

# Sevenoaks Weald

## Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



PLANNING GUIDANCE 2013



# Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

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 the process of ensuring that we 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..

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1. *The Green from the west*



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Local authorities are required under the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) 2012, in Paragraph 126, to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect decay or other threats. They should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Local Authorities are encouraged to 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 its 2006 documents Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

The omission of any particular feature or building does not imply that it is of no significance.



2. *The Windmill Public House*

## **1.1 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 preserve 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.

## **1.2 The Benefits of Being in a Conservation Area**

The historic environment is of particular 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 often 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 will 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.

## **1.3 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 should be 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 Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area could be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to saved policies contained in the Local Plan and the adopted Core Strategy, 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 define the key elements that together give the area its character and objectively analyse how they interact to enhance their individual impact. They 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 professionals (planners, conservation officers, 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.

#### **1.4 The key purposes of this Plan are to:**

- Define the key characteristics and features of the area which contribute to its 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 and character within the conservation area;
- Identify opportunities for enhancement to be delivered through accompanying 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;
- Provide guidance and set out objectives to preserve and enhance the buildings, structures and features;
- Identify distinctive public realm character within the conservation area, provide guidance, and establish key actions to preserve and enhance the public realm;
- Protect and maintain biodiversity;
- 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 is a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.



3. *The Green from the south-east*

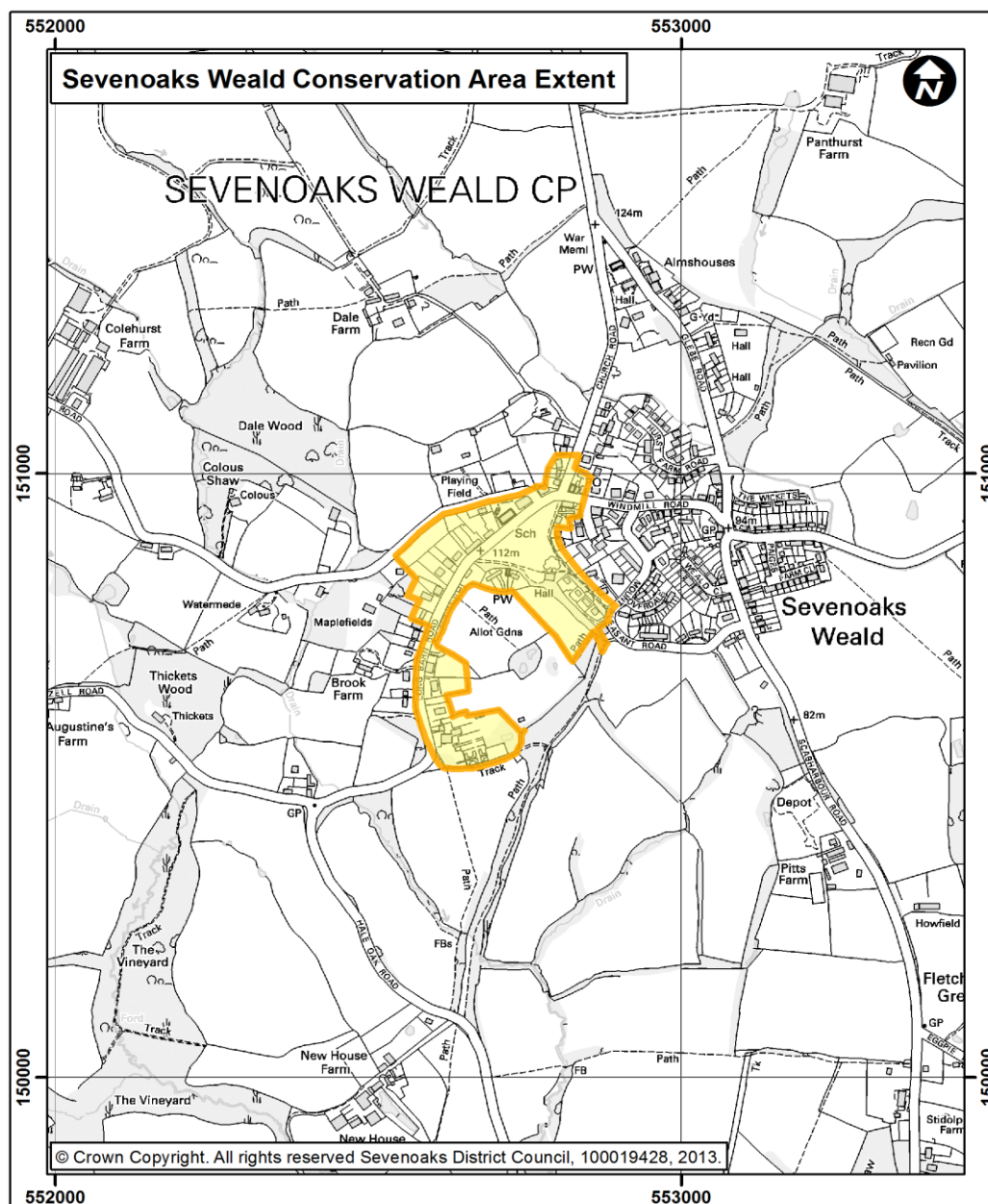


## 2.0 LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Sevenoaks Weald is a small village located about two miles south of Sevenoaks Town, in the Weald of Kent. Geologically it is on the Weald Clay. About a mile to the east is the A21 road and country lanes link the village to that road as well as to Sevenoaks itself and nearby villages

The settlement is on the ancient 'droveway' into the formerly densely wooded 'Weald' down Hubbards Hill. Formerly part of Sevenoaks parish, the settlement only really began to grow after the building of the chapel of ease, now St George's, in 1821 to serve the southern part of the then Sevenoaks parish.

