

Riverhead

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



PLANNING GUIDANCE - 2010



Riverhead

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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 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. This Appraisal was approved by the District Council in June 2010 and adopted as Informal Planning Guidance.

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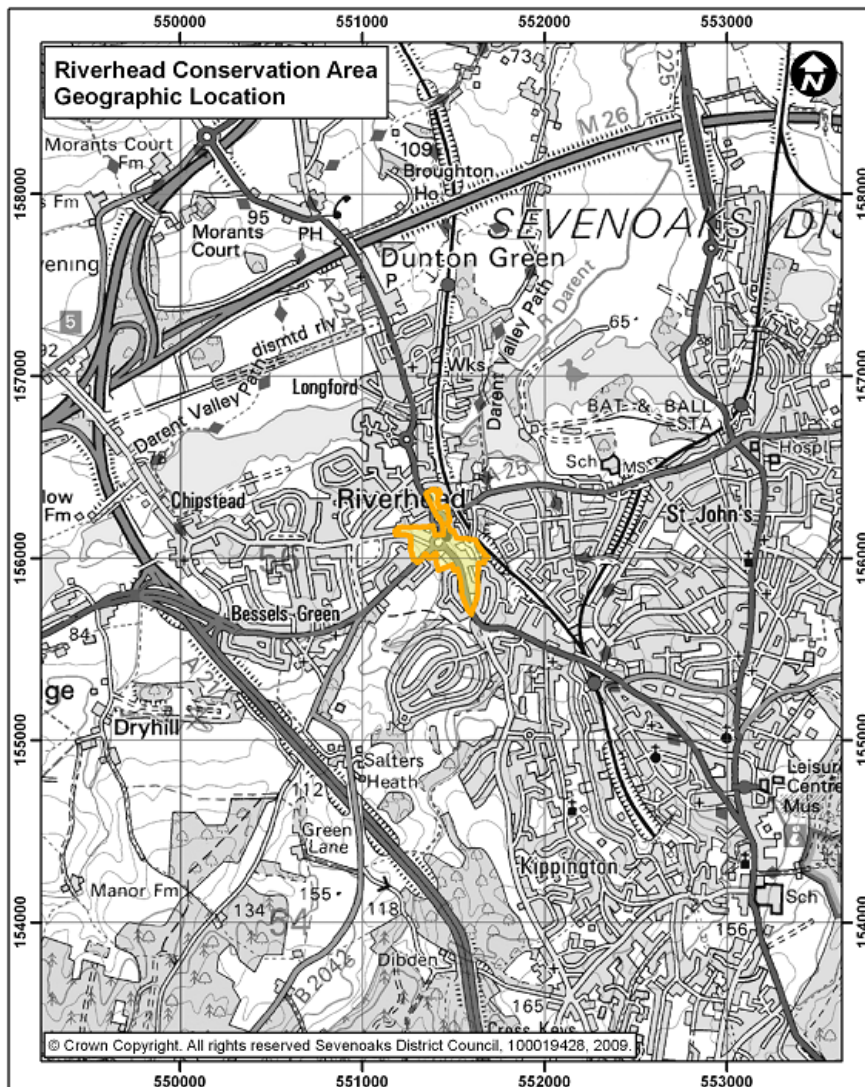
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Contents:	page
1.0 INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas	8
1.2 The Benefits of Being in a Conservation Area	9
1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans	10
1.4 Key Purpose of Plan	10
2.0 Location and Geographical Context (including additions to the Area)	13
3.0 GUIDANCE AND POLICIES	14
3.1 National and Regional Guidance	14
3.2 Development Plan	14
3.3 Local Policy	14
3.4 Buildings Contributing to Character	16
3.5 Conservation and Enhancement	16
3.6 Special controls in the Conservation Area	17
3.7 Houses and their alteration	17
3.8 Other commercial premises and flats.	18
3.9 Demolition	18
3.10 Trees	18
3.11 Unauthorised Works and development	19
3.12 Maintenance and Repairs	19
3.13 Boundary treatments	19
3.14 Listed Buildings	20



1. View north along Amherst Hill

4.0	General Description	21
5.0	Historical Development and archaeological significance	22
6.0	Views, setting and topography	25
7.0	Trees and Natural Features	26
8.0	Architectural Description	27
9.0	CHARACTER APPRAISAL	30
	<i>Amherst Hill</i>	30
	<i>Worships Hill</i>	32
	<i>The Square</i>	35
	<i>Chipstead Lane</i>	36
	<i>London Road, Maidstone Road and Linden Square</i>	37
	<i>Shoreham Lane, The Glebe Field and Amherst Place</i>	39
	<i>Montreal Road</i>	40



