement to lower or remove buildings identified on the plans as detracting from significant views when the opportunity arises. Policies for the protection of views of most importance should be considered for inclusion in the Local Development Framework documents.

Street Furniture and Paving

- 8.17 It is recommended that lighting of a consistent design is extended throughout the Conservation Area in order to better link the various parts of the Character Area and enhance the sense of place of the Conservation Area as a whole.

8.18 The street lighting that is of interest should be retained to preserve the historic character of the Conservation Area. The lights that should be retained include:

- ◆ the two lamps on the 1920s town bridge parapet
- ◆ the 1930s Art Deco lamps attached to 43 High Street (Plate 31), which harmonise with the architectural style of 41 High Street opposite
- ◆ the imitation gas lamp at the foot of East Hill (Plate 33) the historic gas lamp on St James Place, adjacent to the listed 53-55 Spital Street (Plate 34)
- ◆ the lamps between Holy Trinity Church and 82 High Street are neutral, being inserted to appear as gas lamps (Plate 35)
- ◆ the modern street lamps that light the modernist flood relief landscaping of the banks of the Darent to the north of the Town Bridge are appropriate to the style of the landscaping (Plate 36) as are the modern maps at One Bell Corner.
- ◆ the lamp over the door of 45 High Street is an important feature of the Listed Building.

8.19 Other street lights should be replaced or removed with those shown in Plates 18-20.



Plate 31 - Art Deco street lamps on 43 High Street



Plate 33 - Lamp at the base of East Hill



Plate 34 - Gas lamp on St James Place



Plate 35 - Lamps between Holy Trinity Church and 82 High Street



Plate 36 - Lamps associated with the mid 20th century riverside landscaping.

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- 8.20 Instead of current brick paving in the pedestrianised areas there should be medium or long term plans to remove the current brick paving in the pedestrianised areas and replace it with a scheme that includes pavements of large masonry slabs (York stone would be appropriate although the material used historically is not certain). Where expense needs to be limited large slabs with a smooth texture may be appropriate (especially away from the principal spaces), laid perpendicular to the street in a staggered fashion edged with granite kerb stones. Paving bricks with two raised surfaces that look like two regular square cobbles should not be used on the main streets as the bricks would wear down easily, with very occasional traffic and the surfaces would be too regular. This form of paving may be suitable for smaller paved areas, especially away from the High Street.
- 8.21 The roadway in the pedestrianised areas should be paved differently and at a lower level than the pavement. Granite setts would be appropriate and the historically unmetalled nature of some of the streets suggests that a smooth appearance using tarmac would also be appropriate, although the material has come to signify modernity in the public mind, rather than granite setts that are generally associated with historic character. Another possible option is a combination of granite setts and tarmac in imitation of the arrangement that was laid to hold the former tram rails (see above). There is a risk that this would look too unusual and the fact that this arrangement may have been used historically just to found the tram rails suggests that it would represent a very short lived historic arrangement that served a now redundant purpose.
- 8.22 Where there are small concrete paving slabs within the Conservation Area their replacement with larger slabs should be considered, as they would represent an enhancement.
- 8.23 It is recommended that where works are undertaken within the Borough that involve the removal or replacement of granite kerbstones, that they are recovered and reused in the Town Centre.
- 8.24 It would be appropriate to reduce the number of bollards and adopt alternative traffic management techniques, where possible, that have less visual impact on the historic spaces. Where it is imperative that lines of bollards are retained they should be thinned out. Alternative methods of traffic management should be reviewed with a view to removing many of the bollards within the area.
- 8.25 There should also be a review of the number of steel posts and the need for them, with a view to removing redundant posts.

Interpretation

- 8.26 A range of interpretation measures are recommended.
- 8.27 Many of the recommended initiatives have already been set up within Dartford but should be expanded in a more integrated fashion and be led by the council and museum and advertised by the regional Tourist Board. There is currently a system of walks through the town (Town Trails) set out in a booklet produced by the Dartford Historical & Antiquarian Society, and arrows set into the paving indicate routes through the town. This system should be expanded. Plaques have already been

used successfully in the town, for example that commemorating the former urinals on East Hill.

- 8.28 Interpretation measures could include interpretation boards, located at key points, education packs for schools and heritage trails through the Town Centre and beyond, both themed and area specific (relating to both cultural and natural heritage). Dartford's blue plaque scheme, similar to English Heritage's Blue Plaque scheme to commemorate site specific local events and people and former buildings of interest, should also be continued.
- 8.29 The subjects covered by interpretation boards should be tailored to address and highlight the items and themes of interest within the specific area in they are located. The boards need to be designed to be visible, attract attention, but not form a major townscape feature in their own right. They should also avoid cluttering the streets. Interpretation boards should draw attention to other interpretative heritage resources, such as exhibits in the museum and other related features within the borough.

Proposed locations for interpretation boards include:

- ◆ The entrance to Bridge House
- ◆ In Bullace Lane, at its north end
- ◆ Outside Holy Trinity Church, this board should be sited to minimise the impact on views from the west
- ◆ By the police station on West Hill
- ◆ The north end of Bull's Head Yard
- ◆ At the bottom of the steps of the Home Gardens foot bridge
- ◆ Outside the railway station
- ◆ Next to the Tourist Information booth next to the clock tower on Suffolk Road
- ◆ Near to the Zion Baptist Chapel
- ◆ At the foot of West Hill, by the Magistrates' Court
- ◆ On the location of the former Market House on the High Street
- ◆ Next to the former mill pond in Central Park
- ◆ Next to the medieval bridge span in Central Park
- ◆ Next to the surviving elements of the Victoria Flour Mill.
- ◆ Outside the former State Cinema on Spital Street
- ◆ Next to the south wall of the Lowfield Street Almshouses
- ◆ Outside the Library
- ◆ Within St Edmund's burial ground

- 8.30 Three trails are proposed:

- ◆ An industrial history trail is proposed that mostly runs south to north along the River Darent, extending from the site of the former gunpowder mills to the south and beyond the railway line to the north. The trail would benefit from increased access to the surviving ground floor elements of the Victoria Flour Mill. It would also deviate from the river path where necessary and mention industries within Dartford located to the west, such as the brewing industry.

- ◆ A Conservation Area trail is proposed that runs west to east through the Conservation Area and terminates at St Edmunds Burial Ground and the view back over the Conservation Area. The history of the town and its buildings and spaces should be explained and there should be links to the museum and the system of interpretation boards. As this trail is extensive themed and shorter routes within it should be suggested.
 - ◆ A natural heritage trail is proposed that runs along the River Darent in tandem with the industrial history trail and that deviates from it where necessary. It will cover the ecology of the Town.
- 8.31 School packs should be prepared that cover the History of Dartford and its surviving buildings and features. They should include material that advertises the interpretation boards and gives details of the heritage trails. Links between the museum and local schools should be maximised. School packs should be organised by the Council in conjunction with the museum.
- 8.32 Plaques should be attached to buildings that have an association with locally and nationally important people (such as Jane Austen). They should also be used to note buildings or unusual features of interest that used to stand on specific sites. There should not be too many of these plaques as they will cease to attract people's attention.

Park Improvements

- 8.33 Where improvements are being designed for Central Park and the gardens of Acacia Hall they should enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This can be guided by conducting research into historic arrangements of plantations and paths through map, photographic and documentary research and replicating or referring to them in the new scheme. Any restoration work should not remove natural or man-made features of significance or that contribute positively to the character of the area in favour of reinstating an earlier scheme. This approach should be applied to tree plantation and landscape design not only in Central Park and the gardens of Acacia Hall, but across the Conservation Area as a whole.

Implementation of Planning Controls

- 8.34 A review of the potential for application of further Article 4 Directions in the Town Centre Conservation Area is needed. Article 4 (2) directions should be applied and enforced more widely to control the gradual removal of historic timber and cast iron or steel framed windows and their replacement with UPVC. They should also be applied to control changes to the roof lines and building frontages in sensitive locations (such as the roofs on Great Queen Street).
- 8.35 The recent strengthening of the enforcement team and increase in enforcement action and the more systematic approach to breaches in the planning regulations should be built upon, the growth of the enforcement team sustained, and a more proactive, systematic approach to enforcement in the Town Centre pursued.
- 8.36 Documents such as the draft Public Realm Design Guide (September 2005) and the proposed development of a shop front design guide mean that the Council are already setting clearer and more detailed standards of guidance for Dartford Town

Centre. More such policy documents concerning planning and design should be produced. These, along with greater promotion of advice to applicants prior to the submission of applications, would encourage the submission of appropriate design proposals and ensure a smoother path to approval of planning applications with conservation associated issues.

- 8.37 The appointment of a Heritage Champion in Dartford provides momentum to the development of heritage initiatives within the Council and raises awareness and improves understanding of conservation issues across the authority more broadly.

Implementation and Management

- 8.38 The implementation of the management plan should form part of the policy of the council.
- 8.39 A clear management structure needs to be established to ensure the implementation of the plan. This includes named posts and councillors within the council nominated to oversee its implementation. There should be fixed targets for implementation of the various proposed actions. The exact timetable should to depend on available and projected funding. The implementation of the plan should be reviewed regularly by the council.
- 8.40 The management plan and the management of the Conservation Area should be subjected to regular review and updating at least every five years to seven years or when major developments have been implemented.

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APPENDIX A

Listed Buildings and Buildings that Contribute to the Character and Interest of the Conservation Area

A. Listed Buildings and Buildings that Contribute to the Character and Interest of the Conservation Area

CHARACTER AREA 1 – WEST HILL & HIGHFIELD ROAD

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.1 Key Buildings

A.1.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **21& 23 West Hill:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/58. 2 parallel ranges. 3 storey 18th century building with ground floor shop. Stock brick with red brick dressings, hipped tiled roof, parapet with stone coping, and dropped eaves cornice. 5 window bays to West Hill, the southern elevation has a prominent bow and a Victorian ground floor 5 light bay. Later shopfronts. Red brick pilasters. Form a group with No. 21-35 odd
- ◆ **25 West Hill:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/59. 3 storey 18th century house with ground floor 19th century shopfronts. Attics are partly stuccoed over lath and plaster, but with 2 applied panels of weatherboarding running through the 2 upper storeys. These probably conceal 2 earlier windows. The old tiled roof has 2 hipped dormers with sash windows. Modillion cornice, 1 sash set in moulded architrave. Forms a group with No. 21-35 odd.
- ◆ **27 & 29 West Hill:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/58. 3 storey 18th century house with ground floor shops. Stock brick with red brick window dressings. Renewed pantiled roof with 1 hipped dormer, 5 window spaces with several blanks, some casements and some sashes. Later shopfronts. Form a group with No. 21-35 odd.
- ◆ **Dartford Union Workhouse, West Hill:** c.1838 with later alterations. 2 to 3 storey yellow stock brick buildings consisting of a range fronting West Hill, with projecting stone frontispiece, with separate rear ranges set around two courts. Both the range, facing onto West Hill (Grade II Listed Building TQ 57 SP/563), and buildings to rear and north east of range (Grade II Listed Building TQ 57 SP/564) are listed.
- ◆ **Former West Hill Police Station:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 57 SW SP/565 Former Police Station 19th century –Single storey yellow brick building of 3 bays, 1843: Stock brick walls. One storey. Cornice and blocking course continuing round central projecting bay with pediment over, the central projection with four-panel door above two steps, and a blocked flanking window opening with rubbed brick arches to each side. Set back blank walling to each side again. Early plan shown on O.S 1868 map and comprised central reception area with two cells to each side, the east cells later altered by the insertion of a large drying closet for the workhouse and the west cells since converted into one room, but retaining a door. The building ceased to function as a Police Station after 1872 and was then used as a workhouse ward for tramps.