In the Countryside Assessment 2011 Sevenoaks Weald is classified as in the Low Weald, characterised by an undulating enclosed rural landscape, 'which is influenced in the higher contours by the prominence towards the skyline of the A21 and associated bridge.' The Assessment also states that 'views are contained by the frequent trees, hedgerows and woodland and by the topography '. This is the backdrop to the village green itself.



## **3.0 GUIDANCE AND POLICIES**

### **3.1 National Guidance**

Government advice concerning conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in the Planning Policy Statement 5 Planning Practice Guide. Further advice about conservation areas including the production of management proposals, has been produced by English Heritage (2006).

### **3.2 The Development Plan**

Adopted planning policies relevant to the Conservation Area and its vicinity are contained in the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011 and related Supplementary Planning Documents. Some of the earlier policies contained in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2000 have been saved and currently remain relevant and any proposal for development needs to be considered in the context of these policies together with the documents referred to above.

Sevenoaks Weald is identified in the Core Strategy as a ‘service village.’

Planning policies are continuing to evolve and it is recommended that the current situation is checked via the Council’s website before any development proposal is prepared.

### **3.3 Local Policies**

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted March 2000) lists the following policy relating to conservation areas. This policy has been saved:

- **EN23 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**

### **3.4 Buildings Contributing to Character.**

A number of building within the Conservation Area boundary are considered to contribute to the character of the area, although only one is nationally listed as of historic or architectural importance. These include most of the buildings around the Green, together with several in to the south-west of the Green.



#### *4. The Methodist church*

Buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area are identified on the character appraisal plan (map 2) at the end of this document. These criteria can be viewed at the end of this report.





5. *Patience Cottages on the south side of the Green.*

### 3.5 Conservation and Enhancement.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that the Local Planning Authority 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 fulfill this requirement and provide the background for development and enhancement schemes.

This area has a rich townscape and an environment of high quality. This appraisal aims to ensure that this rich context is respected so that only design solutions of a high standard are introduced, allowing the area to continue to maintain its quality and status as one of the more desirable places in the south east.

There is richness, variety, quality and history of townscape within this area that is special and the need to maintain and enhance the best of this quality is crucial. Context and quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of this area and this character must not be lost through undue pressure for poorly designed infill development or redevelopment of an unacceptable nature.



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.

### **3.6 Houses and their alteration**

The size of extension which may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a conservation area than elsewhere.

Any proposals should be discussed with the Council at an early stage if possible. Planning permission is likely to be required for the erection of any building or structure within the garden of the house, for example, a workshop, pavilion, greenhouse and so on.

Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, render, 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.

Any proposals for development should be checked with the relevant development control team of Sevenoaks District Council.

### **3.7 Demolition**

Planning Permission is currently 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 substantial part of such building.
- any wall of fence (or substantial part) less than 1m 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.

### 3.8 Trees

Six weeks written notice must be given to the Council before any work to a tree within a conservation area is carried out. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within six 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 1.5 metres (4'11") above the ground and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.



6. *Magnolia tree in Long Barn Road in Spring*

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.

### 3.9 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 their individual properties.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost due to the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, roads, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as street furniture, signs, lights, and hard surfacing, can change an area's character. In the conservation area few of the buildings are isolated. Even if they are detached, they are part of a wider street scene, often of buildings of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one building can affect not only that building, but also the whole street.

Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably damage the street scene. 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.

### **3.10 Boundary Treatments**

Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or Kent ragstone wall, railings, fencing 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. There are many mature hedges and attractive walls around The Conservation Area and these are an integral part of character.

### **3.11 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.

When a building is listed, this covers the building both internally and externally, any object or structure fixed to it and any extensions whenever constructed. In addition, any object or structure within the grounds or garden of the building, which was there by 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.



New gates, fences, walls, railings or other means of enclosure surrounding a listed building will require planning permission. Similarly, most sheds, garages and greenhouses and other outbuildings will also require planning permission. The scale and design of these should harmonise with the existing building and its setting.

There are in fact very few listed buildings in Sevenoaks Weald and only two within the Conservation Area boundary.



7. *The listed Phoenix Cottage- unassuming rural charm*



## 4.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Sevenoaks Weald is a village centred on its Green, a loosely arranged grouping of buildings of various ages, styles and sizes, but forming a coherent whole. On the north side the Weald Community Primary School, erected in 1874 by the Sevenoaks School Board. To the west of the school and on the south side of the Green are cottages erected by Sevenoaks Tenants Ltd. c. 1909. Older cottages are positioned on the east side of the Green close to the Windmill PH. The windmill itself is long gone, but was located on the Green itself in the vicinity of the Methodist chapel.

The village has a church, St George's (erected 1821 and extended in 1871), but this is some distance away to the north of the village centre and outside the area for inclusion in the Conservation Area. It is however visible from The Green, with a backdrop of vegetation.



8. *View of St George's church from the Green*

## 5.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The settlement of Weald is known to have been part of an outlying manor related in terms of ownership to the Archbishops Palace at Otford. This extended from Shoreham in the north to Leigh in the south. Later Weald was part of Sevenoaks parish until a separate parish was formed in 1861 covering an area of about 2,200 acres.

The triangular shaped Green is at the heart of the village, although the village has expanded in all directions. The earliest buildings here were positioned informally on the south, north and west sides. Cottages were randomly sited on the north and east sides extending south westwards along Long Barn Road. In the latter road especially, newer houses have been erected in the spaces, most of them of no special merit.

Weald Community Primary School, a significant and key feature on the north side of the Green was erected c. 1874 designed by T.G. Jackson on behalf of the Sevenoaks School Board. It is a flourishing school, which has been expanded to maximise the use of its site.

Other 19<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier development can be found nearby, including rural cottages and terraced houses adjacent to the Windmill PH. These are modest in scale and are of traditional brick or timber cladding with tile or slate roofs.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century sites to the north and south sides of The Green were developed with 'Garden City' inspired housing by the Sevenoaks Tenants Ltd. organisation, which also developed two other sites in Sevenoaks itself. The housing was designed by Harry S Stewart architect to the Co-partnership Tenants Movement. A contemporary Town Planning Review, of July 1910, described the Sevenoaks sites as 'small, with not much scope for site planning, although their properties at Weald are attractive with ample gardens.'

Long Barn, a late medieval timber-framed hall house with later additions, is located further down Long Barn Road, but has been included within the Conservation Area boundary. It is a listed building, Grade II\*, and the site as a whole is a designated Historic Park and Garden, so is already well protected as a Heritage Asset.