Map 1. Location

10.0	Negative Features	41
11.0	Key Issues	43
12.0	MANAGEMENT	44
12.1	Current and Future Pressures on the Area	45
12.2	The Need for Contextual Design	46
12.3	Scale	46
12.4	Extensions to existing buildings	47
12.5	Repairs	47
12.6	Windows	48
12.7	General Improvements	48
12.8	Traffic and Streetscape	48
12.9	Streetscape and Public Realm	49
12.10	Streetscape Design Principles	49
12.11	Surface Materials	50
12.12	Street furniture	50
12.13	Traffic management	50
12.14	Sustainable design	50
12.15	Pride and Identity	51



2. Characteristic galleting in Chipstead Lane

13.0 Acknowledgements

52



3. Good door

14.0 Bibliography

52

15.0 English Heritage guidance - Unlisted buildings in a conservation area 53

16.0 Maps

Designated area with listed buildings

54

Character Appraisal

55

1.0 INTRODUCTION



4. Good ironstone cobbles in Chipstead Lane

This document replaces the Riverhead Conservation Area Appraisal which was produced in December 2003 by Sevenoaks District Council. 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 its 2006 documents Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. The Appraisal draws heavily on the original document. The boundary was assessed for possible extension and it has been agreed that Montreal Road be included within the boundary and that the boundary be extended westwards along Worship's Hill to include nos.15 and 27.

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

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.



5. Characteristic and prominent listed building

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.



6. Characteristic chimneys

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 Riverhead Conservation Area can 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 emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) 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, 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 boundaries of the conservation area and define the key characteristics and features 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, the plan is a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.



7. Montreal Road



8. View South along Shoreham Lane

2.0 Location and Geographical Context

Riverhead lies at a focal point of two major roads, the A25 and the A224. The A25 runs east/west and the A224 runs north/south.

To the northwest there is an interchange of the M25/M26 (M25 junction 5). Because this junction has no access to or from the M26 except for M25 (west) motorway traffic, the section of the A25 between Riverhead and the M26/M20 junctions is very busy.

The A224 runs from Sevenoaks through Riverhead to Orpington and London; pressure on this route has been relieved by the A21 Sevenoaks bypass.

The railway line from the south coast to London passes to the east of Riverhead but the closest stations are Sevenoaks and Dunton Green, which are equidistant from the centre.

The Parish of Riverhead has a small population of around 2000. A range of shops serves local needs although there are superstore developments in the north of Riverhead Parish and on the outskirts of Sevenoaks, which can draw customers away from local traders.

The proximity to Sevenoaks has overshadowed Riverhead.

3.0 GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

3.1 National and Regional Guidance

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

3.2 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 and will be produced over the next 2-3 years. In the meantime the adopted Local Plan of March 2000 will retain development plan status 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 during this transitional period.

3.3 Local Policies



9. This new timber gate is too "formal" and blocks views within the conservation area

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.**



10. Good early nineteenth century front door and hood

3.4 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. The written criteria from English Heritage can be viewed at the end of this report.

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 areas meriting conservation, designate such areas and prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. These Conservation Areas should be periodically reviewed. 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.

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 a richness, variety, quality and history of townscape within this area that is special and a 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.



11. Attractive informal wooden gate and brick wall

3.6 Special Controls in the Conservation Area



12. Good chimneys

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.

3.7 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, tiles, render or pebbledash 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 15metres 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 the Council.

3.8 Other commercial premises and flats.

Any extension or alteration to other commercial premises or residential flats, which materially affects the external appearance of the building, will require a planning application to be made. This is particularly important within conservation areas, where even small alterations can materially affect the character and appearance of the area. For instance, such alterations can include rendering brickwork, replacement of slates with concrete tiles, and replacement windows. The advice of the relevant development control team should be sought before carrying out any changes.

3.9 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 substantial part of such building.
- any wall of fence (or substantial part) less than 1metres 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.

3.10 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 1.5metres (4'11") above the ground and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.

3.11 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.

3.12 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 through 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 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. Where a number of different designs are used along a street, the rhythm and unity of its original appearance can be spoilt.

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.

3.13 Boundary treatments

Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original wall boundaries, whether brick, ragstone or sometimes ironstone in Riverhead, 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.

3.14 Listed Buildings

Many historic buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, following advice from English Heritage, 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 and any extensions, whether modern or not. 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 Sevenoaks District Council 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. Similarly most sheds, garages and greenhouses and other outbuildings will also require planning permission. The design of these should harmonise with the existing building and its setting.

Riverhead is an air quality management area. There are various options outlined in the Air Quality Action Plan 2009 and its two appendices. This document is available from Sevenoaks District Council Environmental Health.



13. Note the fine old Estate wall at the back of this car park

4.0 General Description

Riverhead Conservation Area covers some 10.0 hectares and contains about 30 listed buildings. It was first designated in 1974, extended in 1992 and 2010 and covers the centre of the village around the junction of the Square and Amherst Hill, but also stretches northwards to include the east side of London Road and a small section of Maidstone Road. To the south the wall to the former Montreal Park on the west side of Amherst Hill is included as is the land lying between here and Shoreham Lane. It also includes parts of Montreal Road and Worship's Hill. The western extremity includes the north side of Chipstead Lane and extends almost to the boundary of the Chipstead Common Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area lies completely within the built environs of Riverhead, which is linked to Sevenoaks town, although the countryside designated as Green Belt almost reaches the northeast and south-west borders.

