

Brittains Farm Sevenoaks

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



PLANNING GUIDANCE - 2011



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The historic environment is a social asset of immense value and one of the keys to the continuing prosperity of Sevenoaks District. Conservation Area Appraisals are part of a process which helps us make the best use of our historic environment. They are tools for the positive management of change, not a means of preventing development. Conservation is focused on the entire historic environment, not just listed buildings. Trees, open spaces, buildings, uses and streets all contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the District's conservation areas.

The built environment of our conservation areas has used energy and materials moulded by people both past and present. The District Council will creatively manage the fabric of these areas in a sustainable way as a legacy for future generations.

It is intended that this appraisal and management plan will inform the activities of the Council, the public and other bodies where these affect the conservation area. This Appraisal was approved by the District Council in October 2011 and adopted as Informal Planning Guidance.

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The converted oasthouse

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Brittain's Farm Sevenoaks drawn by Charles Essenhigh Corke 1900

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document replaces the Britains Farm Conservation Area Appraisal which was produced in July 2000 by Sevenoaks District Council in partnership with Sevenoaks Town Council and local amenity groups. Local authorities are required by law to preserve or enhance their conservation areas and part of that process is to regularly review their conservation areas and produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These explain what is important about the area and what improvements are needed.

This Appraisal and Management Plan follows the broad format suggested by English Heritage in the 2006 document Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. This Appraisal draws heavily on the original document, but the conservation area has recently been re-surveyed and the boundary reviewed. During this process, photographs were taken and both positive and negative elements recorded. However, the omission of any particular feature or building does not imply that it is of no significance.

1.1 Conservation Area Boundary Review

A review of the boundary was undertaken as part of the preliminary survey work associated with this Appraisal. The boundary, which was reviewed in September 2007, accurately reflected the overall extent of the area of special architectural or historic interest and no changes were made.

1.2 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas first came into being as a result of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are intended to identify any valuable visual or historic characteristics in a locality that may warrant special measures in order to protect and conserve them.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 recognises that there are particular areas of 'architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and charges planning authorities with a duty to designate any such locations within their jurisdiction as conservation areas. This designation then empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to planning considerations and development within them and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses to the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, thereby fostering a sense of communal pride.

It has been recognised that designation, because of the responsibilities and obligations it places on both owners and the local authority should only be imposed on areas that are demonstrably suitable. Where the criteria have been met, the area should then

benefit from the additional control and protection that designation confers, and from official recognition of the special architectural and historic character of the locality.

The management of our national cultural and historic inheritance is of paramount importance and conservation areas are vital grass roots starting points from which to safeguard the continuing care of our environment.

1.3 The Benefits of Being in a Conservation Area

The historic environment is of particular economic importance for tourism and leisure. In addition, maintaining the appearance of a conservation area and the character of the groups of buildings and the public areas within it will sustain or enhance the value of individual properties. Conservation can also play a key part in promoting economic prosperity by ensuring that an area offers attractive living and working conditions which encourage further investment.

The principles of conservation management planning, that managing any historic place should be based on understanding it and assessing its significance and values, are now accepted as applying to historic areas as much as to historic buildings.

1.4 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans

As their number grows, it has become even more important for local authorities to include a well-defined and considered policy for designated conservation areas in their development plans. Development pressures are such that any designation is likely to be subjected to detailed scrutiny and must be readily and demonstrably defensible against adverse criticism. The criteria for designation should be kept as uniform as possible and the public kept fully aware of the reasons for any proposed changes in their area.

The 1990 Act charges local authorities with the responsibility of undertaking a review of their conservation areas from time to time, both to consider the possibility of revising their extent, and to identify any past changes or future pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.

English Heritage published an advisory leaflet on appraisals in 1997 and more detailed guidance on both appraisals and management plans in 2006. This guidance outlines the preferred approach to these plans and gives examples of the type of content that it would be useful to include.

The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Britains Farm Sevenoaks Conservation Area can be assessed. It defines those key elements in the area that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be conserved or enhanced. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Development Plan, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas, and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the Conservation Area.

The appraisal and management plan defines the key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyses how they interact to enhance their individual impact. The plan can then provide management suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that highlight the area and give it its local distinctiveness. These plans can also be used to assess the impact of planning policies and the implementation of enhancement measures.

The plan will help the District Council, development professions (planners, architects, landscape architects, highway engineers etc) and the local community engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset. This new Appraisal and Management Plan is based on the Britains Farm Conservation Area Appraisal 2000 and sets objectives for the protection and enhancement of the conservation area, addresses areas identified in the first appraisal and brings forward opportunities to enhance the area.

1.5 The key purpose of this Plan is to:

- Define the key characteristics and features which contribute to the conservation area's special character or appearance and should be preserved or enhanced.
- Provide a basis for making sustainable community based planning decisions about the future of the conservation area.
- Raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage.
- Record those principal elements that detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Identify distinctive built form character within the conservation area.
- Identify opportunities for enhancement to be delivered through management plans or other initiatives.
- Inform key agencies, societies and residents whose activities impact on the conservation area and maximise the investment in the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area to the benefit of the social and economic quality of life in Sevenoaks.
- Provide guidance and set out objectives to preserve and enhance the buildings, structures and features.
- Outline the key statutory requirements in respect of development within the conservation area; provide guidance and set out actions to secure the proper and effective application of these requirements.
- Propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance works within the public realm.