- ◆ **Zion Strict Baptist Chapel**, Priory Hill: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/49. 2 storey timber framed and weatherboarded building with a hipped renewed pantiled roof, set on a brown brick plinth. The first floor has 1 sash with glazing bars intact and 1 casement. The ground floor has 1 sliding sash. 2 doorcases with wooden weathergoods on brackets and 6 flush panelled doors. (Plate 2). Group value with Nos 1 and 2 (Zion Cottages) which are local interest buildings.
- ◆ **Twistleton's Almshouses**, West Hill, Nos 6-22 even: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/14. This charity was founded in 1572 under the will of John Byer of Horsemans Place, Lowfield St, but the existing building was erected by John Twistleton of Horsemans Place in 1704. An L-shaped block of 1 storey red brick. Tiled roof with coved eaves cornice, gable ends with kneelers, 4 windows facing north and 6 windows facing east. Casement windows. Simple wooden doorcases in cambered architraves.

A.1.2 Unlisted buildings

- ◆ **Chapel** at the rear of the former Dartford Union Workhouse.
- ◆ **Church Court**, 4 West Hill: red brick Early English revival former Congregationalist Church, 1882, with cupola.
- ◆ **24 West Hill**: Gothic single storey former National School, 1826, two ranges and linking loggia.
- ◆ **8 Essex Road**, Enterprise House-former Technical Institute, 1902.

A.2 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ These include 31-35 West Hill, which form a group with the adjacent Listed Buildings to the east; Zion Cottages; the former warehouse/workshop at the rear of 29 West Hill; the c.1900 century Linden Cottage and stables and the yellow brick walling associated with these buildings create the secluded character of the area around the Zion Baptist Chapel. They also link the Chapel with the Listed Buildings and former school on West Hill, through their scale and materials. The paving of small stones at the rear of 29 West Hill is of interest as it is representative of a formerly more widespread form of paving, used in less important and less wealthy areas of town.
- ◆ The early to mid 19th century terrace of cottages adjacent to the former National School, 26-42 West Hill reflects the low status of this part of West Hill in the mid 19th century and the cottages' front garden retaining walls enhance the sense of enclosure on the hill. The walling to the west of and behind the Police Station on the north side of West Hill dates to the late 19th century and later. Its yellow brickwork forms part of the setting of the Listed Building and channels views into the Conservation Area from its west end.
- ◆ The Magistrates' Court is an extensive two storey stock brick building, partly set on a Kentish ragstone plinth. The function of this building accords with the historic uses in this Character Area. 1-3 Highfield Road was the earliest building of the terraces on this side of the road and was built by 1860. This terrace and the 1860s cottages on the corner of Spring Vale North behind the church represent the first phase of suburban terraced housing at this end of the town

beyond the ribbon development along West Hill. The Early English revival Baptist Church on Highfield Road (1865-1867) forms one of a group of religious buildings, and one of three relatively large gothic revival buildings at the west end of the Conservation Area.

- ◆ At the west end of Spital Street, Number 2 Highfield Road (Highfield House), a former pair of semi-detached stuccoed houses consisting of two parallel ranges, of three storeys and a basement was definitely built by the early 19th century (it appears on the 1838 Tithe map). It contributes to the more open character of the area around the road junction at the bottom of West Hill.

CHARACTER AREA 2- SPITAL STREET

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.3 Key Buildings:

A.3.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **The Royal Oak Public House**, 57 Spital St.: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/57A. Probably 17th century timber-framed building, 2 storeys with three attic dormers and a peg tiled gabled roof. Ground floor painted brick, first floor applied timber-framing with pebbledashed infill. 3 sashes with verticals only. The ground floor has a 19th century pub front. On the right hand side is a 19th century portion of 2 storeys in matching style, having one sash with verticals only and a hipped tiled roof. The interior has exposed beams.
- ◆ **53 and 55 Spital Street**: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/57. 3 storeys and basement classical yellow stock brick building. Hipped pantiled roof. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact in Italianate architraves. Pilasters rise through all storeys. Doorcase with cornice and pilasters. Later curved bow inserted on front elevation.
- ◆ **Kent House, Spital Street**: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/56a. Mid-19th century former County Court. 2 storeys, faced in white stock brick, hipped slate roof, with 4 cambered double sashed to 1st floor. 4 round-headed sashes to the ground floor with keystones. Modillion cornice. Stringcourse. Royal cartouche above round-headed doorcase. Forms a group with the Methodist Church and nos 39 to 43 (odd) local interest buildings.
- ◆ **Methodist Church**, Spital Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5374 1/55 /TQ 5474 2/55. 1844-45 yellow brick gothic revival church by W Pocock. This consists of a single storey three arched entrance to the recessed nave flanked by 2 crenellated towers with crockets and pointed lancets with hood moulding to front. Portico with 2 pointed arches. Forms a group with Kent House and Nos. 39 to 43 (odd) local interest buildings.
- ◆ **Beadles** car showroom and offices, Spital Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ5374 2/10003. Dated 1910, built by Frank Atkinson for Mr J Beadle. Neo-Classical style building built of stock brick with red brick dressings. The office, of two to three storeys, has a tiled roof with central and end brick stacks. 4 windows, mainly metal-framed casements, but rear elevation has mezzanine

floor with oculi, now with late C20 UPVC replacement lights. The side elevation has open pediment with wooden cornice, end rusticated pilasters and ground floor giant round-headed arches with keystones, impost blocks and Gibbs surrounds. The pedimented gable has two diamond-shaped plaques with date 1910 and central square stone tablet with keystone, floral swag and initials JCB. Large one storey car showroom built out to front of 3 x 2 bays. Flat roof with parapet with moulded cornice with triglyph frieze. The front has central open curved pediment supported on 2 rusticated brick Tuscan columns and two piers each side. There are corner rusticated piers and the sides have rusticated brick piers with flanking brick columns. Interior likely to retain a 12 panelled ceiling with roof lights, Tuscan columns, sirapite walls with moulded pilasters and granolithic floors with Doloment panels.

- ◆ **Coach and Horses Public House**, Spital Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/18. A 15th/16th century timber-framed building of 2 storeys and attics. The upper part of the street front has been tile hung and the ground floor has been restored in Regency style. Tiled roof with 2 dormers. The building contains some exposed stop moulded ceiling beams and a good staircase of early C18 or late C17 date with turned balusters.

A.3.2 Unlisted buildings

- ◆ Co-Operative Department Store (Plate 5), is a Portland stone clad Art Deco three storey building with a steel Art Deco shop front to its side elevation, leaded comes to side staircase fenestration. The central five bays project on the front elevation. The building shows Egyptian influences with fluted parapet decoration.
- ◆ 43 Spital Street, three storey building with two bayed gable facing the street. The building is stucco fronted with pilasters to the quoins and plat bands between the floors. It appears on the 1860 map and may date to the early to mid 19th century or may be considerably earlier (further research is required).

A.4 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ 3a -3 Spital Street. Painted brick three bay two storey mid 19th century building with ground floor shops.
- ◆ 5-7 Spital Street. Terrace of four former two bay houses with shops, two storeys plus attic dormers, ovolo decorated terra cotta eaves cornices.
- ◆ 11-15 Spital Street. The end building of Copperfields (1989).
- ◆ Building behind 22-26 Spital Street is the former Gem cinema, which is brick built with a steeply pitched slated roof.
- ◆ 1 St James Place, a two storey yellow brick 19th century three bay house, with central door flanked by two windows to each floor and gabled roof. It has a dentilled eaves cornice.
- ◆ The State Cinema, an Art Deco cinema, opened in 1935, textured brick walls, faience central projection with black porch, and black glazed tile to ground floor, tripartite upper floor window separated by black glazed tile clad responds.

- ◆ 46-48 Spital Street, early 20th century Conservative Club, three storey building (including attic) with central recessed bay with one window to first floor and three to the attic, flanking bays each have two windows to first floor and a single attic dormer window. There are shop fronts to the right two bays and a Tuscan door case to the left bay. The building may have been rebuilt and may date to before the early 20th century.
- ◆ 45-51 Spital Street, a terrace of four three storey yellow brick (one with brown brick) buildings with ground floor shops, with dentilled cornices and slated gabled roofs, flat arches to first floor fenestration. Number 47 has two window bays to the upper floor, the rest have one.
- ◆ 50 Spital Street, Arts and Crafts influenced offices of two storeys plus attic with four bays to the right and a projecting bay to the left, topped with a pedimented mannerist gable with a vehicular passage to the ground floor. Arched openings to ground floor, rectangular windows to its first floor.
- ◆ A terrace of two houses of two bays and three storeys next to the end building of Copperfields, dated 1989.
- ◆ There is a historic street light on St James Place

CHARACTER AREA 3 - HIGH STREET

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.5 Key Buildings:

A.5.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **Trinity Church**, High Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/8. This consists of a Nave with aisles, a chancel with north and south chapels and a tower. The lower portion of the tower is Norman, the upper portion 15th century. The north, St Thomas's chapel dates from about 1220. The remainder of the church is 14th century. The west corner of the south aisle of the Nave was cut off in 1792 to widen the High Street. Nos. 78-82 (even) and the Church of the Holy Trinity form a group.
- ◆ **82 High Street**: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/7. An early 15th century two storey timber-framed building with a long frontage facing Bullace Lane. The ground floor has modern shop windows. The first floor is plastered and oversails on brackets. Hipped tiled roof. Sash windows, some retaining their glazing bars, with 2 windows facing High Street and 4 windows facing Bullace Lane. At the back is a small additional contemporary portion of 2 storeys and 1 window with a lower elevation, in part of which the timber-framing is exposed with painted brick infilling; the remainder is weather-boarded and plastered. On the east side facing the churchyard is a red brick chimneybreast of which there is a record that it was added in 1465. To the north is an early 19th century extension of 2 storeys with painted brick ground floor, weatherboarded first floor, a tiled roof and 6 sashes. Nos 78-82 (even) & the Church of the Holy Trinity form a group.