The remains of Montreal Park, to the south-west, are included within the North Downs and Greensand Ridge Special Landscape Areas.

The area contains both residential and commercial properties, a private nursery in the old school and the Church of St Mary's. There is a new Riverhead Village Hall and church hall, a large public house and restaurant, together with sheltered housing for the elderly.

The outlying areas of Riverhead, beyond the Conservation Area, are mainly pre and post war housing estates.

The listed properties in the Conservation Area date from the 17th and 18th Century and the older unlisted properties date mainly from the 19th Century.



14. View from Church overlooking The Square

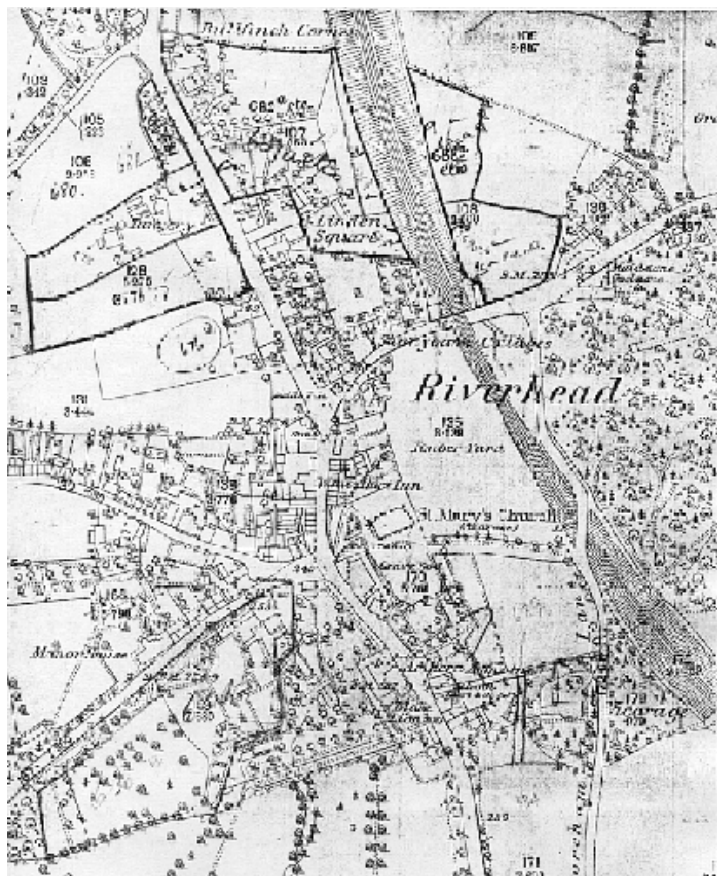
5.0 Historical Development and archaeological significance

The origin of the name of the village may lie in the Saxon word 'rither' meaning hill or deriving from the word meaning 'cattle landing place'.

Riverhead was an early settlement, part of the Codsheath Hundred.

The settlement grew in size during Saxon times as traffic on the pilgrim routes between Canterbury and Winchester increased.

The prosperity of the village during Georgian times is indicated by the high proportion of households that had to pay Hearth Tax on their properties, and although the village was of modest size, it was surrounded by several major country estates such as Chipstead Place, Bradbourne and Montreal.



Map 2. Riverhead in 1869

The latter estate was the property of the "Conqueror of Canada", Jeffery Amherst, the Commander of the British forces there from 1758-1765. He commanded General Wolfe during the campaign that took Quebec and captured Montreal from the French.



15. Montreal

Montreal was built in 1764 using stones from the previously demolished Brook Place, and stood in its own park, of which some walls and a complex pond system still stand. The house was demolished in 1925 and Montreal Park, a modern estate, has been built in its former grounds. The only remaining buildings of the original estate are a summer house, ice house and an obelisk, which was extensively renovated by English Heritage in 2009.

Riverhead remained a small village at the junction of the Sevenoaks to London and Maidstone to Reigate roads, until the railway brought the expansion of residential development that housed commuters to London, and the advent of motorised transport increased the importance of these main arteries.

The junction of the main roads forms the historic heart of the village and this is where the Church of St. Mary's and the former school is located. The public house, now a Harvester restaurant, but previously the Amherst Arms, was an important post house along the mail route to London.



16. Shoreham Lane
– note rural
appearance

Water for the village was taken from a fountain that flowed from spouts in the wall of Montreal to the Square. The series of ponds that carried the water are still in evidence, and water flowed below Chipstead Lane to 'the Dipping Place' by Cade House. At one time this small tributary of the River Darent fed watercress beds opposite the Bullfinch Public House.



17. Evidence of series of linked ponds – this is crucial to the history of the Conservation Area

Riverhead had a variety of country industries typical of the area, including a tannery, a timber yard, smithies and the posting house. The economy was based mainly on agriculture, along with some gravel and sand quarrying to the north east of the village that created the lakes around Bradbourne which are now a wildfowl reserve.