As an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan , the plan will be a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

2.0 GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

2.1 National and Regional Guidance

Government advice concerning conservation areas historic buildings and other heritage assets is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment 2010 and the accompanying Planning Practice Guide . Other advice about conservation areas including the production of management proposals, was produced by English Heritage in 2006.

2.2 The Development Plan

The government has introduced a new type of development plan known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will set out the strategy, policies and proposals for the future shape of Sevenoaks District and will be produced over the next few years. The Core Strategy was adopted by Sevenoaks District Council in February 2011. Policy SP 1 of this document is relevant to conservation.

In the meantime the saved policies of the Local Plan of March 2000 is the development plan until parts of the new system are adopted. As an adopted planning document the Appraisal and Management Plan will be a key material consideration in the determination of development proposals.



Listed historic barn

2.3 Local Policies

Brittains Farm is within the Metropolitan Green Belt where the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but

there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development will not be approved except in very special circumstances. It is for the applicant to prove that very special circumstances exist.

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted March 2000) lists the following policy EN 23 relating to conservation areas. :

- **Proposals for development or redevelopment within or affecting Conservation Areas should be of positive architectural benefit by paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and of its setting. The design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings should respect local character, whilst the treatment of external spaces including hard and soft landscaping, boundary walls, street furniture and signs should be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area.**



Black tarred boarding and slate roof forming a simple vernacular building

2.4 Buildings Contributing to Character

Buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area are identified on the character appraisal plan at the end of this document. English Heritage national guidance on conservation areas sets out the criteria used to identify these buildings.

2.5 Conservation and Enhancement

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 states that local planning authorities should undertake detailed assessments of conservation areas and prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the enhancement of the character and appearance of the area as set out in any plan which may have been prepared. This assessment and the detailed analysis of the area contained in the report are intended to fulfil this requirement and provide the background for development and enhancement schemes.

Sevenoaks has a rich townscape and an environment of high quality. This appraisal aims to ensure that this rich context is respected so that only high quality design is introduced, allowing the town to maintain its character and status as one of the most desirable places in the south east.

There is a richness, variety, quality and history of townscape within Sevenoaks that makes the town special. Within individual character areas there is a need to maintain and enhance the best of these townscape qualities to maintain the town's vitality. Context sensitive quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of Sevenoaks and this character must not be lost through undue pressure for poorly designed infill development or redevelopment.

2.6 Special Controls in the Conservation Area

Designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that changes cannot occur, but rather that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character. Controls are imposed which are additional to normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area. The benefits of this and the maintenance of a high quality environment are perceived by most people who live and work in conservation areas as being worth the additional restrictions.

Additional controls within Conservation Areas are outlined here for information. However, other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by conservation area status.

Houses and their alteration

The size of an extension that may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a conservation area. Any proposals should always be discussed with the Council at an early stage.

Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles will require submission of a planning application. Any enlargement of a house by way of alteration or additions to the roof, e.g. a dormer window, will require a planning application to be made. A planning application is needed for a satellite antenna where it is to be installed on a chimney; or on a building over 15 metres in height; or on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway.

Demolition

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building within a conservation area, except the following:

- any building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115 cubic metres or any part of such building.
- any wall of fence less than 1 metre high fronting onto the street or less than 2metres high elsewhere.
- any building subject to a formal order requiring demolition.

Planning officers are happy to give advice on whether planning permission is required for work within a conservation area. Please contact the Council's relevant development control area team.

Trees

Six weeks notice must be given to the Council of intent to cut down, prune, uproot or destroy any tree within a conservation area. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within 6 weeks of the notice being given, work may go ahead. This requirement does not apply to trees which have a diameter less than 75mm (3") when measured at a height of 1.5metres (4'11") above the ground. Works to trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order will also require consent.

Unauthorised Works and development

Sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the District Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take enforcement action once it is aware of any alleged unauthorised works and after detailed investigation.

Maintenance and Repairs

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are limited. The principal guardians of the character and appearance of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area and who are responsible for maintaining the buildings.



Black timber boarding and a 19th century white lattice window.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost through the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, including paving and along boundaries. Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Any change to a window or doorway should be carefully designed to respect the character and materials of the original building.

Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which could dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably damage the character of the group. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. In older buildings paint or render can also trap moisture which may cause damage to walls. Many alterations to older properties using modern materials can upset the balance within these properties and can cause more costly problems, such as cracks, damp, or rot. Care should be taken with any alteration to an older building.

Boundary treatments

Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or ragstone wall, railings or hedges, should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area. At Britains Farm ragstone and brick walls are characteristic of the area.

Listed Buildings

Many historic buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport because of their architectural and historic interest. The main purpose of listing a building is to ensure that care will be taken over decisions affecting its future, that alterations respect the particular character and interest of the building, and that the case for its preservation is taken fully into account in considering the merits of any development proposals.

If you live in or occupy a listed building, further guidance on the controls that apply is available from the relevant development control team. When a building is listed, this covers the building both internally and externally and also any object or structure fixed to it. In addition any object or structure within the grounds or garden of the building which was there before 1948 is also listed. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition, extension or alteration of listed buildings in any way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, internally as well as externally. You must get this consent from the District Council before any work is started. You may also require planning permission for the proposed works. The Development Control Area Team will be able to advise you on this.