- ◆ **The Wat Tyler Public House**, 80 High Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/37. A 2 storey timber-framed building, with attics painted brick and a half-hipped tiled roof with 1 sash to attic storey to the High Street. 1 3-light bay to lower floors. The jettied side elevation to Bullace Lane is of 2 storeys. The first floor has restored timber-framing, having diagonal braces and plaster infill. The ground floor is of painted brick. 4 sashes mostly without glazing bars. A plaque on this side elevation notes, "Wat Tyler and several of the Commons called at this ancient tavern (so it is said) to quench their thirst with flagons of ale". A notice on the front of the building misleading calls it "the House of Wat Tyler". Nos. 78 to 82 (even) and the Church of the Holy Trinity form a group.
- ◆ **Bank House**, 45 High Street (now Home House): Grade II* Listed Building TQ 5474 2/2. A large late C18 3 storeys house, bricks painted red with white tuck pointing, modillion cornice and parapet. 2 full height flanking canted bays of 3 windows at either side of the central doorway, each rising the whole height of the house with central sash between. Glazing bars intact. The doorway is in a moulded architrave surround with an enriched frieze, a pediment on console brackets, a rectangular fanlight and a 6 panelled door. Over the doorway a lamp, hanging from an elaborate scroll bracket, is a prominent feature.
- ◆ **44 High Street**: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/5. Early 18th century, 3 storeys and attics red brick building, peg tile roof with 1 dormer and heavy overhanging timber modillion eaves cornice. String- course above 1st floor. 2 sashes with glazing bars missing. Modern shop front. Of group value with 46 & 48 High St, which are buildings of local interest
- ◆ **Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel**, High Street: Grade II* Listed Building TQ 5474 2/1. Formerly a large coaching inn on the London to Canterbury and Dover road. Built in 1703. 2 storeys and attics. The ground floor is of painted brick on a tiled base. Above the building is faced with grey bricks, which have been renewed, with red brick window dressings and quoins. Tiled roof with 3 dormers. Parapet of grey bricks and wooden modillion cornice. 9 sashes with glazing bars intact. In the centre of the ground floor is the carriage entrance leading to the hotel yard with a royal cartouche on each side of it. Tuscan columns on the left hand side of the carriage entrance and C18 pub front. The building runs back into 2 long wings behind separated by the hotel yard with galleries on each side on the 1st floor. The yard is now glazed over. It has a galleried courtyard and the saloon bar has a Regency bay window.

A.5.2 Unlisted buildings

- ◆ **1a Hythe Street**: Arts and Crafts red brick fronted building, with the gable facing the street, with terracotta and stone decoration
- ◆ **43 High Street**: on the corner of Market Place, three storey stuccoed building with applied flat front façade to the High Street, side elevation rendered with dentilled eaves cornice and hipped peg tiled roof. The bow to the rear is a prominent feature visible from the park.
- ◆ **3 High Street**, The Woolwich: three stories plus attic, mansard roof, built as a bank, between 1897 and 1910, Lavishly decorated, eclectic with Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne influences.

- ◆ **11 High Street:** two storey flat fronted narrow building with steeply pitched peg tiled roof, classical façade and shop front added. This building may date to the early post-medieval period.
- ◆ **15 High Street:** three storey narrow building presenting the hip of its roof to the street. The ground floor shop front is mid 20th century with possible earlier elements, paired sash windows to first floor and single sash window to the second floor.
- ◆ The rear element of **24 High Street** is timber framed and jettied and is likely to date to the 16th or 17th century.

A.6 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ There are many historic buildings in this Character Area that contribute positively to the character of the area. These include 3-9 Hythe Street, 1-112 and 16-18 Hythe Street. On the north side of the High Street they include numbers 2, 6-24, 42, 54, and 66-72. On the south side of the High Street they include 9, 11, 17, 25-37, and 55 High Street. At the north end of Lowfield Street the buildings that contribute to the character of the area include numbers 2-12 and 1-13.

CHARACTER AREA 4- LOWFIELD STREET

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.7 Key Buildings:

A.7.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **Almshouses**, 41-43 Lowfield Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/23. Dated 1889. Built by John Johnson in Queen Anne Dutch style on the site of 4 earlier almshouses built by John Byer in reign of Queen Elizabeth I. A 2 storey yellow brick with lavish red cut brick dressings specially made to the design by the Elham Valley Brick Company. Tiled roof with curved gable ends. 4 Ornamental pediments, 2 of which are triangular and the centre 2 curved and incorporating the date AD 1889. The building has a moulded brick eaves cornice and a moulded brick string course between the ground and first floors with Anthemion motif. 4 double sashes to each floor set in moulded architraves. The tablet between 2 centre first floor windows records the earlier almshouses on the site. There are panels of swag moulding underneath first floor windows. The 2 doorcases have stone open pediments moulded architraves, rectangular fanlights and 6 fielded panelled doors, with the top 2 panels cut out and glazed.
- ◆ **Two Brewers Public House**, Lowfield Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/40. A 17th century timber-framed building, refaced in the 19th century. The front elevation is of 2 storeys, the ground floor faced with green tiles, the first floor of stock brick. Parapet with modillion cornice, and 4 cambered sashes with keystones. The side elevation is weatherboarded and has a renewed tiled roof and an outside chimneystack. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact. Rear elevation has 2 hipped gables.

A.7.2 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ 18-36 Lowfield Street: on the east side of the street all contribute positively to the character of the area, as do the buildings on the west side of the street between the two Listed Buildings (numbers 35-39). Number 24 Market Street, an Art Deco building, also contributes to the character of the area, as does the warehouse opposite.

CHARACTER AREA 5- MARKET PLACE AND CENTRAL PARK

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.8 Key Buildings:

A.8.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **Public Library and Museum**, Market Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/44. Built in 1916 by T E Tiffin, presented by Andrew Carnegie. 1 storey post-Edwardian baroque building with red brick stone dressings, hipped slate roof, and a central octagonal cupola with dome. This has double pilasters and round-headed windows, urns at the corners and swag moulding to the base. The building has a central open pediment with a cartouche of Kent and swags supported on coupled Tuscan columns. It has a balustraded parapet, a round-headed doorcase with decorated keystone, and 6 fixed casement windows in all, 2 of them 3-light windows set in projecting open pedimented window surrounds with Tuscan columns.
- ◆ **War Memorial** 1922. The surrounding formal gardens form an integral part of its setting. Grade II Listed Building.

A.8.2 Unlisted buildings

- ◆ The relocated **medieval bridge arch**.
- ◆ **Former bandstand location** to the south of the Library.

A.9 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ Within **Central Park** elements that contribute to the character of the area include the bandstand, historic railings and evidence of missing railings, the paths associated with the original recreation ground, the garden layout of Bank House, tree plantations and beds that date to or replace those that date to the 1930s or earlier and the evidence of the former mill pond. The specimen trees are of particular interest and form an essential part of the character of the park.
- ◆ In the area to the north, the façade of the central bays of **8-10 Market Street** is of interest. The estate agents (dated 1902) at **7 Market Street** and the building at **3 Market Street** contribute to the character of the space in front of them.

CHARACTER AREA 6- ACACIA HALL & ENVIRONS

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.10 Key Buildings:

A.10.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **Bridge House**, High Street: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/4. An 18th century 2 storey and attics brown brick building with hipped slated roof with overhanging eaves. The building has 4 windows and 2 dormers facing north, 4 windows and 2 dormers facing east, 3 windows facing west, with glazing bars intact. The doorway in west front is set in moulded architrave surround with a pediment over it on console brackets. On the west side there is a 2 storey 19th century extension in matching style with hipped tiled roof and 1 sash with glazing bars intact. The Bridge House, Acacia Hall & the Mill Building to rear of Bridge House from a group. (The Mill building is a local interest building).
- ◆ **Acacia Hall**: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/35. A mid-19th century 2 storey yellow stock brick house with some surviving original garden features (a pond and walling). The house has a hipped slate roof, 4 windows, 2 of which are 3 light with italianate architraves. The ground floor windows have 2 modified Venetian windows and 2 round-headed windows with keystones. There is a Tuscan portico. The garden elevation has a wooden canopy and French windows. The Bridge House, Acacia Hall & the Mill Building to rear of Bridge House from a group. (The Mill building is a local interest building).

A.10.2 Unlisted buildings

- ◆ The **foot bridge** over the Darent and the adjacent bridge over the boundary ditch contribute strongly to the character of the grounds.
- ◆ The timber framed and weatherboarded **mill building** to the East of the Darent is of interest in its own right and as part of the group.
- ◆ The white brick **stables** topped with a cupola are a local landmark and from part of the character of the grounds of Acacia Hall.

A.11 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ The willow trees, garden features and boundary walling of Acacia Hall contribute to its character.
- ◆ The river itself is of interest as is the presence of the Town Bridge's parapet that separates the character area from the High Street. The railings and walling are of interest.
- ◆ The screen of trees on the south east edge Acacia Hall's garden maintains the garden's character, screening views of the nearby modern buildings.

CHARACTER AREA 7- OVERY STREET & LOWER EAST HILL

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.12 Key Buildings:

A.12.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **14 and 16 East Hill:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/31. Two houses, now house with shops, 18th century with later alterations. Yellow stock brick buildings with red brick dressings and quoins. No 14: 4 storeys with two bay elevation to East Hill; originally, from evidence of 19th century maps, with steps and entrance facing west before construction of No 12 in late 19th or early 20th century. Bands at second and third floor levels; cornice. Ground floor shop window and doorway retains late C19 or early C20 casing. Three- light sash window on first floor. Sash window to left hand on second floor with blocked opening to right hand No 16: 3 storeys, two bays, with 20th century shop to ground floor. Sash window to left hand on first and second floors; first floor sash partly concealed; narrow blocked openings to right hand.
- ◆ **1 and 3 Overy Street:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/10. A 17th century timber framed building of 2 storeys, plastered, with parallel steeply pitched old tiled roofs. 3 sashes with verticals to first floor. Later mullioned and transomed diamond-paned windows on the ground floor. Rear elevation has a hipped gable. Nos 1 to (odd) 17 form a group.
- ◆ **5-9 Overy Street:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/11. A 17th century timber-framed building of 3 storeys, plastered. The ground floor is probably underbuilt. The buildings have a tiled roof with 3 small gables, 3 casement or sliding windows and 3 doorcases with flat wooden weatherboards on brackets. Nos. 1 to (odd) 17 form a group.
- ◆ **11-13 Overy Street:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/45. 18th century weatherboarded buildings at the rear of 15 Overy Street.
- ◆ **17 Overy Street:** Grade II Listed Building TQ 5474 2/12. 18th century 2 storey house, with attics and north gable fronted with weatherboarding. The building has a tiled mansard roof with 2 dormers, 3 windows in all with glazing bars intact. Large bay of 3 windows on the ground floor. Small box-like porch with a door of 6 fielded panels. Nos. 1-17 (odd) form a group.

A.13 Unlisted Buildings and features that Contribute to Character

- ◆ The Victorian yellow brick villa and retaining walls to the north of 17 Overy Street are part of the setting of the Listed Buildings. East Hill has a varied character with unusual and different buildings. Those that contribute to the character of the area include 2, 12 and 18 East Hill, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 East Hill and 1, 3, 9 and 11 Darenth Road.

CHARACTER AREA 8- EAST HILL

Buildings that Contribute to Character

A.14 Key Buildings:

A.14.1 Listed Buildings

- ◆ **St. Edmund's Chartered Graveyard**, East Hill: Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 2/64 Churchyard with yellow brick battered retaining walls. It contains 9 18th century to mid-19th century stone table tombs, some good 18th century headstones with cherub, skull or hourglass motifs and some early 19th century headstones with urns or other Classical Revival motifs.
- ◆ **Martyrs Monument in St. Edmund's Chartered Graveyard**: East Hill Grade II Listed Building TQ 5473 3/30. Erected in 1851 'To the memory of Christopher Ward Linen Weaver of Dartford a Protestant burnt on Dartford Brent July 19th 1555' and also to Nicholas Hall and Margery Pollen both burnt in 1555. It is a stone memorial in the shape of a spire with a buttresses on a knapped flint plinth fenced off with iron spear railings.