After the opening of a railway station at Bat and Ball in 1862 and Sevenoaks Tubs Hill in 1868, the village grew, and the creation of a network of Parish Councils in 1894 identified Riverhead as a separate entity from Sevenoaks for administrative purposes.

Road widening, demolition of buildings, and loss of agricultural land to housing development, have significantly altered the character of the village centre from one hundred years ago.

Several important landmarks remain from earlier centuries and one of the roles of the conservation area is to preserve reminders of the village's evolution.

George III's stay in Riverhead on November 7 1778 was reported in the London Gazette.

Montreal Road dates to the 1930s. Various plots were bought and developed by Burroughs de Carle Jackson between 1931 and 1937.

6.0 Views, setting and topography

Views, setting and topography are important in the Riverhead Conservation Area. The photo below illustrates an easily available fine view.



18. view to Downs.



19. Churchyard at
St Mary's Church

7.0 Trees and Natural Features

Trees contribute strongly to the special character of the Riverhead Conservation Area. The trees throughout the Conservation Area are integral to the special interest.

Retaining mature trees and hedges is fundamental to preserving character. Trees in conservation areas are protected and their removal will only be permitted where a clear case exists. New trees should add to the quality and local distinctiveness of the area. Contact the Council's Arboriculture Officer for further advice.



20. Mature trees in the Riverhead Conservation Area add character.

8.0 Architectural Description

Riverhead Conservation Area has a variety of buildings from different periods in its history, and there is little continuity of architectural style. The earliest timber framed buildings (including the core of the Harvester Public House) date from the 16th Century and many have plaster or render infill to the first floor and painted brickwork below.



21. Harvester Public House

Some of the older properties, such as Cade House and 11 Chipstead Lane, have areas of tile hanging to the first floor, although early photographs of Cade House suggest that this may be a later addition.

In addition to tile hanging the predominant material is brick. This has been used in buildings of all eras, from the substantial bulk of Riverhead House and the old Manor House dating from the 18th Century, to the Victorian and Edwardian shops around the Square, and the new development at Amherst House, on the corner of Maidstone Road.

There is a varied mix of commercial and residential properties. Some of the ground floors of older houses have now been converted to shop use, and there are newer, purpose built parades of shops on the periphery of the Conservation Area.



22. 28 London Road- attractive original shopfront

The use of coursed local ragstone is also popular, as exemplified by Decimus Burton's Parish Church (see below) and the remains of the Montreal Estate walls on Amherst Hill.



23. The Church of St. Mary stands on high ground dominating the Square. It is built of ragstone and has a copper spire that rises out of the surrounding group of mature trees.

Both tiled and slate roofs are common. Steep pitches and decorative bargeboards are generally found with the tiled roofs, and shallower pitches, lead ridges and hips with the slate. The roof lines are varied, interesting and enhanced by the changes in level on the rising ground to the east.

The larger properties tend to be protected from the noise and traffic of the main roads behind planting, although some of the older houses are built so close to the highway that they cannot be screened in this way.

Chipstead Lane has a series of terraced cottages, of various dates, that also sit close to the road, but here the narrowness of the road has protected the buildings from too much traffic and the houses have a quiet setting considering the proximity to the A25.



24. Good open space in Chipstead Lane (also garden of 62 Chipstead Lane)

In London Road many of the residential properties have been converted to shops, sometimes to the detriment of the original detailing.

The majority of properties are two storey, with taller exceptions being part of the Harvester, some shops in the Square and Amherst House, which has a car park at ground level. Single storied buildings include the Riverhead Village Hall, the New Forge and the Sheltered Housing off The Glebe Field.



25. Listed Buildings on Amherst Hill

9.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Amherst Hill

Entering the Conservation Area from the south via the main road from Sevenoaks (see bottom of page), the view down the hill is spectacular. The visual impact of trees and hedges is distinct. The long stone wall that marks the former boundary to Montreal Park is the first indication of the historic approach to the village centre (see immediately below right).

The road runs down a quite distinct hill towards the junction and roundabout at the bottom (see immediately below left). The feeling of spaciousness and openness is apparent (images 26, 27 and 28).



The view of large and historic chimneys as one nears the junction is evocative.

The Harvester Restaurant on the left is surrounded by a large area of tarmac which is featureless. The bland Harvester signage and this bland space overpower this area.

This area is dominated by the road junction and the change in height.

The previously open land between Amherst Hill and Shoreham Lane has now been developed into an estate of large detached houses, set amongst mature trees. This land is at a higher level than Amherst Hill, and the trees are seen on the skyline from the village centre, forming a backdrop to the buildings.



29. Progressing down Amherst Hill, Amherst Cottage on the left and Nos. 6-8 (see page 29) on the right, are older listed properties that mark the entrance of the historic heart of the village. They are somewhat dwarfed by the much extended Harvester Pub, which does not present its most attractive face to this approach.