New gates, fences, walls, railings or other means of enclosure surrounding a listed building will require planning permission. Any shed, garage, greenhouse or any other outbuilding, along with a pool, enclosure or container would also require the submission

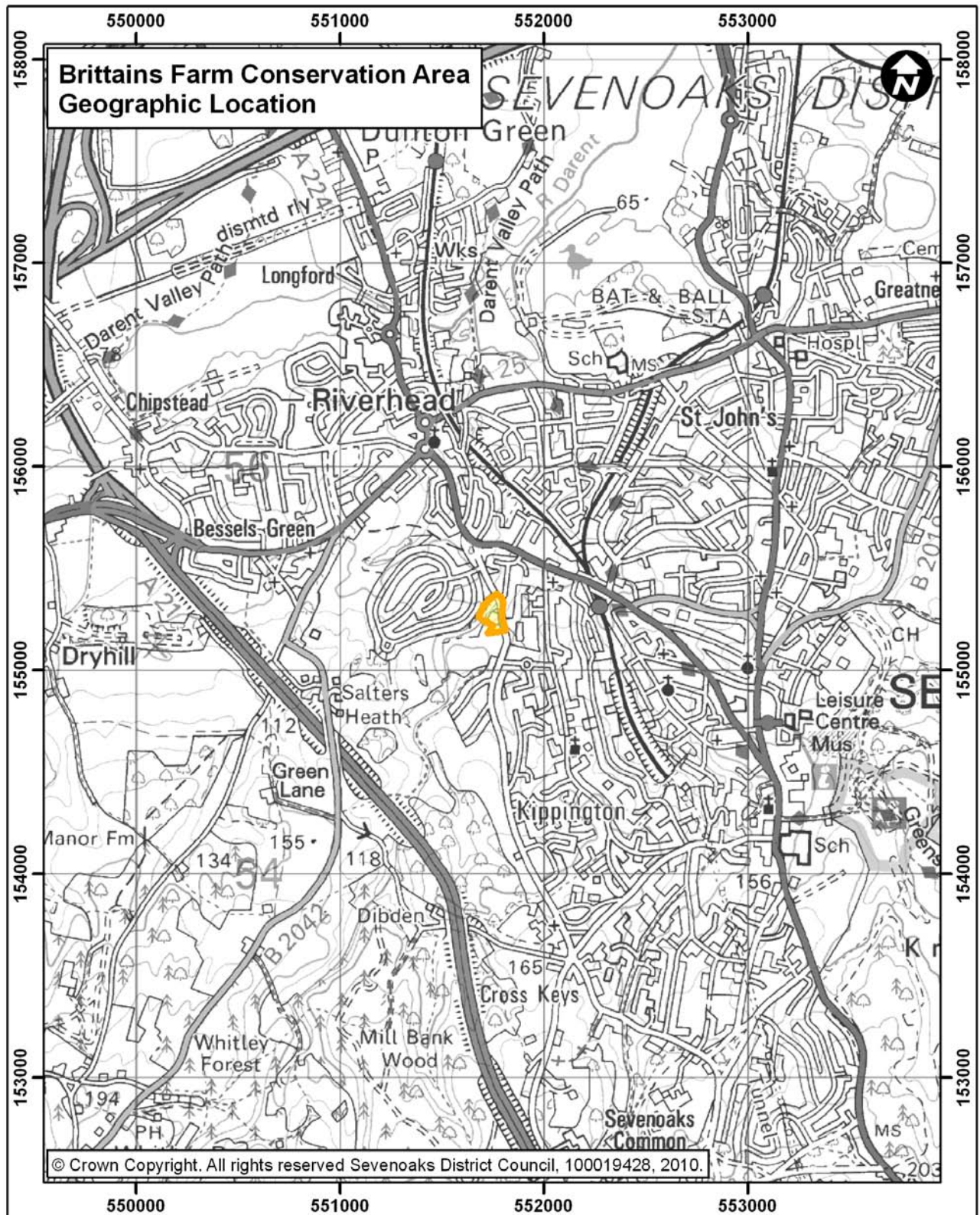
of a planning application. The design of these should harmonise with the existing building and its setting.

2.7 Security

Household security and the security of parked cars is important to the Council. Residents should ensure that their house and any vehicles are secure. However, a conservation area is an historic area and this should be taken into account. Standard types of security measures may not always be appropriate and a standard burglar alarm box may be inappropriate in a highly visible location on an historic building. Compromise can usually be reached. For advice and guidance on this matter contact the Council's development control team and the Crime Reduction Officer for Sevenoaks through the Community Safety team at the Council Offices . Planning permission or Listed Building Consent may be required for any security work.

3.0 CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Location and Geographical Context



Map 1 General Location

Sevenoaks is a prosperous market town with a population of approximately 22,000 people (22,667 in the Census of 2001), situated on the north slope of the Greensand ridge to the south of the North Downs from which it is separated by the Vale of Holmesdale. It is served by good road and rail links to London and the west, and has an easy connection to the A21, which bypasses the town and runs to the south coast. The rail network with its frequent services to London, has facilitated the growth of Sevenoaks and its surrounding villages as a commuter area.