Nearby to Long Barn is the now vacant St Edward the Confessor Roman Catholic church. This was erected in 1965 to a design by J. J. Aylward. Its modernist style perhaps does not meet with general approval, but it has interest as a rare example of good contemporary architectural design in the Sevenoaks area.



9. *Former Roman Catholic church, now in commercial use*

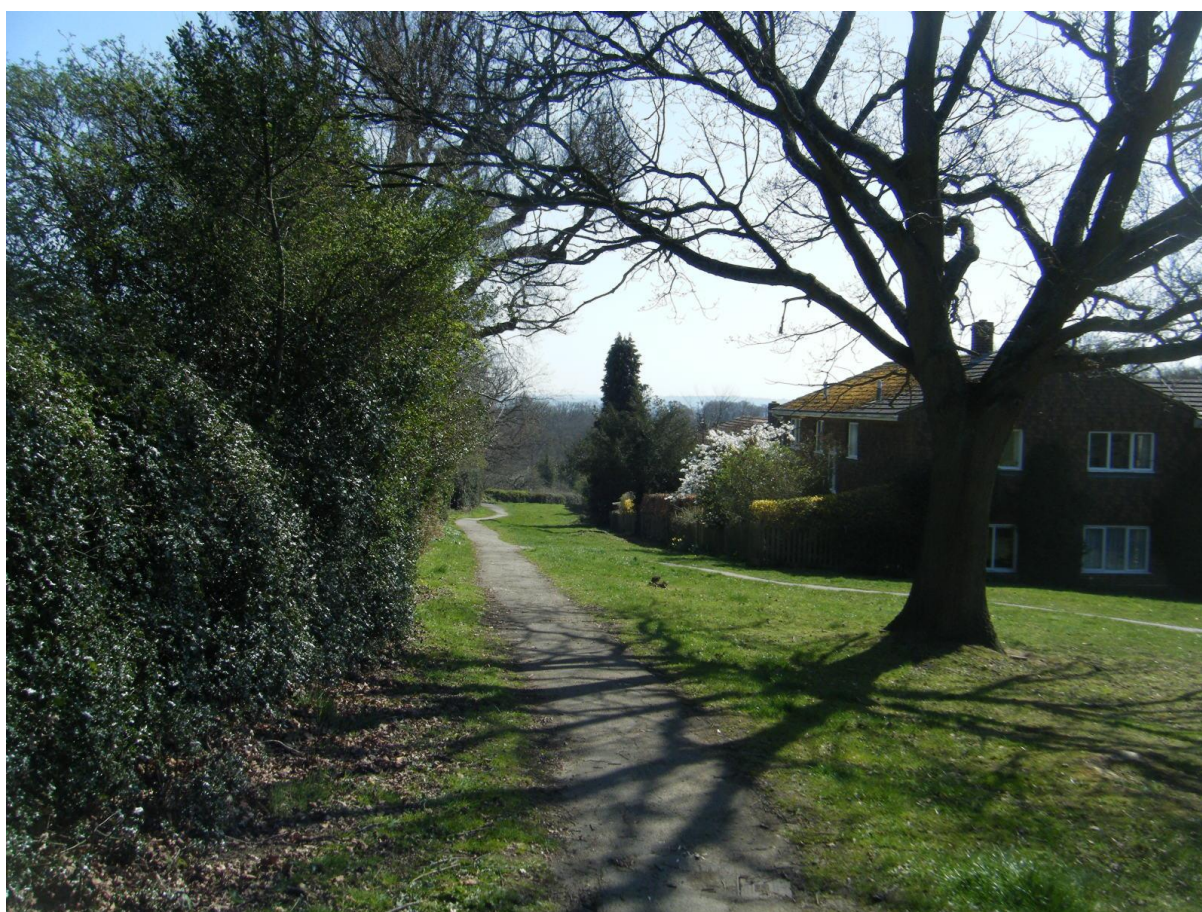


## 6.0 VIEWS, SETTING AND TOPOGRAPHY

Views, setting and topography are important in the Conservation Area. The pre-eminent feature here is the Green and the informal arrangement of buildings around it and nearby. The backdrop of countryside is also significant, especially the view northwards to the church and to the higher ground of the ridge on which Sevenoaks itself stands.