Worships Hill



30. *Worships Hill*

From The Square, looking west along Worships Hill, the view is quite enclosed by buildings on the left and right.

Views open up towards St Mary's Drive and the Countryside beyond.



31. *The houses on the north east side of Worships Hill form an important group adjacent to the main road towards Westerham. The prominence of the decorative railings and the mellow red brick buildings behind are a familiar and attractive part of the street scene.*



32. Riverhead House on the left, is an early 18th Century mansion that has now been converted, somewhat insensitively, into maisonettes.

The boundary continues westwards along Worship's Hill to include fine historic barns, where there has been some development pressure

The traffic moves through this area at speed, although it is still an integral part of the Riverhead Conservation Area.



33. Fine historic wall in Worship's Hill



34. Fine eighteenth century barns remain mainly low-key and rural in appearance. These buildings are quite delicate and have already suffered some collapse.



35. fine chimneys in The Square

The Square



36. Note fine dominant chimneys and gables. This group of buildings is indicative of Riverhead.

The Square is dominated by the busy road junction and this is examined in the “negative features” section. The buildings are characterised by tall chimneys and the stunning topography of the magnificent Church and its setting.

Some environmental enhancement work has been carried out here (see below). The kerb was enlarged around the post box and new paving was laid.



37. Chipstead Lane

This improvement work has increased the pedestrian dominance of the footway and although it uses some cheap and mass-produced materials, it is to be welcomed for the positive impact it has had on reducing the dominance of traffic.

This sub-area is again dominated by the large open space around the Harvester Pub. The Parish Council has encouraged planting in this area and this has softened the space.

Chipstead Lane

Chipstead Lane is an oasis of calm, with its tight clusters of terraced houses, mature trees and variety of roof lines leads away from the traffic that dominates the Square. Although on-street parking detracts from the charm of the street, the road is one way and of restricted width which limits traffic flow. The character of the Lane derives from the mix of small scale residential buildings in a variety of vernacular styles, with good quality details.



38. Chipstead Lane – note characteristic narrowness and historic street-light on left

There are some important walls and other features along Chipstead Lane that have been highlighted on Map 4.

The houses are generally on or near the highway behind a small footway and on small tight-knit plots



40. Chipstead Lane

London Road, Maidstone Road and Linden Square

London Road and the short section of Maidstone Road is dominated by traffic. The short dual carriageway section and the run up Maidstone Road with the bulky retaining walls is particularly unfortunate. Rows of cottages on both sides of London Road were demolished in the road widening of the 1960s. (see Marian Mills' book)

Please see also the "Negative Features" section below. This dual carriageway could be "softened" by the introduction of more planting, etc.

The Boundary includes all those houses and shops between Maidstone Road and Scotts Way.



41. In London Road many of the residential properties have been converted to shops, sometimes to the detriment of the original detailing.

The line of shops and houses on the north east side of London Road (below) have a pleasing variety of colour and style to their front elevations, but some properties would benefit from more regular maintenance and a restriction on the use of unsuitable replacement windows.



42. North east side of London Road



43. A historic building behind Oakwood Beauty



44. Fine window in London Road



45. This short section of Maidstone Road is dominated by speeding cars, large lorries and buses approaching the junction with London Road and by the topography and the large retaining walls.

Linden Square is a very attractive oasis and lies at the northern extremity of the Conservation Area, hidden from London Road and is a group of houses, some of which date from the early 17th Century. They are grouped attractively round a leafy square in a peaceful setting.

Shoreham Lane, the Glebefield and Amherst Place

Shoreham Lane meanders from Maidstone Road through to the top of Amherst Hill. From Uplands Way, only the west side of Shoreham Lane is included in the Conservation Area.

Along Shoreham Lane there are large, detached houses of varying ages set in spacious mature wooded gardens. To the north there are views across the village to the Downs beyond.

The recent development of Amherst Place (see below) respects the characteristic design and topography of the Conservation Area.



46. Amherst Place

Montreal Road



47. Montreal Road

This leafy road has many fine, individually designed houses which are worthy of protection. The open and mature tree lined street is unusual and complements the architectural individuality of the houses.

The house pictured below has many fine “Arts and Crafts” features, such as decorative bargeboards, good tile hanging, good chimneys and exposed timbers.

This road, and the spacing of these large houses, set back and on large plots, adds to the special character of the Riverhead Conservation Area.

Houses are set back and this unusual characteristic adds to the glory of this road.



**48. “Oak
Beams”
1931-1937
by
Burroughs
de Carle
Jackson**

10.0 Negative Features

In contrast to those examples that enhance the character of the Conservation Area, there are some parts where the potential has not been realised, or where the buildings, details or roads positively detract from the atmosphere.

The dominance of the road and heavy traffic is the main negative feature (see the three images below).

Much of the existing signage including street signs are just standard units that display no special status for use in historic areas. This is poor. There are good examples from elsewhere of the use of special and individual street furniture, road signage and yellow restricted parking lines in historic Conservation Areas.