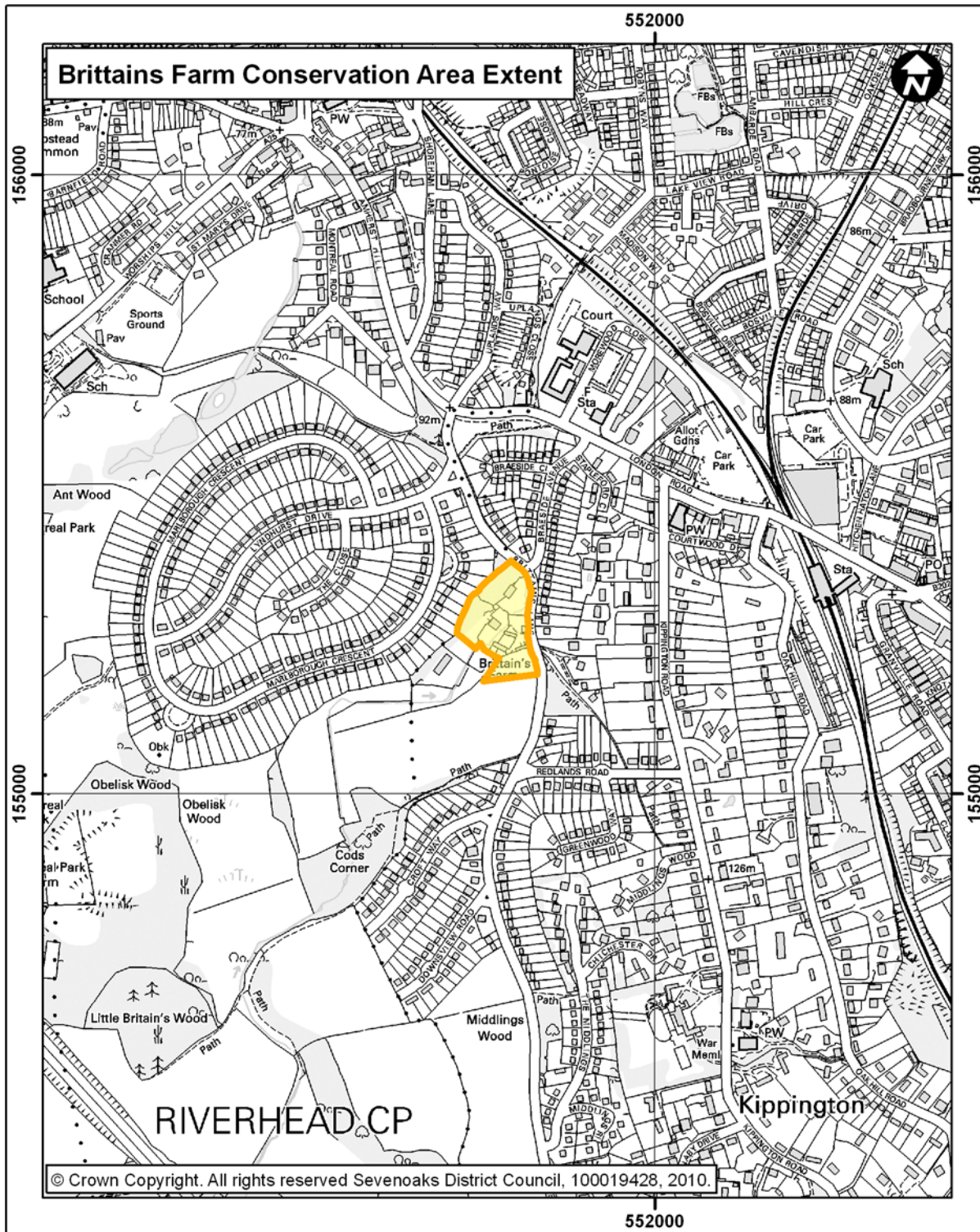
The coming of the railway initiated the most significant change in the town's development. For hundreds of years Sevenoaks remained constricted to its hill top site surrounded by a number of country estates such as Knole, Kippington, Montreal, Bradbourne, Greatness and Wildernesse. The first station opened at Bat and Ball in 1862 and the station at Tubs Hill followed in 1868. Sevenoaks then began its expansion into a base for commuting workers to London.

Brittains Farm is situated between Sevenoaks and Riverhead in Brittains Lane, opposite the junction with Braeside Avenue. It is on the edge of the built up area but close to the train station.

Open countryside to the south west of the conservation area extends to the A21. The conservation area lies within the Green Belt, sandwiched between the housing estates on Montreal Park and Croft Way and contains a farmstead that was once part of the historic Montreal Estate.