APPENDIX B

Community Consultation

B. Community Consultation

AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE CONSULTATION

- B.1 In line with Dartford Borough Council's *Statement of Community Involvement* (March 2006) (and HLF guidance *Conservation Management Plans: A guide* 2003), community consultation was advertised in the local press and carried out during the period between 15th June and 25th August 2006, to ensure that the *Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* reflects the opinions and aspirations of those who visit, live and work in Dartford town centre.
- B.2 Both the document itself and a public consultation questionnaire were posted online (27th June – 4th August 2006) and these were also available for consultation at all local libraries in the borough and at all parish council offices. In addition, a public exhibition, with display boards illustrating the content, key issues and recommendations of the Plan, was held at The Orchard Centre in Dartford on Saturday 22nd July 2006, to distribute questionnaires and to gather public views on the Plan.
- B.3 The consultation questionnaire is included at the end of this appendix. The questions were structured to ensure that the final document reflects community opinion and ideas and to act as a 'check' on key sections of the Appraisal and Management Plan document, particularly:
- ◆ **Special Interest:** Does community opinion concur with the Appraisal's assessment of the special interest and character of Dartford town centre? Are there any aspects of the town centre's special character which the Plan has not picked up on?
 - ◆ **Boundaries:** Is there broad community agreement with the Conservation Area boundaries set by the Appraisal? Are there any contentious areas?
 - ◆ **Issues:** Has the Management Plan picked up on all the key issues that members of the local community feel the town centre is facing? Do people broadly agree or disagree with the issues that have been highlighted in the Plan?
 - ◆ **Recommendations:** Will the Recommendations made in the Management Plan address the key concerns of the community and ensure that the heritage of the town centre is managed in line with the priorities of the local community? Are there any further recommendations that people would like to see included in the Plan?
- B.4 Although the questionnaire was online for 8 weeks, and approximately 86 people stopped to view the public exhibition (the vast majority of whom talked to a member of the Atkins Heritage team manning the exhibition), only 9 formal questionnaire responses were made. Nonetheless, these responses can be analysed to provide a useful sample of public opinion.

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1: What is important to you about Dartford Town Centre?

- B.5 8 different statements, reflecting all the key points made in the Appraisal regarding the special interest of the town centre, were set out and respondents asked to indicate their views on these. A separate box was also provided where respondents could add comment on anything else they value/feel important about the town centre, but that was not covered by the statements provided. Thus this question can be used to indicate both the extent to which community opinion broadly concurs with the Appraisal's conclusions on the special character of the town and if there are any key characteristics that the Appraisal has missed.
- B.6 As the table of responses below indicates, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with any of the statements provided, which indicates that the points of special interest and character highlighted by the Appraisal are largely considered important and endorsed by these community respondents.
- B.7 As support was strongest for such statements, it is clear that those members of the community who responded particularly value the historic importance and development of the town centre illustrated by its streets and buildings, the character of the area, and its open spaces, and that they recognise the contribution that these make to the town's special character. There was also clear agreement and endorsement of the importance of familiar landmarks and the town's industrial history.
- B.8 Responses were more mixed regarding the remaining three statements and there was some disagreement (but not strong disagreement) with each of them. Respondents were quite divided on the attractiveness of Dartford town centre as a place to shop and, indeed, many of the additional comments discussed below provide suggestions for improvements. There was some uncertainty and disagreement about the importance of views from the town centre to East and West Hills and particularly about the spiritual feel of the town centre, where a majority of respondents answered in the 'Disagree' or 'Don't know' categories.
- B.9 There were also a range of additional comments made in response to this question. These broadly covered:

Public Concern for the Historic Character of the Town

- B.10 1 respondent felt that the town centre has been turned into a 'modern nothing'. Similar concern about the erosion of the historical character of the town in recent times was also expressed informally by members of the community on the day of the public exhibition. Thus, while some were sceptical about the weight the Plan will have, almost everyone recognised the need for, and importance of a framework to protect the key buildings and spaces of the town centre.
- B.11 Another respondent mentioned One Bell Corner and suggested that more should be made of this. The Plan already notes One Bell Corner as a successful example of an area where the intangible heritage assets of the town are interpreted and celebrated (at 7.16). In the implementation of the broader Recommendations and Proposed

Actions set out in section 8, further development and replication of this approach considered.

Comment on the Need for more Soft Landscaping in the Town Centre

- B.12 3 respondents commented on the need for more tree planting, shrubs and flower bed areas, and one specifically stated that such landscaping should be required and sustained on new developments.
- B.13 In response to these comments the draft Conservation Area Management Plan has been amended (at 7.53 and 8.42) to clarify its approach to tree planting, design improvements and soft landscaping. This should be carried out with due consideration to historic planting patterns and design, not just in the Park and the grounds of Acacia Hall, but throughout the whole Conservation Area.
- B.14 There is also potential for these comments on soft landscaping issues to be reflected in the emerging Park Masterplan. Additionally, it should be noted that most new developments have S106 conditions that include aspects of landscaping, and also that soft landscaping issues are addressed by the other Council initiatives.

Further Comment on the Attractiveness of the Town Centre and Means of Improving it

- B.15 1 respondent was keen to see Dartford's heritage as a market town enhanced, a comment which also reflects views expressed more broadly on the day of the public exhibition.
- B.16 This document recognises the importance of Dartford's town centre as a market town in its discussion of the historic development of the town. Community comments on this issue have been noted and will be considered in the context of the implementation of the broader Recommendations and Proposed Actions (e.g. Interpretation, Shop fascia design) in section 8.
- B.17 1 respondent also noted the need for many buildings to be painted and for improved wayfinding in the town centre. Action under the town centre THI (if successful) should address the buildings issue and Recommendations of this document indicate the appropriate approaches to colours, buildings materials etc. within the Conservation Area. The need for improved wayfinding is recognised by this Plan (e.g. at 7.12 and 8.20) and this will need to be addressed further as the town configuration changes with new regeneration projects coming forward.
- B.18 Concern was also expressed about uses that detract from the character of the town centre, for example, gambling establishments and pubs/clubs with late licences. These comments will be addressed by wider Council initiatives and Action Plans.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
Its attractiveness as a place to shop	3	2	4		
Its historical importance and development since Roman times, illustrated by its streets and buildings	6	3			
The park and green spaces	6	3			
The views from the town centre to East Hill and West Hill	1	4	2		2
The town's industrial history	2	6			(1 blank)
The character of the area, with its variety of spaces, architectural styles and historic buildings	6	3			
The familiar landmarks it contains	3	6			
The spiritual feel of the place, reflected in the religious buildings and graveyards	1	3	3		2

Question 2: What do you think are the most important issues facing Dartford town centre?

- B.19 9 different statements were made, reflecting the issues identified by the Management Plan, and respondents asked to indicate their views on these. As the table below shows, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with any of the statements in this question and, while there was some disagreement with 6 out of the 9 statements, in all cases a clear majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements. This again suggests that the public opinion sampled broadly concurs with the Plan on the issues it has highlighted as significant.
- B.20 There was total agreement that the lack of protection for Listed Buildings and other important historic buildings, ground floor vacancy, and the paucity of information displayed about Dartford's history and importance, are issues that must be addressed. The fact that 8 out of 9 respondents strongly agreed on the lack of protection for Listed Buildings and other important historic buildings is of particular note. Concern was also (7 out of 9 respondents) very strong regarding inappropriate shop frontages and the clutter created by too much street furniture.
- B.21 While 6 out of the 9 respondents agreed that the lack of people living in the area was an important issue, only 1 strongly agreed. It appears that the role of the town centre as a residential area interested the respondents less than other issues felt to be of more significance and concern

- B.22 A number of additional comments were made. 1 respondent expressed particular concern about the cottages on East Hill/Overy Liberty. Planning permission, albeit being implemented over a long period, is in fact in place for the buildings mentioned. Another respondent suggested that adjustment to the pedestrian crossing sequence at the junctions of East and West Hill is needed for the safety and convenience of pedestrians. This comment has been noted. This document recognises that traffic congestion is an on-going issue that is being addressed by wider council initiatives.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The ground floor vacancy in buildings on the High Street	5	4			
The lack of people living in the area	1	5	3		
The gradual loss of character through inappropriate styles of modern shop frontages, their colours & materials	7	1	1		
The clutter created by too many signs, bollards, barriers, inappropriate paving etc.	7	1	1		
The unclear walking route from the train station to the High Street	3	4	2		
The traffic junctions at the foot of East & West Hill, which spoil the appearance and walking routes through the historic town centre	6		3		
The lack of information displayed about Dartford's history and importance	4	5			
Modern development, which may spoil pleasant views, and the scale & character of the town centre	4	4	1		
The lack of protection for Listed Buildings and other important historic buildings	8	1			

Question 3: Do you feel that the following proposals will help to look after the heritage of Dartford town centre?

- B.23 11 different proposals were listed, reflecting the Recommendations set out in the Management Plan, and respondents asked to indicate their views on these. There was no strong disagreement with any of the proposals and, while there was very limited disagreement with 4 out of the 11 proposals, in all cases the clear majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements. This

suggests that the public opinion sampled endorses the Recommendations made by the Plan.

2.20 Broadly speaking, respondents felt strongest about the need for:

- ◆ a list to protect unlisted, but locally significant, historic buildings,
- ◆ the impact of new development on the special character, heritage and views of the town
- ◆ the creation of more attractive and clearer routes along the river and through the town centre

B.24 3 respondents did include additional comments here to reinforce their views, and these have been noted. 1 felt that Acacia Hall is in fact already easily accessible. This respondent also felt that improvements to the Park and Acacia Hall should only happen within limits, as open spaces tend to be targets for vandalism.

B.25 Another respondent commented that all town centres tend to have the same street furniture. In fact, street furniture can be used to reflect the unique historic character of a place, and issues of design and consistency are dealt with in the Management Plan (at 8.27-35). Further guidance on development work will also be provided by Dartford Borough Council's emerging Public Realm Design Guide.

B.26 Another respondent suggested that a 'railway track' might be painted along the walking route from the railway station to the town centre, to make it more attractive and clear. This comment has been noted and such issues are being addressed under a Council environmental improvement scheme.

Question 4: What do you think are the three most important improvements that could be made to enhance the character of the town centre?

B.27 All comments in response to this question have been noted. Some of these comments can more appropriately be dealt with through other Council initiatives and, where relevant, they have been passed on to other parts of the Council for consideration. These include comments on policing, on traffic congestion at peak times on the ring road around the town centre, and on keeping the paved High Street closed to traffic at all times (the latter will be taken into account as part of Traffic Order revisions currently under consideration). Other improvements suggested relate to:

Economic Prosperity and the Nature of Retail Businesses in the Town Centre

B.28 Suggestions made by 4 of the respondents relate to improving the economic prosperity and attractiveness of the town centre, by encouraging new shops and small businesses (possibly by lowering rents/business rates), reducing the number of empty shops, and transforming the kind of retail businesses there. Fewer pound shops, charity shops and cafes, and more alternatives, such as specialist/antique shops and other 'quality' retailers, were suggested. The Conservation Area Management Plan does recognise ground floor and upper floor vacancy as an issue and sets out a Recommendation (OP4) to address the latter. To a large degree

however, these concerns can be dealt with more appropriately through other Council initiatives for the town centre.