52. Poor maintenance (left) and a listed stone dovecote (right) which is covered in grape ivy.

The list description describes it as: "Dovecot in garden to West of The Riverhead Public House II. Probably C18 2-storey square building of galleted random rubble with pyramidal tiled roof. One small leaded dormer. Arched entrance. Somewhat decayed." This dovecote was photographed with ivy in 2003.



53. Amherst House

Although the scale of this building suits the progression down the hill, the fenestration and roof details are rather incongruous in this setting.

11.0 Key Issues

This Appraisal concludes that the most important issues which affect the special architectural and historic interest of The Riverhead Conservation Area. are:

- Highway and car dominance and presence of many large lorries.
- Maintenance and replacement of inappropriate standard highway features. The use of modern and standard materials should be discouraged;
- Loss of traditional details;
- Presence of cheap low-quality replacement materials. This is perhaps less prevalent than it has been in previous years, although landlords and house owners wanting to make spurious savings on maintenance and increases to thermal efficiency still insist on these inappropriate changes;
- Speeding traffic through the Conservation Area (whilst surveying this area, the writer found difficulty crossing the road, the car is dominant, many vehicles seemed to be speeding throughout the Area and there were many large lorries);



54. Standard signs and rubber bollards, thick double yellow lines, illegal parking

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 Riverhead 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.



55. Glebefield House – a characteristic building

12.1 Current and Future Pressures on the Area

Significant development pressure from developers and house owners/builders could lead to very detrimental changes (which appear at times very minor). Given the high degree of historic assets surviving within the conservation area any development is likely to impact on the character and appearance of the area. Very careful consideration of the fine grain and scale of the area is needed in any interventions. A thorough understanding of even small areas of potential development is essential in order to maintain the overall quality and authenticity of the historic core. This information should be provided by any developer when making a planning application, in accordance with the advice given in PPS 5.



56. UPVC windows are poor quality and do nothing to highlight the unique quality of the Conservation Area

Increasing the strength of the linkages between The Riverhead Conservation Area and the adjoining countryside would be positive. Low-key information boards could be developed which encourage pedestrians to use footpaths. Reducing the degree of intrusion of speeding vehicular traffic would also increase the attractiveness of the area.

Any new development should encourage high quality and innovative design that reflects local identity and distinctiveness and promotes healthy, safe and secure living and working environments. The design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate neighbouring buildings but the townscape and landscape of the whole area. The pattern and pedestrian scale of existing local streets and spaces should help determine the character and identity of the new development. Pedestrian linkage and flow should be carefully considered in relation to existing patterns.

The dominance of cars, both moving and parked, is a major issue in the Conservation Area and has been discussed above.

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.



57. Inappropriate shopfront in The Square

The following are general principles that should be adopted for all development within the conservation area.

12.3 Scale.

Scale is the combination of a building's design, height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Proposals for new or replacement buildings must show how the new structure will relate to its context.

12.4 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.

12.5 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.



58. Attractive service alley at the rear of cottages on East side of London Road adjacent to St Mary's Church

12.6 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 painted white.

12.7 General Improvements

Several of the buildings, would benefit from redecoration, new more traditional windows; repairs and improvements to their exterior.

12.8 Traffic and Streetscape

The dominance of vehicles both moving and parked is an issue in the Conservation Area. Speeding cars and large lorries do create a poor environment for pedestrians. This has already been highlighted.

A regular liaison meeting between traffic engineers and conservation could be scheduled. This would inform Highways of any conservation issues and provide a useful forum.



**59. historic
cobblestones at
junction of
Shoreham
Lane and
Church
Field**



**60. Interior of
historic timber
barn on Worship's
Hill (see photo on
page 36)**

12.9 Streetscape and Public Realm

The relationship between buildings and public realm in the Conservation Area is very important. There is a clear hierarchy of spaces informed by pedestrian routes, the character of the street, that is to say the width of the road, its surfacing material, positions of buildings relative to the carriageway and footway where these exist, and the functions and uses of the buildings in the town centre.

12.10 Streetscape Design Principles

Best practice principals to be adopted as part of the design process for streetscape works within the conservation area include the following:



**61. Unusual
ironstone
wall in
Shoreham
Lane**

12.11 Surface Materials

Surface materials form the foreground of the street scene. Quality in the design and construction of footways and street surfaces is vital to the character of the area:

- Relate ground surfaces to the local context.
- Keep paving simple and avoid discordant colours.
- Maintain and restore historic paving and detail such as kerbs and gulleys.

12.12 Street furniture

The finest historic streetscapes often have the minimum amount of street furniture sited carefully to reinforce an underlying sense of visual order:

- Retain historic street furniture which reinforces local character; identify and remove superfluous or redundant items.
- Minimise signage and locate signs on existing bollards, lamp posts or walls and buildings at the back edge of the pavement.
- Use a unifying dark colour for all street furniture items.
- Reduce guard rails to a minimum and use simple designs that relate to local character
- Avoid standardised lighting and choose the design and light source most appropriate for the area.