Ragstone and brick wall adds to the character of this farmstead group



Map 2 Boundary and position of the Conservation Area



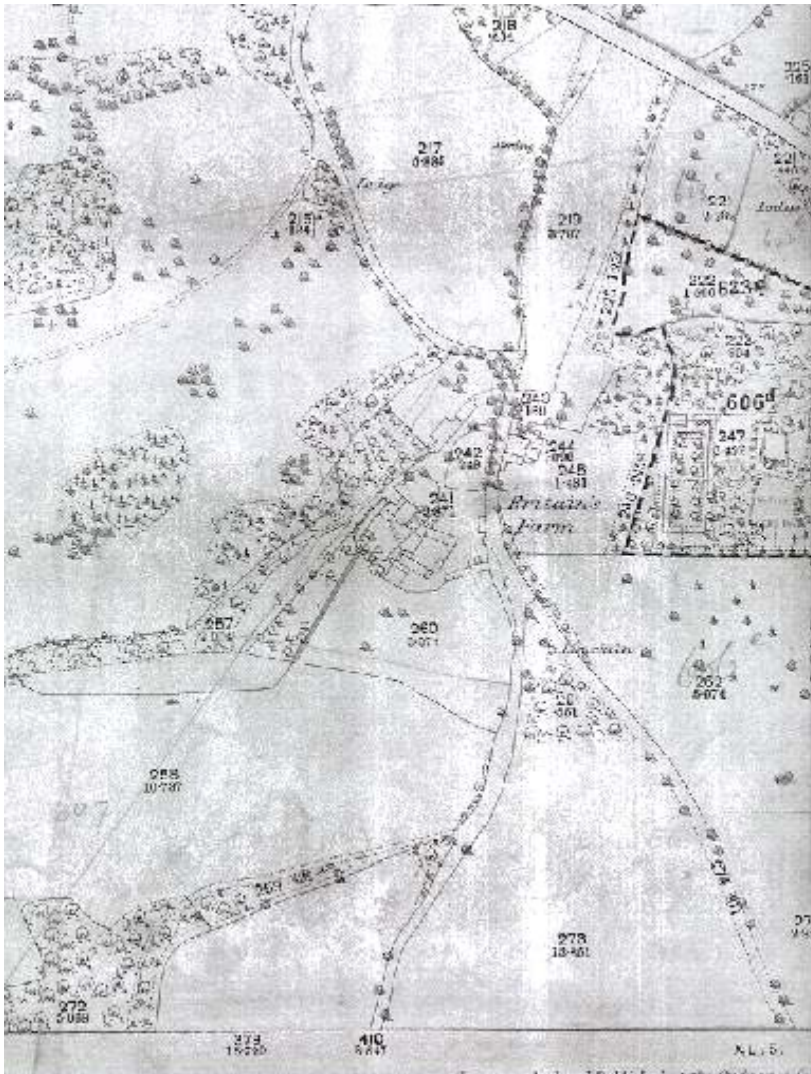
Weatherboarded stables

The conservation area covers 1.5 hectares originally designated in 1974 and was reviewed and redesignated in 2007. It contains five listed buildings and most of the mature trees within the conservation area are covered by tree preservation orders.

A stream flows through the site before disappearing underground below Britains Lane and north to the Sevenoaks wildlife reserve and the River Darent.

3.2 Historic Development

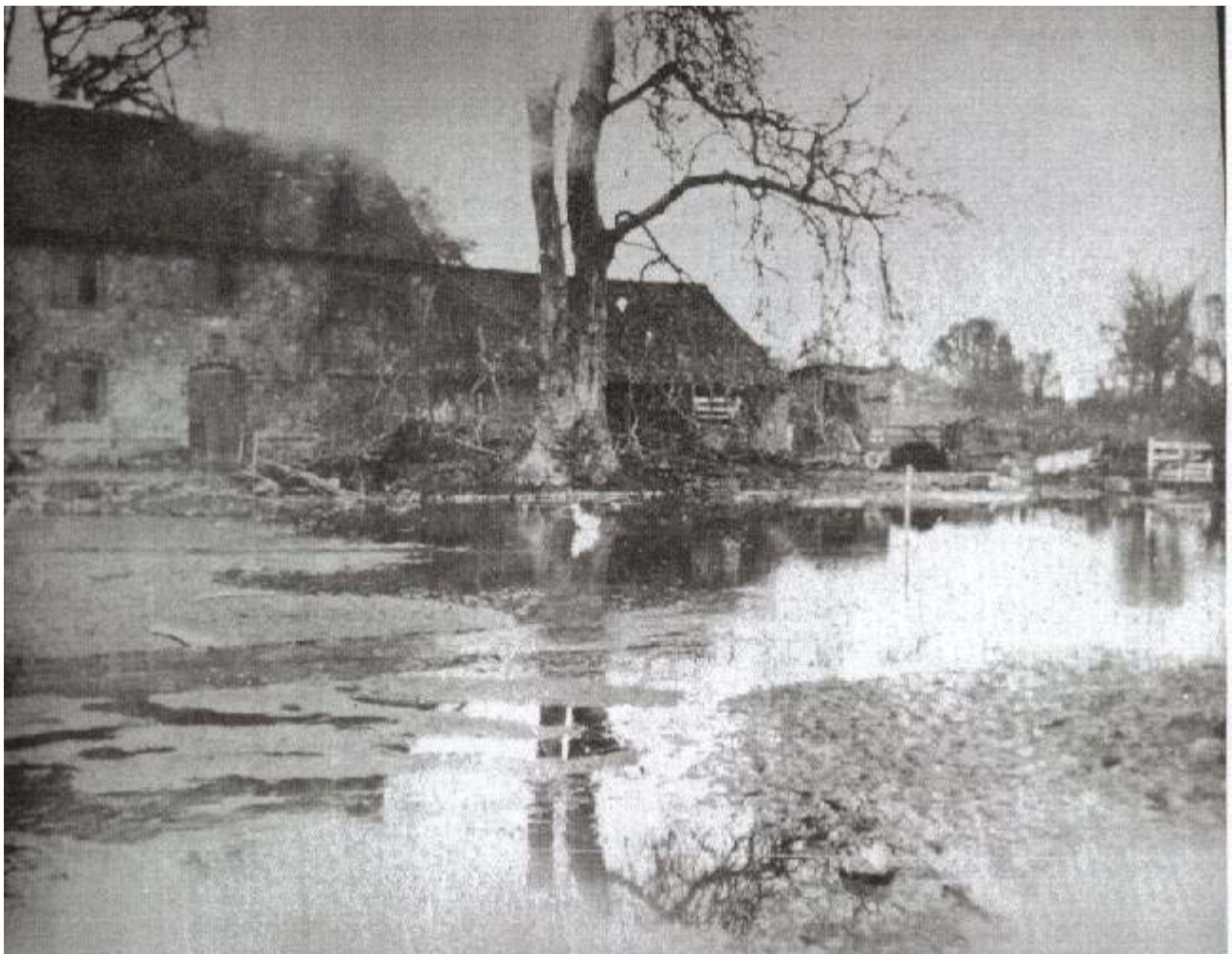
Britains Farm was probably first established in the 12th Century as one of a ring of farms around the original Sevenoaks settlement. The incumbent would have paid his dues to the Lord of the Manor or the Archbishop.



