

Adopted March 2021

# Supplementary Planning Document Edenbridge Character Area Assessment





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## Edenbridge Conservation Area

Area is indicated on map, the assessment can be found in separate Edenbridge Conservation Area Appraisal (2001), located on Sevenoaks District Council website.

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## 1. Introduction

Places evolve and adapt over time. Development is necessary to provide new homes, businesses, social infrastructure and public realm. It is required by national and local policy that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. This document helps determine what these characteristics are that contribute towards making Edenbridge distinctive. By understanding the existing characteristics, this document can be used as a tool to enhance and promote positive development, which is responsive and suited to the local character.

## 2. Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aims to:

- identify the locally distinctive features that contribute to the character within the Edenbridge which is lies outside of the Conservation Area (Edenbridge Conservation Area Appraisal is a separate document which can be accessed on Sevenoaks District Council website, published in 2012);
- support development that encourages rather than erodes character and local distinctiveness;
- provide guidance to enhance the character of the public realm as well as buildings;
- inform the development management process in support of national and local policies;
- raise awareness of the importance and value of local context and character.

As an adopted Supplementary Planning Document, the document will be a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

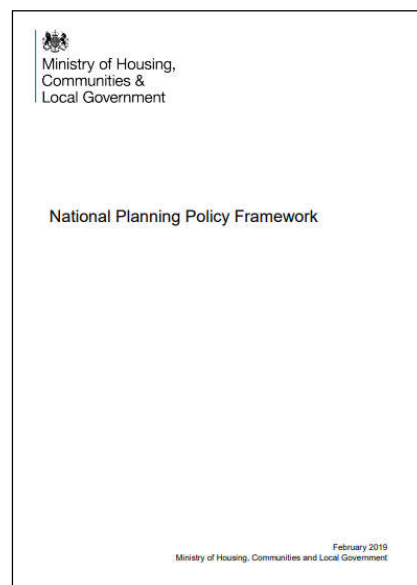
## 3. Policy Context

This document is consistent with national and local planning policy.

### National Planning Policies

The *National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)* states that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (para 9).

Developments should establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit (NPPF, para 127d). This SPD, is one tool to provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However,



level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified (NPPF, para 126).

## Local Planning Policies

One of the main aims of the *Core Strategy Development Plan (February 2011)* is to ensure that new development throughout the District will be of a high quality incorporating designs that respond to the distinctive local character of areas of high environmental quality or make a positive contribution to the environmental enhancement of other areas.

*Adopted Core Strategy Policy SP 1* states that:

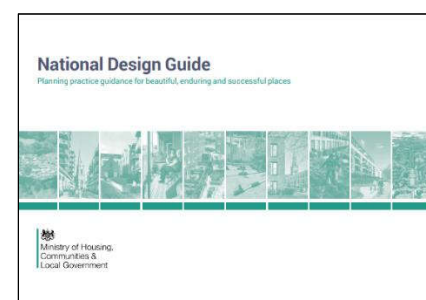
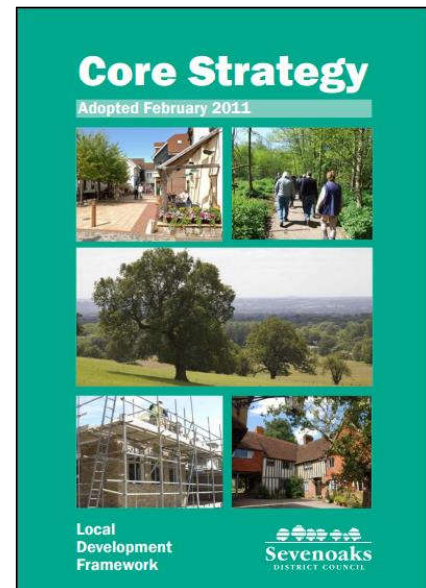
‘All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. Account should be taken of guidance adopted by the Council in

the form of Kent Design, local Character Area Assessments...In areas where the local environment lacks positive features new development should contribute to an improvement in the quality of the environment.’

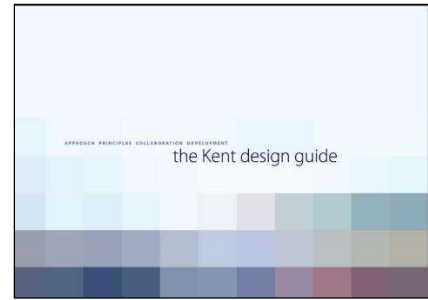
The emerging *Local Plan* sets out detailed guidance to ensure new development respects local distinctiveness. This is supported by policies requiring that all new developments must meet design criteria relating to principles including character and working with the site and its context.