Soft Landscaping in the Town Centre

- B.29 2 respondents suggested more tree planting, shrubs and permanent floral displays (vandal-proof where possible). As already noted (2.9 above), this document has been amended in response to such comments, to clarify the approach advocated by the Conservation Area Management Plan to tree planting and landscape design. Once again, however, such issues can be addressed more appropriately through other Council initiatives for the town centre.

Use of Vacant Buildings

- B.30 1 respondent suggested that the former town hall be used by the Council as an easier access enquiry centre. The Conservation Area Management Plan recognises the issue of vacancy in the town centre. This specific suggestion for the use of Bank House has been noted.
- B.31 Another respondent suggested the possibility of a museum on Dartford's industrial past, housed in the old Co-op warehouse in Springvale North. While of relevance to wider heritage and regeneration initiatives in the town, this warehouse falls outside of the town centre Conservation Area and the comment has been passed on to the planning policy team for consideration.

Enhancing the Special Character of the Town Centre

- B.32 Many of the suggested improvements relate to enhancement of the special character of the town centre. These include:
- ◆ Emphasise the history of the town
 - ◆ Tidy up the town and make it more attractive to visitors
 - ◆ Buildings: improve the upper storey of buildings; clean and repair historic buildings; make shop fronts more in keeping with a historic market town; complete work on The 11 Cricketers and Jolly Miller buildings at the bottom of East Hill (see 2.18 above for response to this latter comment).
 - ◆ Street furniture: remove the Orchard Centre awning completely; reduce street furniture and improve its quality; get rid of the red pavement tiles
- B.33 A number of the Conservation Area Management Plan Recommendations relate to such improvements. For example, the Plan sets out proposals on interpretation measures to emphasise the history of the town (8.36-8.42); on use of appropriate building materials and street furniture, including particular comment on preferred alternatives to existing town centre paving (8.27-35). The issue of the Orchard Centre awning is specifically highlighted (7.45) and that of inappropriate shops fascias addressed (7.20; 8.24-25). The Council's emerging shop front and Public Realm design guides also address issues of street furniture and shop front design.

- B.34 The Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme will (potentially) address many of these broad issues, and policies and actions for such town centre improvements will be embedded in the emerging LDF.

Question 5: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary: Are there any features included within this boundary which you feel ought to be excluded?

- B.35 7 of the 9 respondents made no comment and an eighth found the map hard to read. Only 1 suggested features for exclusion – the parade of 1960's shops at the junction of Spital Street and West Hill are of little architectural value. This comment has been noted but, while these buildings have been recognised as poor in a review of town centre buildings, this parade remains included within the Conservation Area in order to prevent an 'island' within it.

Question 5: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary: Are there any features immediately adjacent to the boundary, which you feel ought to be included?

- B.36 6 respondents suggested extensions of the Conservation Area boundary. 1 suggested inclusion of the old Priory walls and Thames Road, and 17th century cottages at Instone Road; another, inclusion of Dartford Grammar School and the Tudor gatehouse building; a further 2 respondents inclusion of Livingstone Hospital. These comments have been noted and the historical value of the buildings and walls highlighted recognised, but with so few intervening historic spaces and buildings it would be inappropriate to extend the town centre Conservation Area.
- B.37 Another 2 respondents suggested that the boundary ought to be extended to include all of Central Park, particularly in the light of the recent rejection of Tesco development plans to the west of the Park. The detail of these comments has been noted, but extending the Conservation Area to the full extent of the park is of no benefit and would potentially water down the character of the Conservation Area. A more tightly drawn boundary enables the character and relationship of the park edge to the town to be maintained. The full rationale for the Conservation Area boundary in the area of the Park is set out at 6.8 of the Appraisal. A considerable element of the rejected Tesco development was within the existing Conservation Area and any future development on the site identified by the LDF will be tightly controlled by the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Extending the Conservation Area further down Lowfield Street is not considered appropriate

Question 6: If you have read the draft Conservation Area appraisal, please let us have your views on the document

- B.38 5 of the 9 respondents had no comment to make on the Appraisal part of this document. 1 respondent felt that the Appraisal was inaccurate with regard to traffic issues. Alterations to the text have been made in response to this comment (at 7.2 and 4.9). The Appraisal and Plan recognise that traffic congestion is an on-going issue that is addressed by wider council initiatives.
- B.39 Another respondent felt that the proposals are not contentious and that the proposed extensions to the boundary are somewhat timid. This comment too has been noted, but the proposed boundaries, which are drawn at the limits of the historical character of the town centre, have been retained. A further 2 respondents, who found the Appraisal informative and thorough, made a range of comments – for example noting

that information boards in the town would need to be vandal proof, that granite sets would be nice, but expensive and hard to walk on, and that a better design is needed for the necessary bollards on the High Street – and these have also all been noted.

Question 7: If you have read the draft Conservation Area Management Plan, please let us have your views on the proposals and conclusions, or anything else about the document.

- B.40 4 of the 9 respondents had no comment to make on the Management Plan, and a fifth simply urged that it should be implemented as soon as possible.
- B.41 1 respondent questioned the comment at 7.62 regarding the removal of trees on West Hill and felt that there could be no satisfactory argument for removing trees in the Conservation Area. Recent works on West Hill have been implemented under a planning permission. It is the Council's general policy to replace trees where it is absolutely necessary to fell them. The same respondent pointed out that the two 1920s lamps on the town bridge parapet (noted at 8.28) are currently not working or lit. This comment has been noted and contact made with Kent County Council for repairs to be carried out.
- B.42 3 respondents focused on their own views about the town centre, and made a number of suggestions regarding protection and enhancement of its special character. 1 respondent noted the importance of restoring Dartford's market town character. Another emphasised the need to concentrate on existing buildings rather than new developments and on encouraging retailers to stay in the town. All of their detailed comments have been noted. The Appraisal and Management Plan (as well as other Council documents) has already recognised many of the issues raised, for example, regarding shop fronts, colours, building materials, street furniture and more interpretation/education measures.

DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Dartford Borough Council is currently developing a Conservation Area Management Plan for Dartford Town Centre.

The Town Centre is a Conservation Area because its buildings and spaces, its churches, shops, houses, streets and parks, reflect the historic development of the town from Roman times, through the medieval to the modern period.

The Management Plan:

- ◆ assesses what is special about the historic character of the Town Centre Conservation Area
- ◆ defines the boundaries of the Conservation Area
- ◆ identifies the issues that are facing the Town Centre
- ◆ sets out proposals and actions to ensure that the Council looks after this core area of historic interest.

The document will underpin plans for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund), which aims to help communities like Dartford regenerate the historic parts of their towns and cities. The Management Plan also furthers the Council's commitment to making Dartford a place of quality and choice, to ensuring design excellence in all new developments, and particularly to promoting the heritage of the Borough.

Atkins Heritage, the consultants commissioned by the Council to produce this document, have carried out a lot of research and exploration of the Town Centre, and have consulted with a wide range of interest groups in Dartford in the process of developing the Plan. These groups include:

- ◆ Dartford Borough Council
- ◆ Dartford Museum
- ◆ Dartford Historical and Antiquarian Society
- ◆ Dartford Town Centre Forum
- ◆ Dartford and Gravesend Building Preservation Trust
- ◆ North West Kent College

The Council is keen to know your views on the proposals set out in the Plan, and on what is important to you about the character of Dartford Town Centre. The complete draft of the Conservation Management Plan document is available to read online at:

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Your response will help to shape the future management, conservation and development of Dartford's historic character.

Q1: What is important to you about Dartford Town Centre?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
Its attractiveness as a place to shop					
Its historical importance and development since Roman times, illustrated by its streets and buildings					
The park and green spaces					
The views from the town centre to East Hill and West Hill					
The town's industrial history					
The character of the area, with its variety of spaces, architectural styles and historic buildings					
The familiar landmarks it contains					
The spiritual feel of the place, reflected in the religious buildings and graveyards					

If there is anything else that you like or consider to be important about Dartford Town Centre please add it to the box below:

Q2: What do you think are the most important issues facing Dartford Town Centre?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The ground floor vacancy in buildings on the High Street					
The lack of people living in the area					
The gradual loss of character through inappropriate styles of modern shop frontages, their colours & materials					
The clutter created by too many signs, bollards, barriers, inappropriate paving etc.					
The unclear walking route from the train station to the High Street					
The traffic junctions at the foot of East & West Hill, which spoil the appearance and walking routes through the historic town centre					
The lack of information displayed about Dartford's history and importance					
Modern development, which may spoil pleasant views, and the scale & character of the town centre					
The lack of protection for Listed Buildings and other important historic buildings					

Q3: Do you feel that the following proposals will help to look after the heritage of Dartford Town Centre?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
A list of buildings that are of local historical importance, but not protected by national designation, should be drawn up to ensure their protection					
Developers, builders & designers should follow guidance on enhancing & complimenting the heritage of Dartford					
New buildings and development should not spoil attractive views in the town centre and outwards to East Hill & West Hill					
The walking route from the railway station to the town centre should be more attractive and clear					
The north/south route along the River Darent should be more attractive and publicly accessible					
Better pedestrian access should be created between the grounds of Acacia Hall and Central Park					
Shop front designs should follow guidance for protecting Dartford's historic character					
Pavements, street lights, bollards etc. should be enhanced to be in keeping with the historic character of the town centre					
More information should be displayed and heritage trails developed to help people to understand the historical importance of the town centre					

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
Education packs for schools should be developed, to help children to understand the historical importance of the town					
Improvements to Central Park and the gardens of Acacia Hall should reflect the historic character of the area					

Q4: What do you think are the three most important improvements that could be made to enhance the character of the town centre?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