Map 3 Britains Farm In 1869

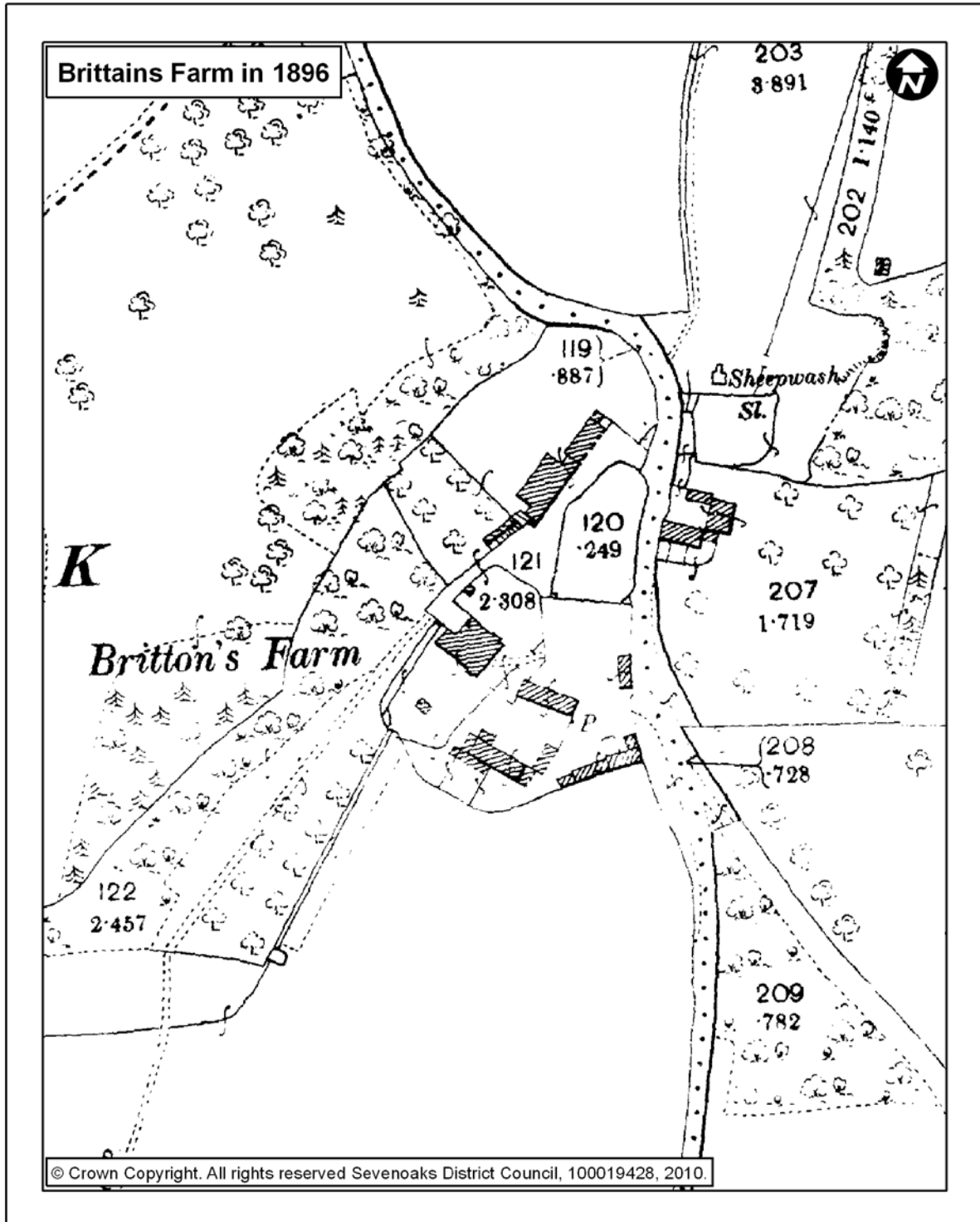
Of the buildings that survive today, the large barn to the south of Brittain's Farmhouse is reputed to date from the 15th Century, but the house itself and the oast were built in 1752 and 1751 respectively, by Thomas Farnaby. He was the second baronet and a member of the family that owned the Kippington Estate. It is likely that the farm was included in the parcel of land purchased with the Kippington estate by Thomas Farnaby in 1630. Before this purchase and from the 15th Century the Kippington Estate is recorded as being owned by a series of textile manufacturers - clothiers, dyers, and cloth workers based on the wool trade in Kent.