## Supplementary Planning Document and other guidance

The *National Design Guide (October 2019)* illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools. The guide states that all local design guides and codes will need to set out a baseline understanding of the local context and an analysis of local character and identity.



The *Kent Design Guide* was produced by the Kent Design Initiative in 2005/2006. It was adopted as an SPD by Sevenoaks District Council at the meeting of Full Council on 24 July 2007. The Kent Design Initiative aims to create a showcase of great buildings, memorable and attractive new places that reinforce Kent's distinctive character.



#### 4. Methodology

The evaluation of the Edenbridge town area has involved an assessment of the character of the development of the area through the review of historic maps; comprehensive site surveys using the approach and characteristics advocated in *By Design – Urban design in the planning system* (DETR, 2000). The following steps were taken:

- Initial appraisal undertaken across Edenbridge Town to identify and document specific characteristics. This involved a review of historic maps, photographs and written material
- Character areas were then defined by common characteristics such as time period and building type
- Street by street surveys were undertaken to identify locally distinctive contextual features and detractors, and these were documented through photographs and written descriptions
- The character areas were then sub-grouped into more specific types relating to time period, building type, and layout. These are illustrated on the Edenbridge map and are the headings used to describe each of the character areas throughout the draft SPD.
- All the information has been collated to give an overview of the locally distinctive contextual features (such as building heights, materials, street type and open spaces) and detractors (if any) of each of the character areas. Further information is given in each character area regarding historical development and characteristics, and shows examples of locally positive features such as views, boundary treatment and detailing. These contribute towards the design guidance provided for each area.

The surveys were led by an architect who was commissioned by the Edenbridge Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) Steering Group. Local Representative groups, Edenbridge Town Council and elected Members of the District Council assisted in each stage of this work.

#### 5. Community Involvement

The SPD has been prepared in accordance with the District Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, 2020 – June COVID-19 Review). Following the



preparation of the draft SPD, the council undertook a six week formal consultation period between 12th August 2020 to 23rd September 2020. The representations made have been considered and amendments have been made to this document where required.

There has been close stakeholder involvement in preparing the draft SPD in order to develop a shared vision with the local community. A briefing session was held for members of the ENP team and the wider public, at the outset of the project in April 2015. A team of volunteers, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, members of the Ward and Town Council undertook an initial appraisal. A series of facilitated walkabouts for the local community was publicised, and took place during June 2015. Street by street surveys were undertaken and each character area was defined. An assessment was written up for each area with images to accompany the description (as explained in the methodology section). Following completion of the draft document, further briefings were held in October 2015 for Edenbridge Town Councillors, and the ENP Steering Group and Task Group members. Each individual character area was then submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for review.

The working document was then reviewed, collated and updated in the summer of 2019 to incorporate mapping, include any further development that had occurred since the original survey and bring in more references related to the streets and public realm that contribute to the character of Edenbridge. The working document was circulated to Ward and Town Councillors and a meeting to discuss the updated document was held in September 2019. The draft document went out to public consultation in 12th August – 23rd September 2020. Feedback from the public consultation has been incorporated into the final version of this document.