12.13 Traffic management

- If traffic calming measures are required, they should be fitted sensitively into the street-scene as though they were part of the original character of the area.
- Adopt a minimalist approach. Any works should involve minimal visual interference with the established streetscape and respect the historic street layout.
- Limit road markings to those essential for highway safety.

12.14 Sustainable design

To encourage sustainable development, all new buildings should 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 provisions for waste reduction, the re-use of materials and should be energy efficient, including the use of renewable energy systems.

Energy efficiency for the existing buildings within the conservation area could be improved by such measures as loft insulation and the provision of secondary glazing, subject to the views of the Council's conservation and building control officers.

The Council will seek to ensure that existing local facilities are retained and their viability maintained by facilitating further environmental improvements and high quality new development.

12.15 Pride and Identity

This area is a quintessential part of the traditional image of England and a vital part of the English economy. The Riverhead Conservation Area faces a wide range of challenges including the economic, social and physical impact, the adverse effects of traffic on the area and erosion of environmental quality. In common with surrounding countryside, the Conservation Area will always change. This area's long history and rich historic fabric are assets which, if wisely used, can help to produce an agreeable and interesting built environment, economic prosperity and a sense of pride and identity.



62. Flamboyant Edwardian building on Amherst Hill

13.0 Acknowledgements:

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This Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared by Quatrefoil Consulting Ltd.

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Kent History Illustrated	Frank W Jessup
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Highway Works in Conservation Sensitive Areas	Kent County Council 1993
Street Improvements in Historic Areas	English Heritage Guidance Note 1993
Kent Design Guide	Kent Design Initiative 2005

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:

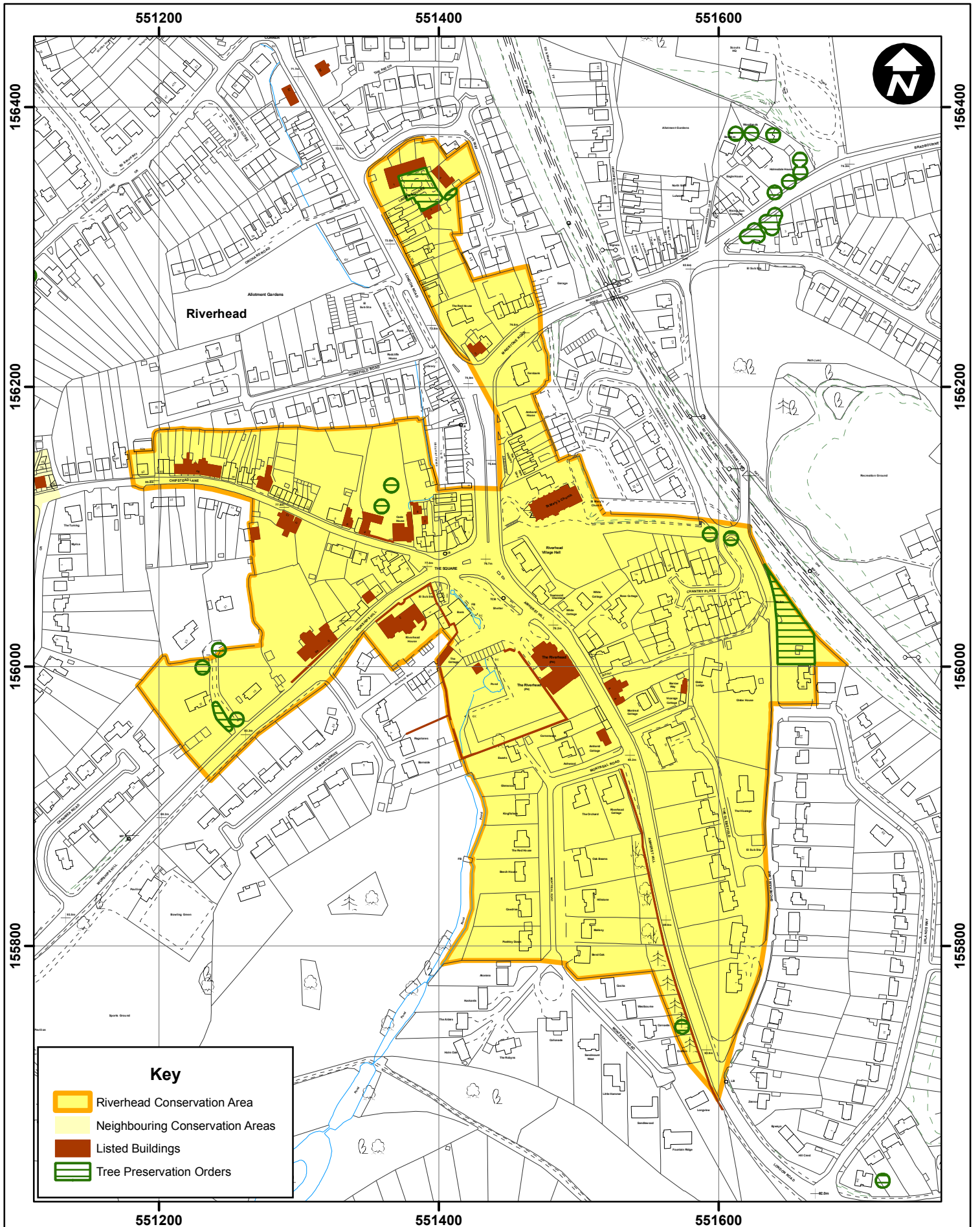
- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically 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?
- 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.