To the south of the green and on land falling away from the green itself, are the village hall and allotments. Part of the allotment site has been included within the Conservation Area boundary, recognising its importance to the setting of The Green.

Public footpaths are important assets to the Green, as they connect to adjacent countryside and to other parts of the village.



10. *Footpath link between the Green and Mount Pleasant looking southwards*



## 7.0 TREES AND NATURAL FEATURES

Trees and hedges contribute strongly to the special character of Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area. The trees throughout the Conservation Area are integral to the special interest especially on The Green itself and along the public footpath links to Mount Pleasant Road. Retaining mature trees and hedges is fundamental to preserving character. Trees in conservation areas are protected by legislation, and their removal will only be permitted where a clear case exists. The planting of new trees would add to the quality and local distinctiveness of the area and is to be encouraged where sufficient land is available. Contact the Council's Arboriculture officer for further advice.



11. *Footpath link to The Green and Mount Pleasant*



## 8.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Although there are only two listed buildings inside the boundary, Long Barn and Phoenix Cottage, there are a number of buildings which have been identified as 'contributing to character' in accordance with the guidelines provided by English Heritage. These include the School and the early 20<sup>th</sup> C cottages on the north and south sides of The Green as well as several 19<sup>th</sup> Century cottages. See Map 2.



12. *Detail of the front elevation of the primary school*

The local Kent Ragstone, found in many properties in Sevenoaks town, does not feature in Weald, possibly because its buildings were never of a high enough status to justify such a material. Instead, there is ample good brickwork, for example in the school buildings and many of the cottages. White painted timber cladding also feature to the cottages near The Windmill PH. In some cases the brickwork to the ground floor has been painted whilst others have been rendered and painted.

There are a wide variety of window styles contained within the area ranging from timber casements or sliding sashes to proprietary metal windows and plastic replacement windows



13. *Porch to the Windmill PH*



## 9.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

The Green is the central and key feature of the village, although there has been much expansion of the settlement beyond it. The space has an informal character fitting for the rural location and the varying ground levels and spread of building around it make it distinctive. The footpath links southwards to Mount Pleasant Road, with their extensive vegetation, are integral to the overall character.



14. *Phoenix Cottage with Patience Cottages behind*

### 9.1 The Green- north side

The school, built in 1874 to a design by T G Jackson, is described by Newman ( The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald 2013) as ‘ a pretty little essay in the emerging style of the London Board Schools, of red brick with brighter red dressings, the white painted windows tall, segment headed and with many small panes . This important and attractive building dominates the green without being out of scale with its setting.

Here also are earlier small scale dwellings such as Lilac and Ivy Cottages and Felicity Cottages, the latter part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century cottage development as described below.



## 9.2 The Green- south side

Here are to be found Patience and Prudence Cottages, early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings in a traditional half- timber style, erected by Sevenoaks Tenants Ltd. in about 1909. These were designed by Harry S Stewart. The overall concept was inspired by the Garden City Movement under the auspices of Co- Partnership Tenants Ltd. established in 1906 to which local societies were affiliated. Sevenoaks Tenants was formed in 1906 and by the end of 1909 had developed three sites, two within Sevenoaks itself and this site at Weald. The cottages are attractive and prominent and are major contributors to the overall character of the village.



### 15. *Patience Cottages and the Methodist church*

Patience and Prudence Cottages appear to have replaced two pairs of earlier cottages.

The nearby Methodist church opened in 1843 and is a modest structure, but with interesting decorative brick features, set on its small plot, well forward of the cottages.

The modern village hall cannot be described as attractive, but the drop in levels on this side of the green and the presence of trees and hedging enable it to avoid being too intrusive. The adjacent playground has timber play equipment, sympathetic to the location.

### 9.3 The Green- east side (Hurst Lane)

#### Windmill Cottages and Old Windmill Cottage

There are some out of character modern dwellings on the east side of the green and these are excluded from the conservation area. Inevitably, however, they have an impact on the setting and should any proposal be made for redevelopment or extensions to any of these properties the conservation area setting would need to be taken into account in determining any application.