## **6. How to Use the Document and Map**

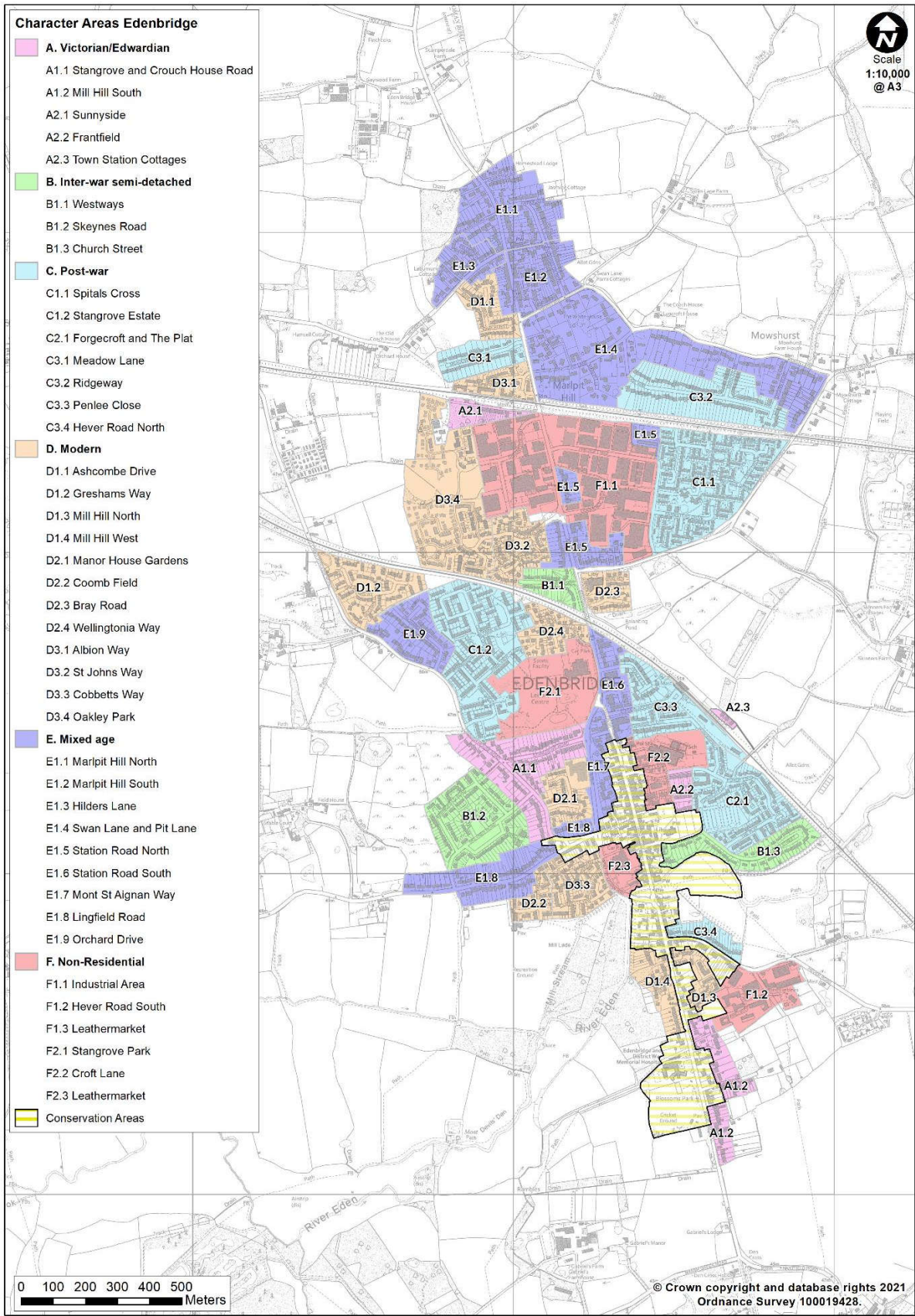
The next section gives an historical overview of the origins and development of Edenbridge. The document and key map divides the built up areas of Edenbridge, as they are in 2019, into six overarching character areas (Groups A-F). These are defined by both residential or non-residential use and time period. These six character areas are then sub-divided into groups based on types of buildings and public spaces i.e. detached or semi-detached and terraced (Groups A1 or A2). These give more detailed information on the characteristics of these areas. There is a total of 40 individual character areas in this Character Area Assessment.

### **How to Use the Map**

The map highlights each of the character areas in Edenbridge. If you are interested in the characteristics of a particular area and can locate it on the map. Please follow these instructions:

1. Find the place on the map, it will be located in a coloured area with a specific code on the map e.g., light blue, C1.1.
2. Then, look under the 'Character Area Edenbridge' key on the left hand side of the map, for this colour e.g., it is labelled C. Post-war. This gives you the overarching time period of the area you are looking for.

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3. Then, look under this heading for the specific code you were looking for and you will find the name of the area e.g. C1.1 Spitals Cross. This shows the sub group that this area fits under which is C1.
  4. Then using this code, refer to the Contents page of this document to find the page number and further information on this character area.



## How to Use the Document

Each individual character area is named and numbered on the map. If you are interested in the characteristics of a particular area, and know the name, these can be referenced using the headings on the Content page.

For each character area there is an assessment of locally distinctive features such as age, heights, types of building, main uses, boundary treatments, street type, open spaces and detractors (if relevant) as well as historical context and design guidance. Key characteristics are illustrated on a townscape map and photographs are also included to depict visually these characteristics.