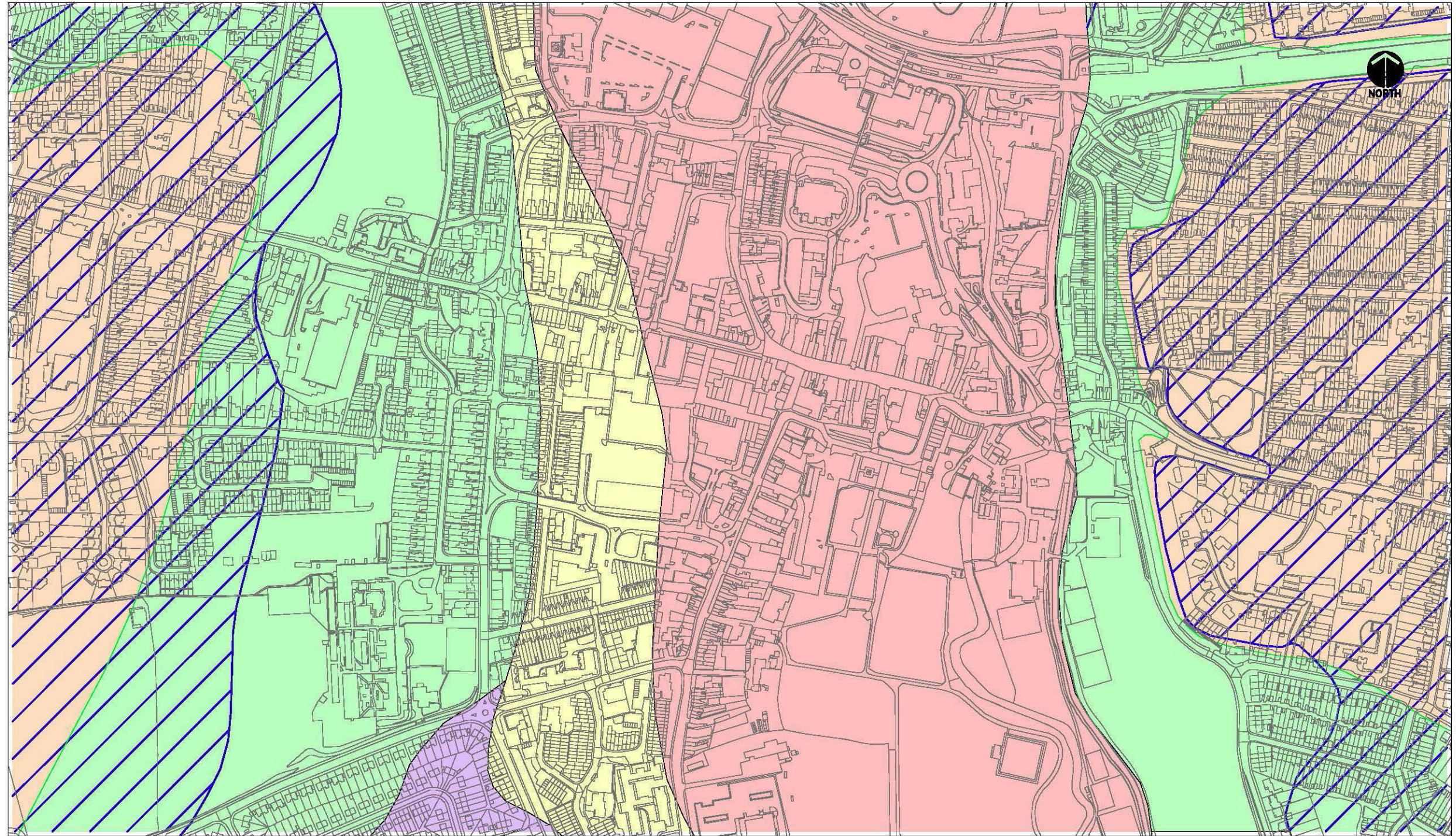
Q5: The map attached shows the Conservation Area boundary, and indicates its most recent extensions. The boundary is meant to include the main historic buildings and spaces in the Town Centre.

Are there any features included within this boundary, which you feel ought to be excluded? If yes, please say why.

Are there any individual features *immediately adjacent* to the boundary, which you feel ought to be included? If yes, please say why.

Q6: If you have read the draft Conservation Area Appraisal, please use the space below to let us have your views on the document.

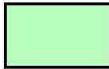


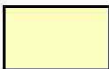


Q 7: If you have read the draft Conservation Management Plan, please use the space below to let us have your views on the proposals and conclusions, or anything else about the document.



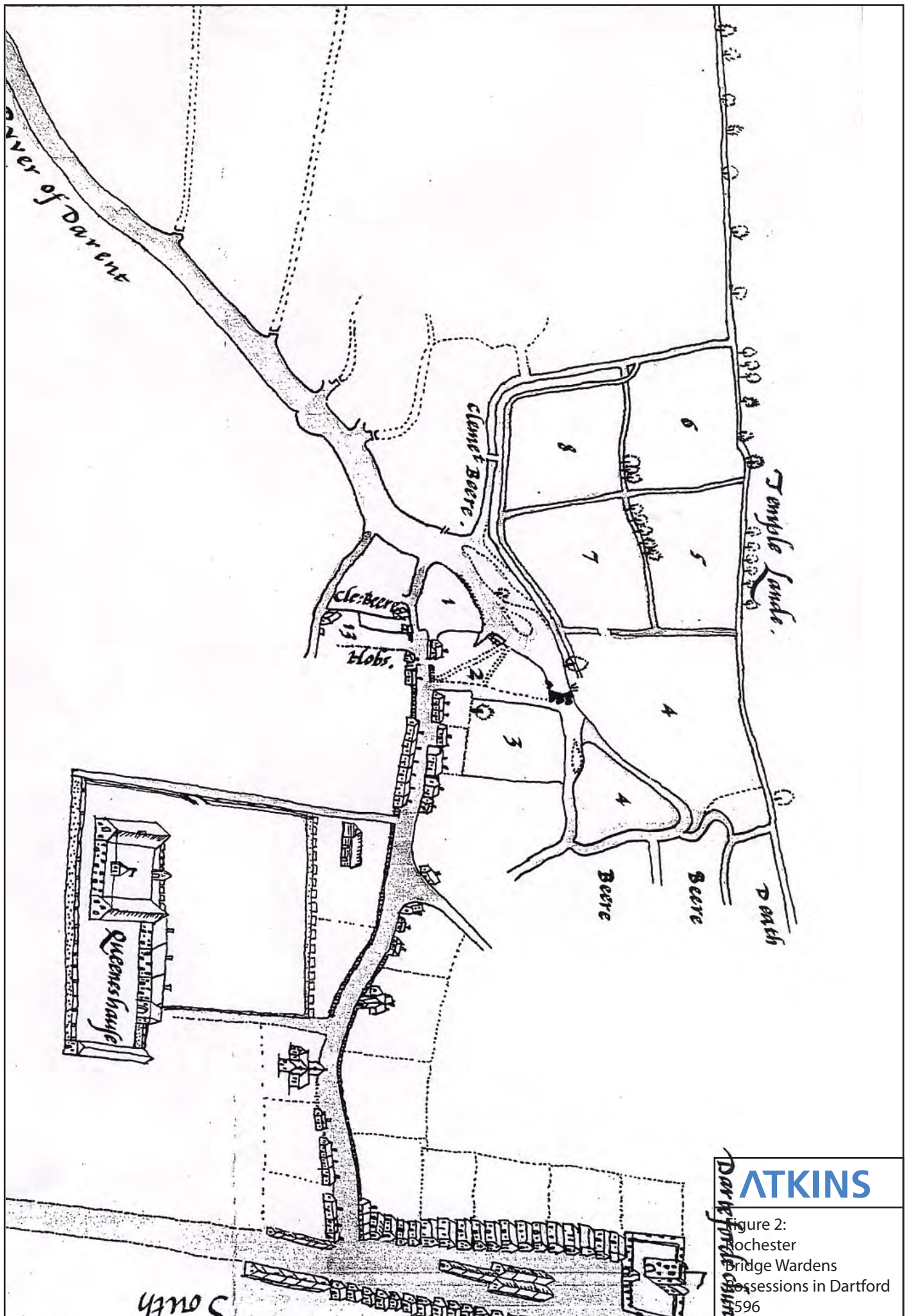
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Scale 1:5 000

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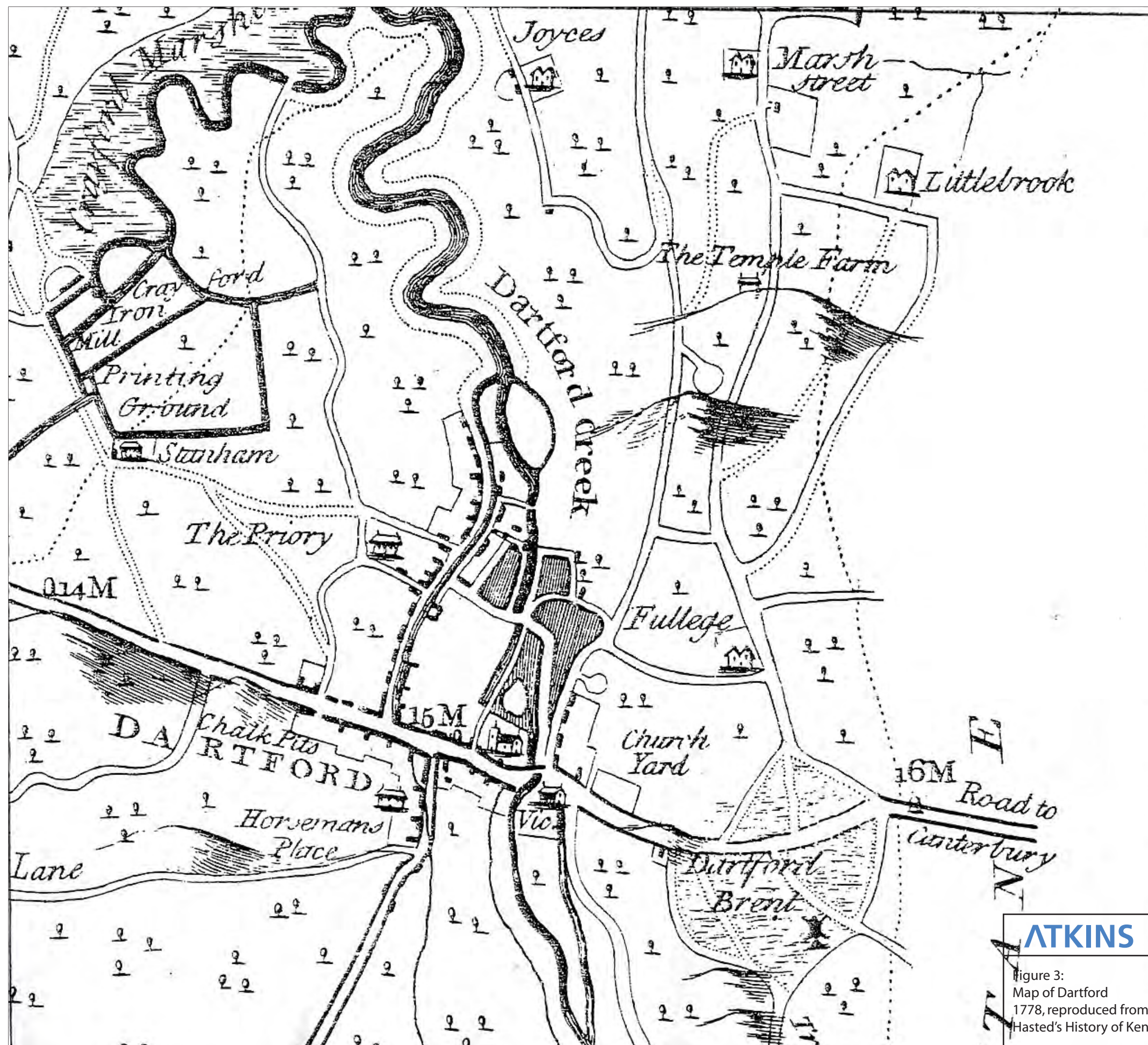
	Chalk		Thanet Sand
	Sand & Gravel		Taplow Gravel
	Alluvium		Boyn Hill Gravel