The Kippington Estate, and presumably Brittain's Farm, was sold in 1796 to Francis Motley Austen, uncle of Jane Austen, who moved there from the Red House in Sevenoaks High Street. The main house at Montreal was built after 1760 by Field Marshall Jeffery Amherst (1717-1797) to celebrate his victory at Montreal in Canada. He was Commander in Chief of the British Army and then became Lord Amherst. The Fourth and last Earl Amherst died in 1925, the family moved away from the area and the Estate was sold to Mr J Runge of Kippington Court. Montreal House was demolished in 1936 to make way for the Montreal housing estate but fortunately Brittain's farmstead remained.



Brittain's Farm oast in the 1930's

Brittains farmstead remained largely unchanged until the early part of the 20th Century, as seen in this photograph taken in the 1930's. After this some of the agricultural buildings were converted into the properties we see today. This occurred sometime after the Montreal Estate was sold and the building of the new housing at Marlborough Crescent and Lyndhurst Drive began.



Map 4 Brittains Farm in 1896

This map shows the agricultural buildings and sheepwash to the east of Brittains Lane which have been lost to more recent housing. Although the spelling has changed slightly, the general form of the farmstead to the west of Brittains Lane remains intact today.

4.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Landscape Setting and Trees

The landscape setting is small to medium scale with an undulating to steeply sloping rural landscape to the west of Britains Farm. This includes farmland with hedgerow networks and scattered dense woodland and shaws. Britains Lane was historically a narrow, winding hedge lined lane and some elements of this remain. There are occasional long views but generally a moderate range of enclosed views. To the north and south suburban housing provides a contrast to the historic farmstead group. Trees, historic agricultural buildings and open areas contribute strongly to the special character of Britains Farm. Retaining mature trees and hedges is fundamental to preserving this character. Trees in conservation areas are protected and their removal is only permitted where a clear case exists. New trees should be native species that will add to the quality and local distinctiveness of the area. Contact the Council's tree officer for further advice.

4.2 Architectural Description

Vernacular materials of Kentish type including clay peg roofing tiles, tile-hanging, ragstone, weatherboarding and deep orange and red brickwork with some vitrified or blue headers can be seen in this group of historic farmstead buildings. The advent of the railway contributed to the use of natural Welsh slate roofs on some buildings.



Simple vernacular detailing.

Galletted ragstone, red brick quoins and blue header bricks used in a decorative pattern, all contribute to the character of this agricultural building. Unusually the roof material is clay pantiles which adds to the variety and overall interest in this vernacular building group.

Brittains Farmhouse is built of ragstone with a clay-tiled roof and wrought iron framed leaded light casement windows. There is a chimney stack at each end and a central doorway. It is a simple but attractive historic building contrasting with the dark weatherboarding of the barn and other outbuildings.



Brittains Farm House

The former oast house is also built in ragstone with a tiled roof. The conversion has incorporated a garage and added a front porch. The windows are simple timber casements with rectangular panes.



Brittains Farm Oast

Brittains Farm is an extremely attractive group of buildings screened from the road by a substantial ragstone wall and mature hedging. The farmstead group has retained its informal historic character and the subtle interplay between building form and open space creates views and visual enclosure which reinforces the character of the farmstead. A limited palette of vernacular building materials and the retention of historic walls adds to the integrity of the group.

Although there is little trace of how it must have appeared as a working farm, as a residential property it occupies a secluded and intimate setting. The surrounding gardens, including the stream and pond, add interest and the grounds are full of mature planting, carefully tended. It is a pleasant surprise to find this enclave of historic tranquillity so close to the built fringes of the town.

4.3 Current and Future Pressures on the Area

Whilst the land remains in its present ownership there does not appear to be any pressure on it in terms of subdivision or redevelopment. However the outbuildings could, in the future, be the subject of applications to convert into additional residential accommodation.

The Metropolitan Green Belt status of the area means that new build development is highly likely to be inappropriate development in this location, and the Britains Farm Conservation Area is safe from unacceptable forms of development for the foreseeable future.



A limited palette of hand made vernacular materials adds to the character of this building.

This outbuilding is partly weatherboard with red brick walls and both clay tiled and slated roofs. It is simple, well maintained and unconverted.

4.4 Individual Features & Groups of Buildings

Small details combine to enhance the area; the planting of a tree, the retention of historic walls and vernacular materials in the buildings together with the variety of hard and soft landscaping surfaces,. Conversely, any lack of attention to these details or paving can quickly detract from the character and interest of the conservation area.

4.5 Key Issues

This Appraisal concludes that the most important issues which can affect the special architectural and historic interest of the Britains Farm Conservation Area are:

- Maintenance of views to open countryside
- Retention of traditional materials and details
- Improvements needed to some buildings



These early oast kilns form part of the building unlike later oasthouses which tend to have separate kilns and storage areas.