In setting out the important features and overall character of identifiable areas of Edenbridge, a local context is provided for the preparation and consideration of development proposals. This forms a canvas within which proposals for development should be conceived and determined. This is to support development that strengthens rather than erodes character and local distinctiveness. Design Guidance based on the identified locally distinctive features is included for each Character Area. This along with other relevant planning policy documents and guidance will form the basis for decision making on development proposals. It should be noted, however, that buildings and features that do not conform to local character may nonetheless have heritage significance and this will also be taken into account during decision making.

Whilst the principal characteristics for all areas have been summarised, it has not been possible to illustrate each individual feature and consequently the absence of a feature from this document does not necessarily mean that it is unimportant to the character of the local area. Further to this, some groupings of houses are not large enough to produce their own character area, the absence of this does not mean they are unimportant to the character of the local area and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis using relevant planning policy documents and guidance.

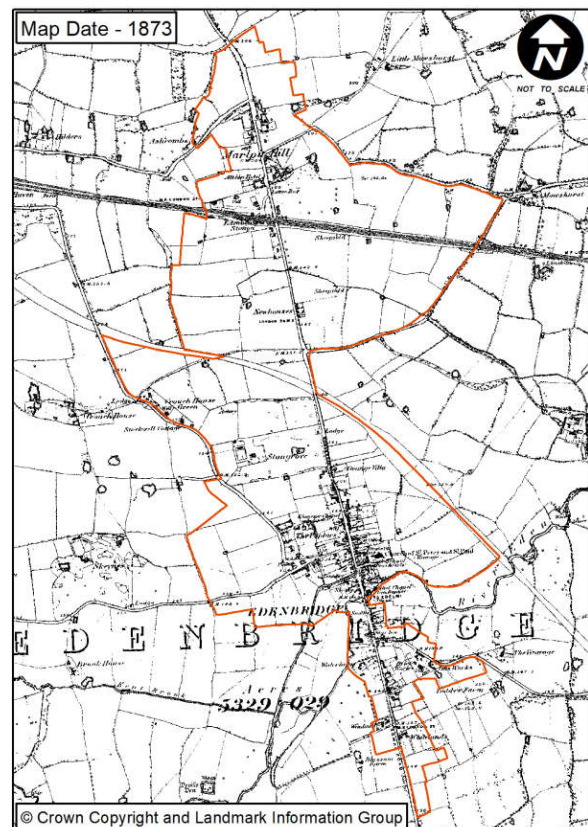
## 7. Historical Development of Edenbridge

The parish of Edenbridge is located in the south west corner of Sevenoaks District, on the border of Kent and Surrey. The western border of the parish is with the Surrey parishes of Dormansland and Limpsfield in Tandridge District. The northern boundary is with the parish of Westerham and Crockham Hill, and the eastern and southern boundary is with the parishes of Cowden and Hever. The population of the parish of Edenbridge at the 2011 Census was 8,907.

The earliest settlement in Edenbridge appears to have developed in Roman times around the place where the London to Lewes Roman Road crosses the river Eden, probably via a wooden bridge. The Roman Road route is still clearly visible and a defining feature of the town. It is known that a bridge existed in Saxon times, and thought that a village had probably developed by the 10th Century. The earliest parts of the Parish Church date back to the late 11th Century. Records show that in 1125, Eadhelm, an Abbot of Canterbury ordered a bridge to be built, and so the place became known as Eadhelmsbrugge which in time became Edenbridge, and the river became the Eden.