Geology Map
Figure 1



ATKINS

Figure 2:
Roche
Bridge Wardens
Sessions in Dartford
1596



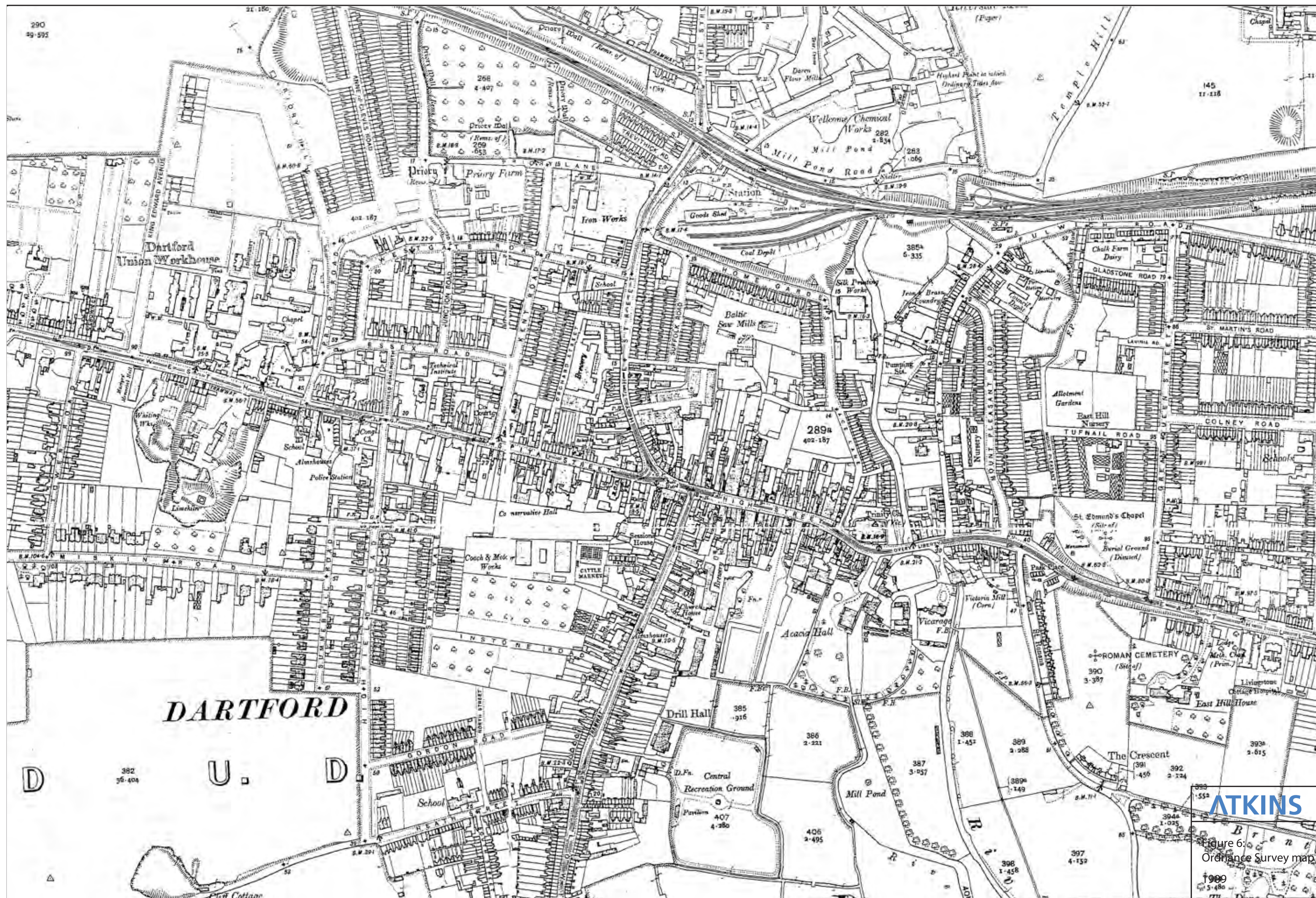
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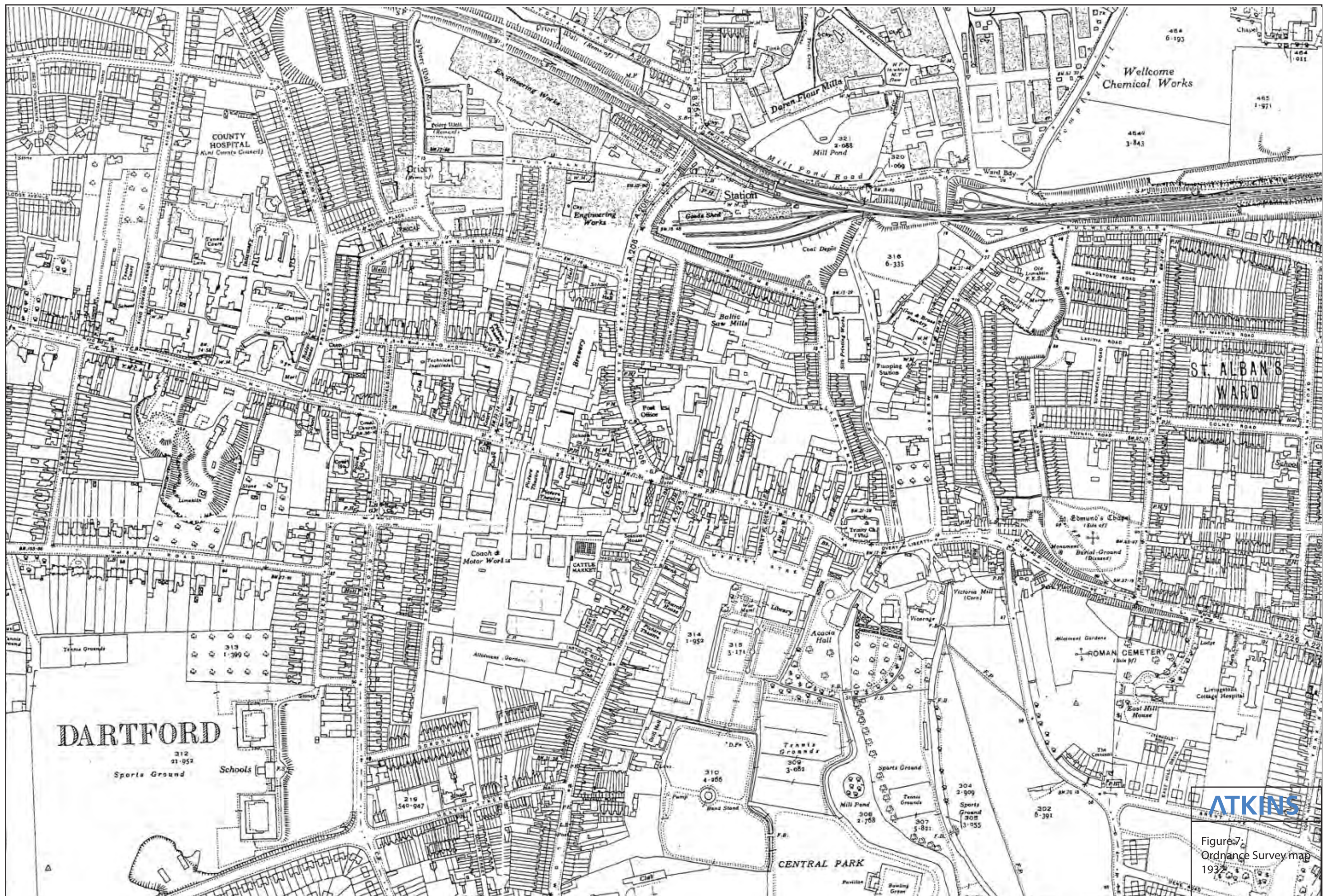
Figure 3:
Map of Dartford
1778, reproduced from
Hasted's History of Kent

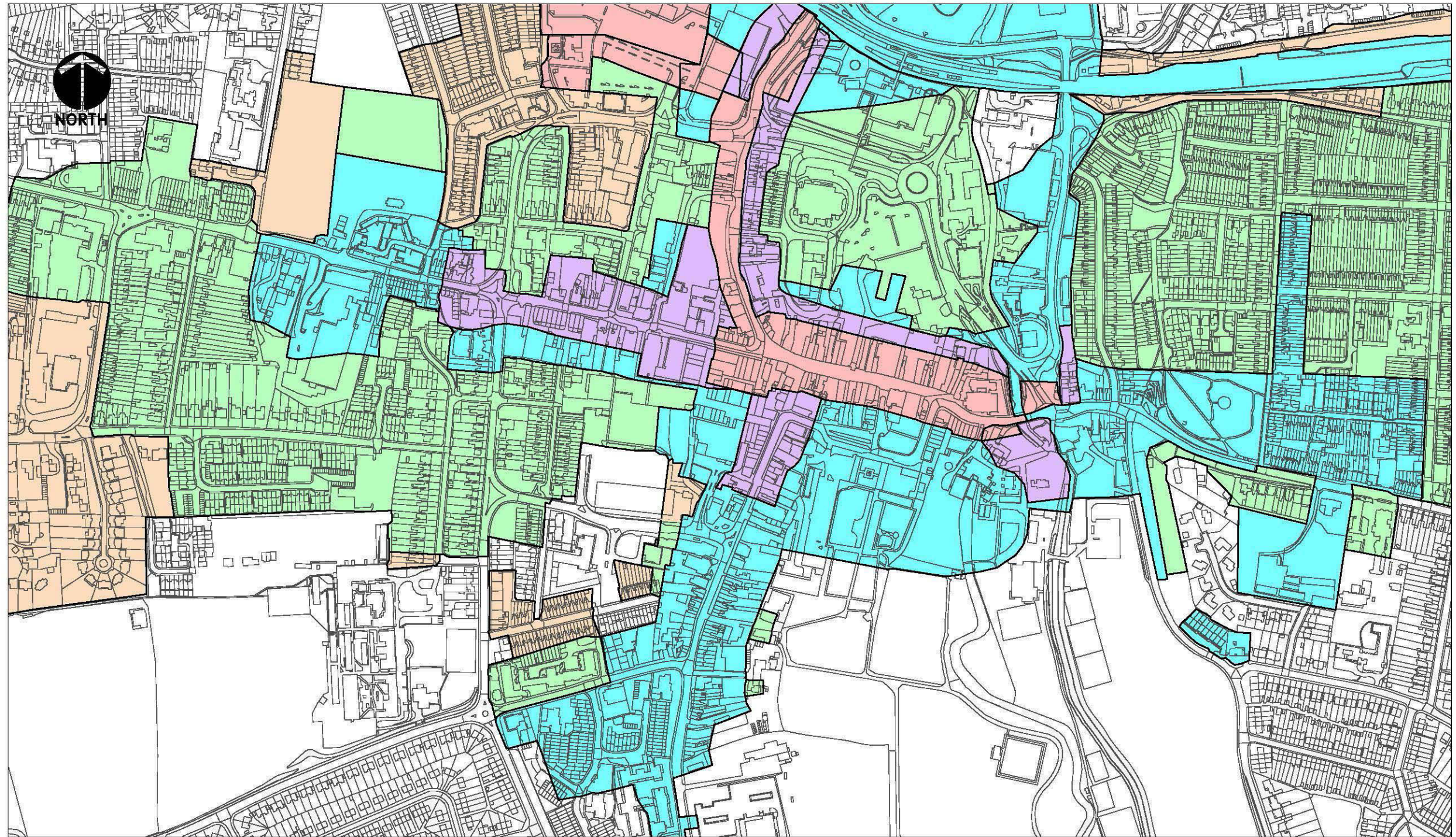




Figure 5:
Ordnance Survey map,
1897







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Key

- Approximate extent of urban settlement in 1596
- Approximate extent of urban settlement in 1778
- Approximate extent of urban settlement in 1860
- Approximate extent of urban settlement in 1897
- Approximate extent of urban settlement in 1909