5:0 MANAGEMENT

5.1 Conservation Area Management

Historic buildings and places are a built environment resource in which everyone has an interest. Changes are inevitable but it is important to understand and then seek to sustain or enhance areas. English Heritage good practice encourages local authorities to prepare a management plan addressing the issues arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal and set out recommendations for action. Some of these actions will be applied generally to conservation areas in the District, and others are specific to the Brittain's Farm Conservation Area.

Clearly in a group of buildings possessing the important historical and architectural qualities of Brittain's Farm the overriding policy should be to preserve and enhance those qualities. However conservation area status is not intended to imply prohibition of development. Conservation area management is therefore largely the management of change, to ensure that local distinctiveness and the special character of place are respected and responded to in a positive manner. Change is inevitable. The challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and reinforce the conservation area's special qualities.



The subtle mix of materials and retention of informal building groups adds to the character of Brittain's farmstead.

5.2 Applying Planning Policy

The District Council will consistently apply existing and future planning policy to ensure high quality design which protects and enhances the character and appearance of the Britains Farm Conservation Area. This will be applied to all development requiring planning or listed building consent including new or replacement buildings, small scale alterations and extensions and boundary treatment. This approach will be followed for proposals both within the conservation area and those outside the designated area which affect its setting or impact on its character.

The built and natural heritage of Britains Farm will be conserved and any change should protect and enhance these cherished assets of local architectural, cultural historical and conservation importance and the character of the surrounding landscape. Local distinctiveness is an important aspect of character to be assessed both in the context of the whole conservation area and the site and its immediate surroundings, when designing any development proposal.

5.3 The need for contextual design.

All development in the conservation area must respond to its immediate environment and context, in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Applicants for planning permission must provide a ' Design and Access Statement ' to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. Proposals which fail to respect the local contextual framework or the scale, height, proportion and materials of the local area will not normally be permitted.

The following general principles should be adopted for all development within the conservation area :-

Scale.

Scale is the combination of a building's design, height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Most of the buildings in Britains Farm conservation area are one or two storeys with pitched roofs and are of a modest agricultural character. Proposals for new or replacement buildings should reflect this context and include drawings showing the proposals in the context of adjacent buildings.

Extensions to existing buildings.

Proposed extensions must take into account the scale of the existing building and must not dominate or overwhelm the original. Extensions should respect the form and character of the original building and its locality and use high quality materials and detailing. For listed buildings this is particularly important. Design should be of high quality, whether modern or traditional. Roof lines, roof shape, eave and verge details and external materials are important considerations. Extensions should not dominate neighbouring properties or lead to an unacceptable loss of open space.

Repairs

Repairs to existing historic structures must be undertaken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of their fabric is not harmed. The regular maintenance of historic buildings can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue a building from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that historic buildings are kept weather and water tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason it is necessary to keep roofs in particular in a good state of repair.

Windows

The commonest window types within the conservation area are white painted timber casement windows or 19th Century lattice casements. Simple black frames are used on a few buildings. Listed Building Consent is always required to alter the form of fenestration in listed buildings. Windows of traditional design, which are in keeping with the building they belong to and respect the historic nature of this farmstead group make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. and should be retained or repaired where possible.

5.4 Sustainable design

To encourage sustainable development, all buildings should where possible use products with a low environmental impact, including the use of locally sourced materials from sustainable resources. Where appropriate in a conservation area, new buildings should also include provision for waste reduction, the re-use of materials and should be energy efficient. Energy efficiency for existing buildings within the conservation area could be improved by such measures as loft insulation and the provision of secondary double glazing, subject to the views of the Council's conservation and building control officers.

5.5 Building Regulations

The District Council will continue to apply Building and Fire Regulations sensitively in conservation areas and to listed buildings to ensure that there is no conflict with the preservation of the character of the area or historic buildings.

5.6 Trees in the Conservation Area

The conservation area is generally focused on listed buildings and other important built features but the landscape surrounding it and trees within it contribute significantly to appearance. The open areas and trees which provide the setting to the Britains Farm conservation area can be as important as the buildings or historic features themselves in retaining character. Trees, gardens and open space help to improve the quality and amenity of the area .



The symmetrical elevation and 19th Century lattice windows indicate a considered design for this former agricultural building perhaps reflecting its origins as an Estate building

5.7 Promotion of Cultural Heritage

To increase the public's awareness and to encourage economic growth and tourism, the Council will actively seek to promote all conservation areas and their cultural heritage. To facilitate this the appraisal and plan will be publicised, placed on our website and distributed to local conservation bodies, amenity groups, the Town and County Councils and other interested parties.

5.8 Pride and Identity

The farm and ancillary buildings in the landscape is a quintessential part of the traditional image of rural England and a part of the English rural economy. Britains Farm is a quiet backwater of Sevenoaks but its conservation adds to the character of the area. The town faces a wide range of challenges including the economic, social and physical impact of change, competition from out of town shopping, the adverse effects of traffic on the area and erosion of environmental quality. In common with their surrounding countryside, market towns have always changed, and will continue to do so. Sevenoaks' long history and rich historic fabric in all its conservation areas are assets which, wisely used, can help to produce an agreeable and interesting built environment, economic prosperity and a sense of civic pride and identity.

Appendix A

UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN A CONSERVATION AREA**English Heritage Guidance**

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions might be asked:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building; is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

In English Heritage's view, any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

Extract from English Heritage Guidance on conservation area appraisals – August 2005

Acknowledgements:

Ordnance Survey Extracts published under licence : LA 076308 1998
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