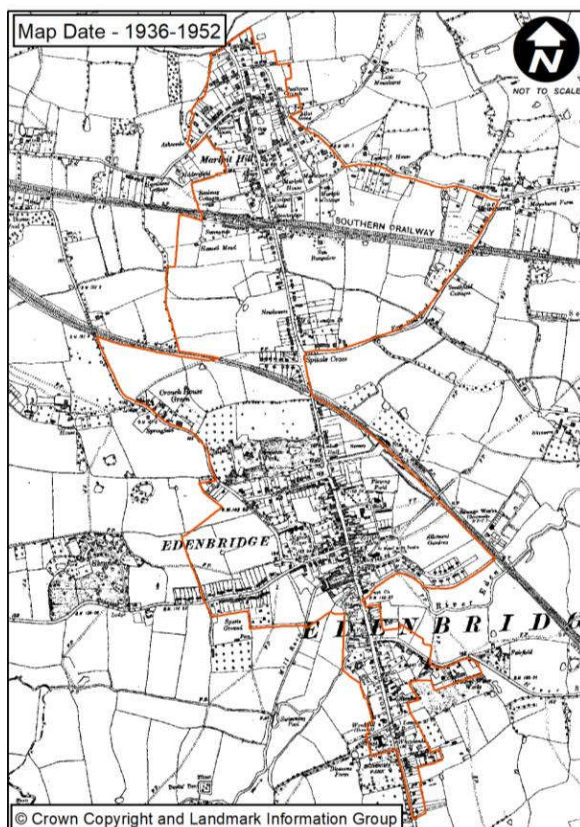
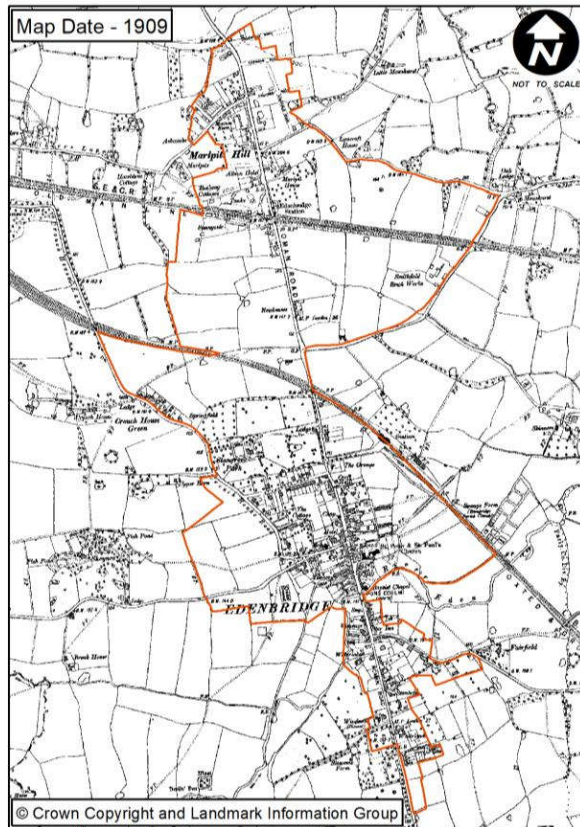
In 1225 Henry III granted a Charter for a weekly market, likely to have been located in the triangular space known as The Square in the centre of the town, and this suggests that the village was of a significant size by this time, with an agricultural hinterland based around keeping pigs and cattle in fields created though deforestation. The first stone bridge, with 6 arches, was built in the time of Henry VII.

In Tudor times, Edenbridge enjoyed a period of prosperity, and the historic centre of the town contains some fine old timber frame buildings from this time. The Weald produced 80% of the country's iron, and the town provided a market centre for this industry. The town's fortunes declined during the 17th and 18th centuries, with the collapse of the Wealden iron industry, and a falling out of favour with the rich City merchants. The next major phase of development in the town took place in the 19th Century in response to the arrival of two railways, providing connections between the town and London, Kent and Sussex. This affected both the economy and physical shape of the town, and houses built in late-Victorian and Edwardian times can be found throughout the town.



Development of the first 'social housing' in the town took place in the 1930s. The next major expansion took place after World War II in 1955 when the then London County Council was given planning permission for over 800 houses and associated infrastructure, including industrial estates (with employment for 1000 people), school facilities and private housing. It was at this time that Green Belt policies first came into effect following the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, defining the boundary of the built area of the town. The idea of a 'Relief Road' to alleviate congestion in the High Street was first mooted. The 1970s saw the closure of the Tannery and subsequent construction of the Leathermarket retail development, Further housing development took place in the 1970-90s on brownfield sites in the town. In the 1990s the decision was taken to proceed with the phased construction of the 'Relief Road', linked to the development of a large supermarket to the rear of the Leathermarket, and a number of further housing developments in the town.

The early 2000s saw the completion of the Relief Road, associated improvements to the High Street, the construction of the Greshams Way, St Johns Way, the closure of Eden Valley School, and the development of residential facilities for people with disabilities just off Hever Road. The most recent developments include Eden Centre, the associated housing in Bray Road and Oakley Park. Some small infill sites continue to provide additional housing capacity.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Information accessed from 'An Introduction to Edenbridge' from the Draft Edenbridge Neighbourhood Plan (2017). Accessed from [Edenbridge Town Council website](http://www.edenbridge-tc.gov.uk).