### 9.4 Long Barn Road

This road takes its name from Long Barn, a timber framed house dating in part back to the 14<sup>th</sup> C, Grade II\* listed and within a designated Historic Park and Garden. This is located over 300 metres south of The Green, but despite the considerable distance from The Green itself, is included in the new Conservation Area as it is such an important building and site in the village.



#### 16. Long Barn

Several properties in Long Barn Road closer to The Green are also included, including Phoenix Cottage (Grade II listed), Prospect Cottages, Oak Tree and Long Barn Cottages and the former Roman Catholic church.



## 9.5 Church Road

Although there are a few listed buildings in Church Road, these are isolated and not contiguous with the area close to The Green. Thus, only a limited part of this road is included, i.e. The Elms and Everest Farm, Victorian buildings which contribute to the character and charm of the village core.

## 9.6 Windmill Road

In Windmill Road, only the Windmill Public House and three dwellings opposite it on the north side are included in the conservation area. The PH. formerly described as an inn, dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is a prominent and much valued property in the village. It has many interesting and notable features such as its porch, decorative bargeboards and unusual window frames.



### 17. Cottages rear of The Windmill PH

The Windmill PH at the corner of The Green and Windmill Cottages 1-4 inclusive.

Over the years these cottages have been greatly altered with replacement windows and added porches etc, but they retain their modest rural charm.



## 10.0 NEGATIVE FEATURES

Traffic, as probably everywhere, is a problem, both passing through and arriving to deliver or collect children at the school or servicing nearby commercial sites. It is difficult to see how this could be alleviated, given the absence of any nearby off street parking. Encouragement of walking to school is one possibility, but many children attending do not live within a reasonable walking distance. Damage to the edge of the green has resulted, caused by traffic and parking- mostly related to the school. This problem deserves closer attention in the future.

The location of the recycling bins is not ideal and they could be better screened or, ideally, repositioned so that they have less impact in the conservation area.



18. *Recycling bins near the village hall*

## 11.0 KEY ISSUES

This Appraisal concludes that the most important issues which affect the special character of the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area are:

- Damage and lack of maintenance in the public realm
- The use of modern building materials, which should be discouraged;



19. *Damage to The Green by vehicles*

## **12.0 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.

Clearly in an historic area possessing many important historical and architectural qualities, the overriding policy should be to preserve and enhance those qualities. However, conservation area status is not intended to imply prohibition of development, and 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 in the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area. The challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and reinforce the area's special qualities.

The built and natural heritage should be conserved and any new development should protect and enhance cherished assets of local architectural, cultural, and conservation importance and the character of the surrounding landscape. Local distinctiveness is an important part of character to be assessed both in the context of the whole conservation area, and the site and its immediate surroundings, when putting together any development proposal.

### **12.1 Current and Future Pressures on the Area**

The village is listed in the Core Strategy as one where small scale infilling development might be permitted. Significant development pressure from developers and house owners/builders could lead to very detrimental changes (which appear at times very minor). Very careful consideration of the fine grain and scale of the area is needed in any interventions, in order to maintain the overall quality and authenticity of the area.

Increasing the strength of the linkages between the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area and the adjoining countryside would be positive. Low-key information boards could be developed which encourage pedestrians to use footpaths more.

Any new development should encourage high quality design that reflects local identity and distinctiveness. The design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate neighbouring buildings but the building traditions and landscape setting of the area.

### **12.2 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. Where appropriate long views of and from the site must be taken into account. 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 are general principles that should be adopted for all development within the conservation area.



### **12.3 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, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations. Wherever possible extensions should not dominate neighbouring properties, lead to an unacceptable loss of open space or result in the loss of historic plot boundaries.

### **12.4 Repairs**

Repairs to existing historic structures should 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.

### **12.5 Windows**

The commonest window types within the conservation area are single glazed white painted timber windows, in the form of vertical sliding sashes or simple casement windows.

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 the Conservation Area, make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Windows should normally be white painted timber.



20. *Unassuming 19<sup>th</sup> C. cottage in Long Barn Road*

### **13.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

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This Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared by Sevenoaks District Council  
Conservation.

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## 15.0 ENGLISH HERITAGE GUIDANCE - UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN A CONSERVATION AREA

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?
- Does it have 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.

*Guidance on conservation area appraisals – August 2005*