Guidance on conservation area appraisals – August 2005



63. Shoreham Lane

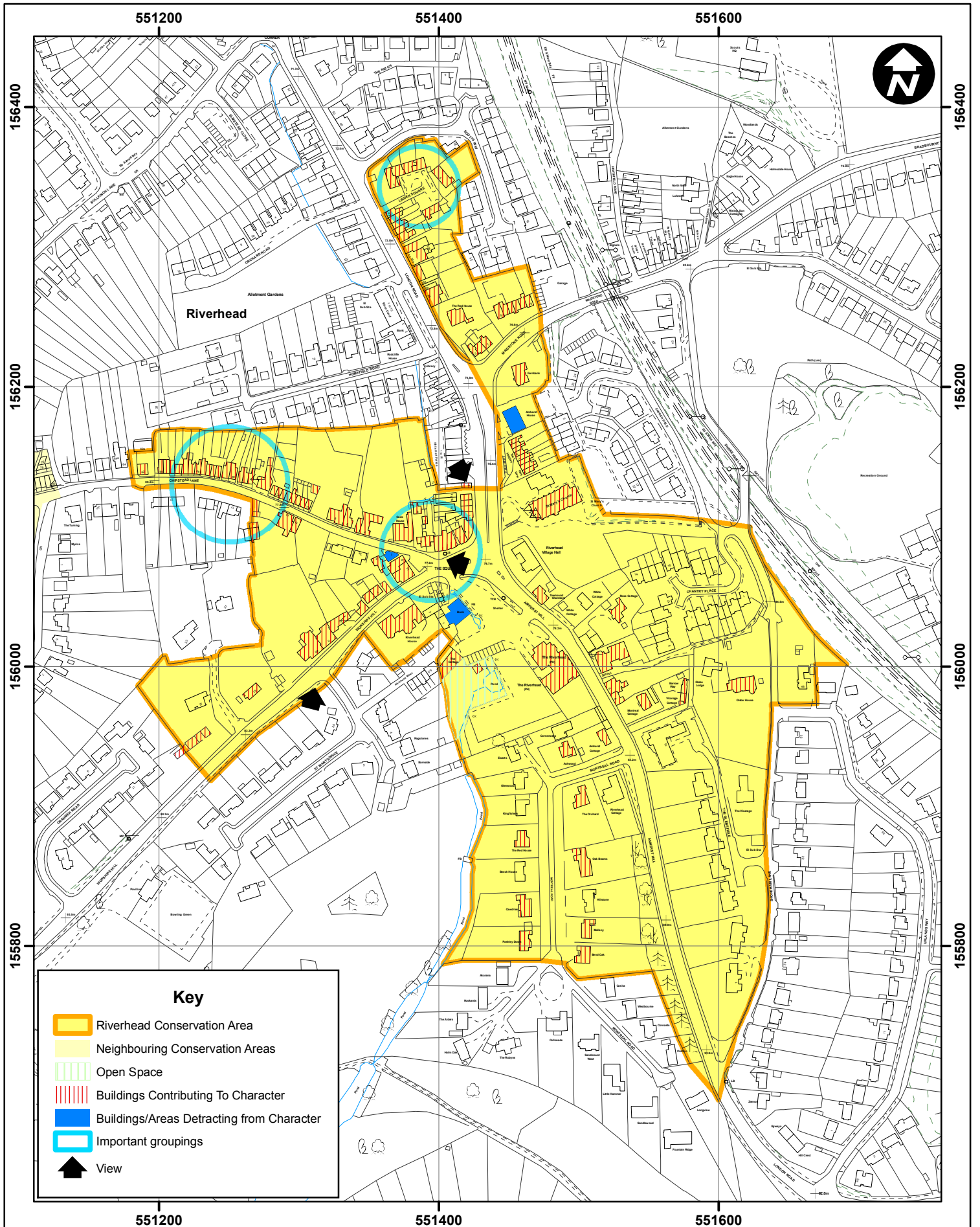


Map 3
Riverhead
Conservation Area

Scale 1:3,500
Date 15/08/2010
Drawn By FMcG

Designations

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Key

- Riverhead Conservation Area
- Neighbouring Conservation Areas
- Open Space
- Buildings Contributing To Character
- Buildings/Areas Detracting from Character
- Important groupings
- View



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Map 4
Riverhead
Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Scale 1:3,500
 Date 15/08/2010
 Drawn By FMcG