Historic Growth
 of Dartford
 Figure 8



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- Proposed Boundary of the Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Areas of Special (Residential) Character

Designations
Figure 9



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- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | Key Facade + Hard Edges | | Prominent Buildings of
No to Negative Interest |
| | Important Views | | Tree Screen |
| | Views of Interest | | Listed Buildings |
| | Key Unlisted Landmark Buildings | | Conservation Area Boundary |

Spatial Analysis & Views
Map East
Figure 10

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May 24, 2006 - 2:45pm



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- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | Key Facade + Hard Edges | | Prominent Buildings of
No to Negative Interest |
| | Important Views | | Tree Screen |
| | Views of Interest | | Listed Buildings |
| | Key Unlisted Landmark Buildings | | Proposed Conservation Area Boundary |

Spatial Analysis & Views
Map West
Figure 10



- A** Views of St Edmund's Burial Ground and monument and of the top of Holy Trinity Church Tower. There are also long views towards West Hill.
- B** Views of the Town Centre roscape and the Church.
- C** Views from Darenth Road of the facades on the north side of the High Street, Holy Trinity Church, Acacia Hall and the surrounding historic buildings nearby. There are also long views of West Hill.
- D** Views from West Hill down Spital Street with the church as a focal point and with East Hill rising behind it.
- E** View down Hythe Street, closed by the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel.
- F** View north along Lowfield Street of the Almshouses and the High Street.
- G** View of the bow to the rear of 43 High Street and the weatherboarding at the rear of 33-35 High Street.
- H** View from Spital Street to the east, down the High Street. The view is partly closed by Holy Trinity Church and the adjacent buildings at the bottom of Bullace Lane, with East Hill forming its backdrop.
- I** Views to the west from the High Street up West Hill. The eastern bow on 21 West Hill forms the focal point.
- J** View to the east and north east towards the memorial on East Hill and St Edmund's burial ground.
- K** Views to the west from East Hill, where the Church, buildings to the south of the church and longer views over the Conservation Area and towards West Hill are gradually revealed.
- L** Views over the Conservation Area from St Edmund's burial ground. There are important views of the cupola of the Stables at Acacia Hall, the weatherboarded building nearby and the roofs of Acacia Hall itself and the Library.
- M** Views towards East Hill and the monument from the grounds of Acacia Hall.

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Key

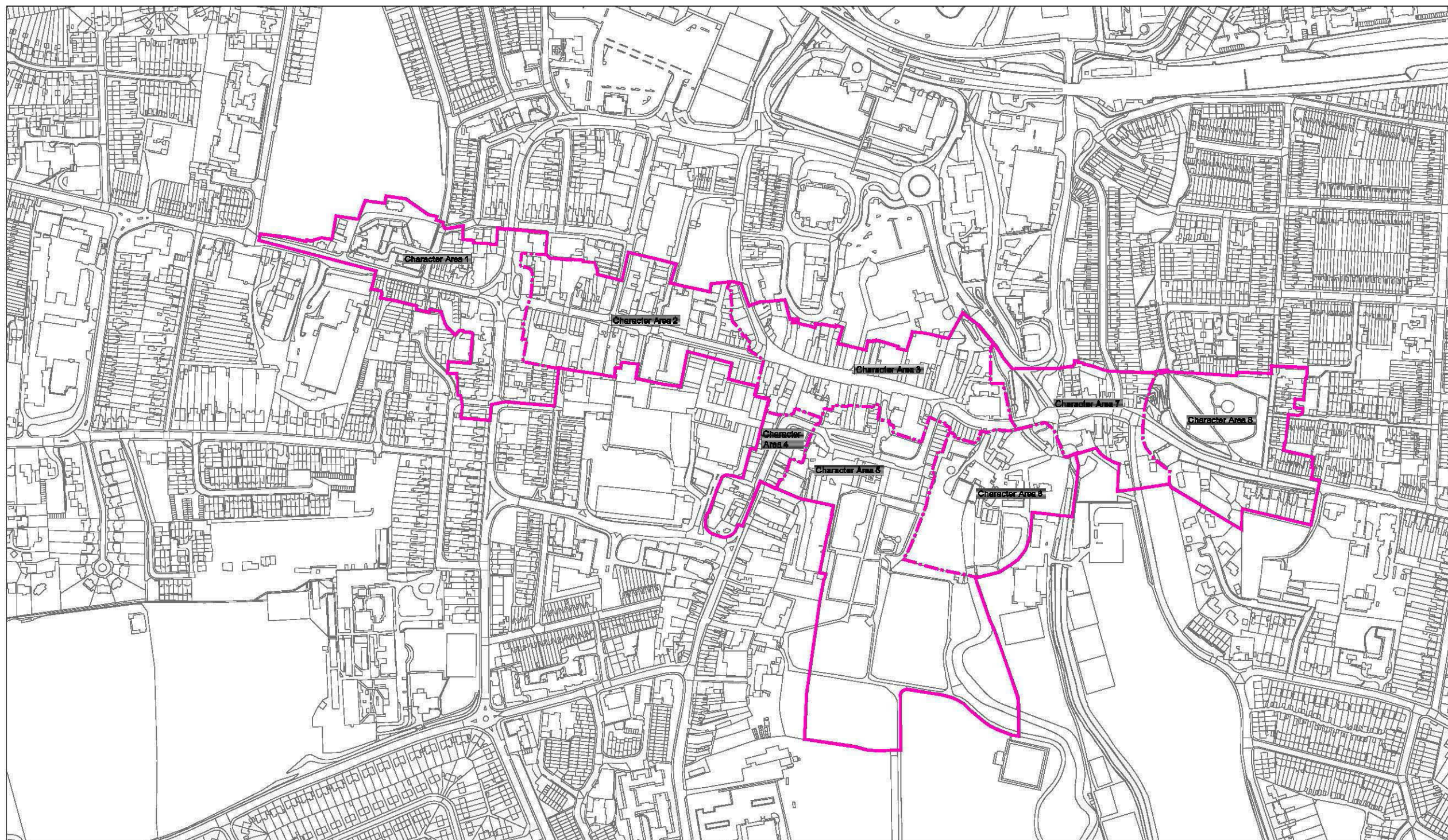


Long View

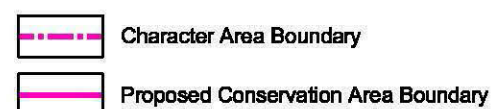
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Strategic Views

Figure 11



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Character Areas

- 1 WestHill & Highfield Road
- 2 Spital Street
- 3 High Street
- 4 Lowfield Street
- 5 Market Place & Central Park
- 6 Acacia Hall & environs
- 7 Overy Street & Lower East Hill
- 8 East Hill






Conservation Area boundary
& Character Areas boundaries
Figure 12

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- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
|  | Listed Buildings |  | Key Unlisted Buildings and Features |
|  | Buildings and Features that Contribute to the Character of the Conservation Area |  | Conservation Area Boundary |
|  | Buildings and Features that Detract from the Character of the Conservation Area | | |






Character Analysis
 Map East
 Figure 13

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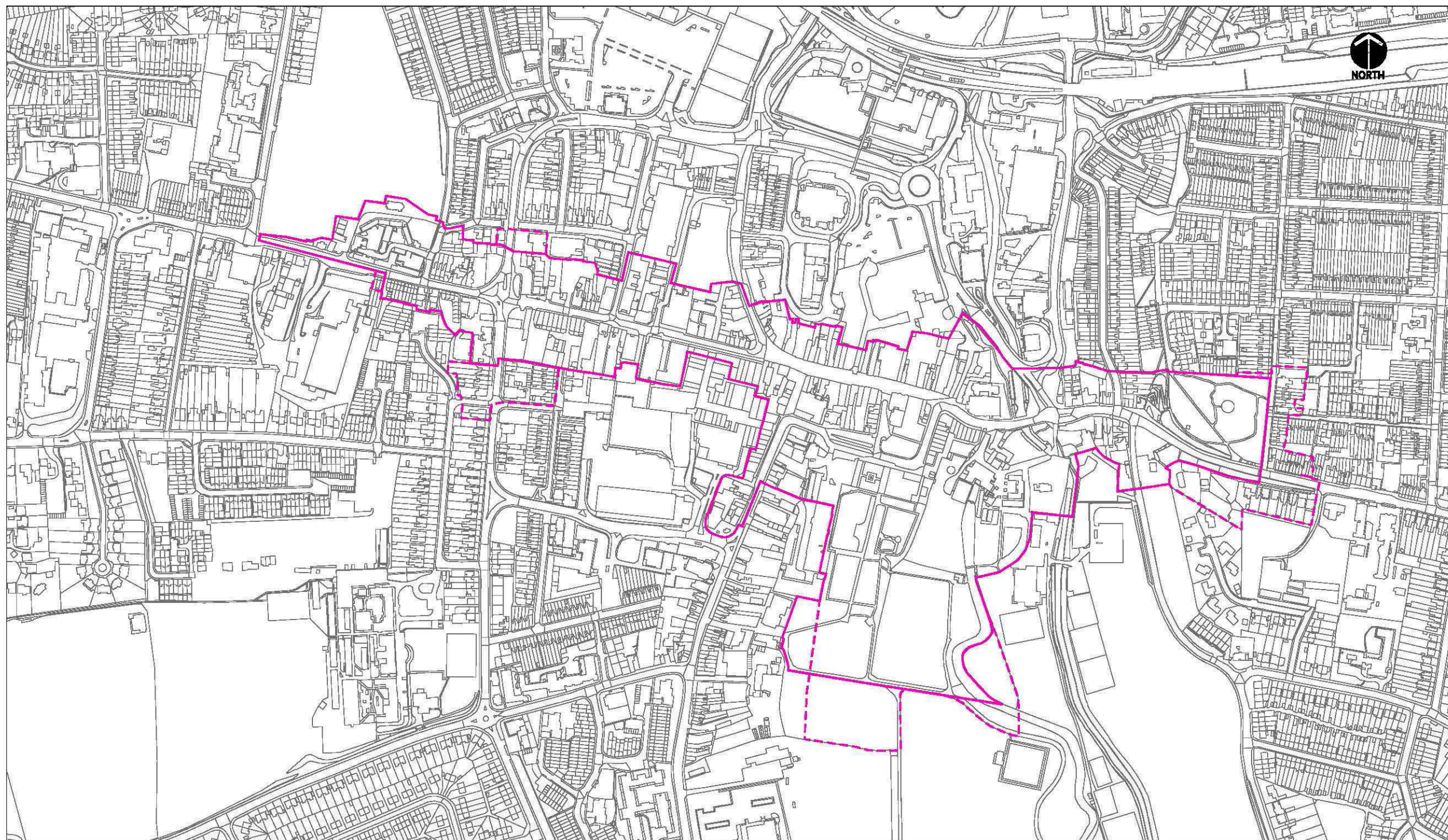


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- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
|  | Listed Buildings |  | Key Unlisted Buildings and Features |
|  | Buildings and Features that Contribute to the Character of the Conservation Area |  | Proposed Conservation Area Boundary |
|  | Buildings and Features that Detract from the Character of the Conservation Area | | |

Character Analysis Area 1
Map West
Figure 13



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- Current Boundary of the Conservation Area
- Proposed Alteration to the Conservation Area

Scale 1:5 000

The Boundaries of the Conservation Area,
showing the most recent extensions
Figure 14