



# *North Cray Village Conservation Area*

**Area Appraisal and Management Plan**  
December 2008

*Listening to you, working for you*



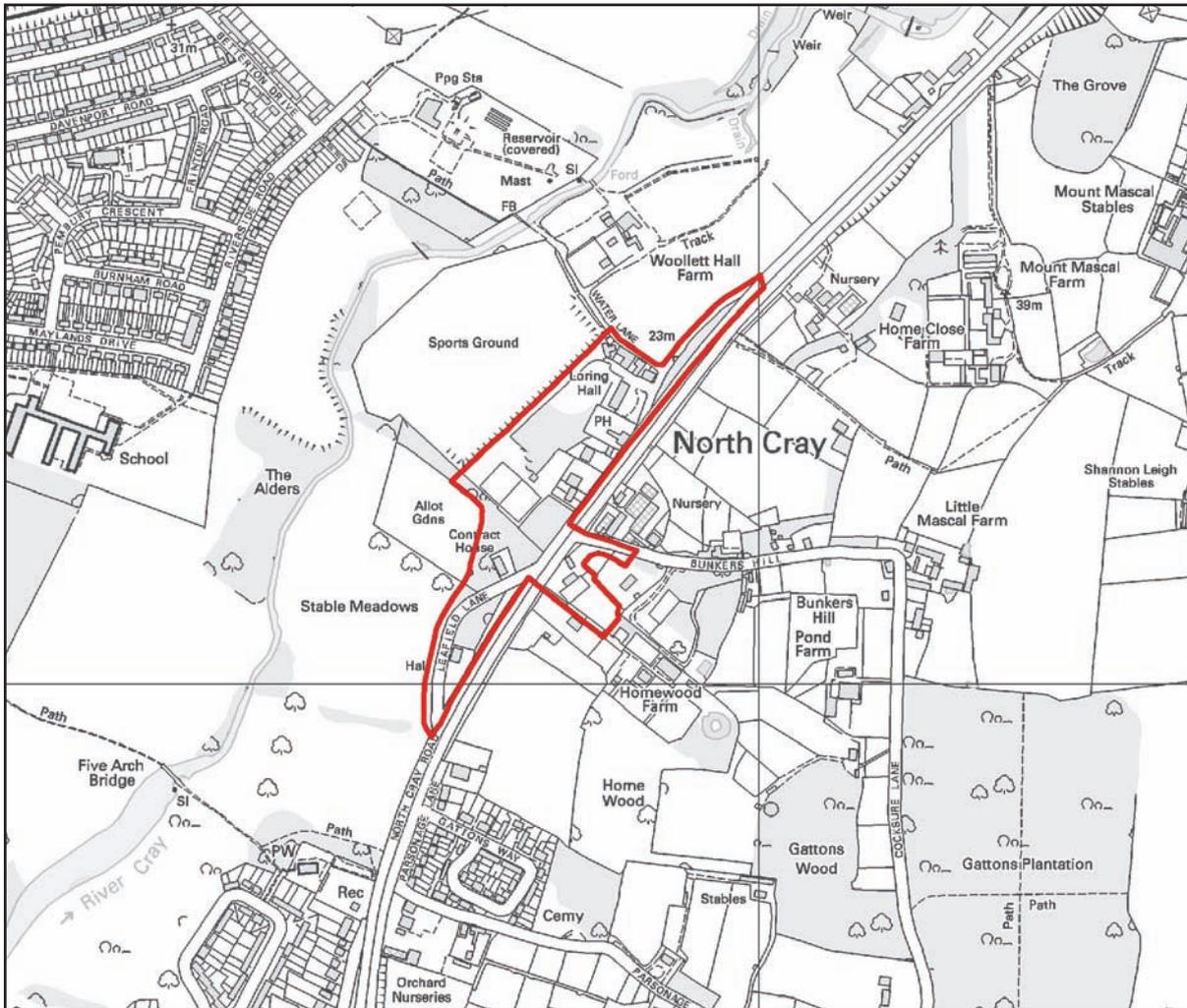
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### Location of Conservation Area



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— North Cray Village Conservation Area

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# *Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal*

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 North Cray Village Conservation Area was designated on the 19th February 1992.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of North Cray Village Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

## **2 Planning and policy context**

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2004 contains the policies and proposals for development, regeneration and land use in the borough. Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are also set out in the UDP and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). It follows advice contained in “Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals” and “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, published by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (August 2005).

## **3 Summary of the special character and appearance of the conservation area**

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of the North Cray Village Conservation Area derives from the following features:
  - An important group of 18th and 19th Century buildings, most of which are nationally or locally listed and benefit from attractive scale, proportions and vernacular or architectural detail.
  - A vibrant village character from the diverse range of building styles.
  - Paddocks to the east, meadows and the River Cray provide the village a rural setting despite the village being divided by the North Cray Road dual carriageway during the 1960’s.
  - Elements of the public realm such as front gardens, grass verges, trees and views of the conservation area combine to convey a very spacious rural character.

## **4 Location, setting and boundary description**

### Location and context

- 4.1 North Cray Village Conservation Area is in the south-east of the London Borough of Bexley, situated 13 miles south east of central London. The conservation area is sited just east of Foots Cray Meadows and along the west side of North Cray Road, half way between the villages of Foots Cray and Old Bexley.



#### Street pattern and layout

- 4.2 The village is dominated by the dual carriageway, North Cray Road, which was widened and straightened during the 1960s as part of a larger scheme intended to bypass Bexley Village. The most dramatic result of this is demonstrated by Dower House which is now severed from the main part of the conservation area and is set on its own section of conservation area on the eastern side of North Cray Road. Leaffield Lane and Water Lane are two short cut-off lengths of the original road that survived the widening. The apparently random building line recalls the winding nature of the earlier North Cray Road.

#### Landscape and setting

- 4.3 To the east of the village is open countryside, protected as metropolitan green belt. To the west is Foots Cray Meadows, where an ornamental five-arch bridge of brick and flint (1782) still survives across the River Cray. On the perimeter of the meadows is St James Church, founded in Saxon times. Although rebuilt and enlarged in 1852 and further extended in 1870, the church still retains 15th Century features. Both structures can be viewed from within the conservation area at the end of Leaffield Lane. The open landscape of the meadows provides the backdrop for the conservation area. Leaffield Lane is surrounded by woodland and includes significant mature trees.

#### Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.4 The extent of the village as a settlement is closely defined by surrounding farmland and open spaces. The western boundary is marked by the change of character from the gardens of Loring Hall to the open sports field beyond. The extent of the conservation area to the north and south is determined by the remaining, cut-off, sections of narrow lane. To the north it also includes Water Lane and the tall brick wall marking the old boundary of Loring Hall. The eastern boundary is mainly set by the dual-carriageway road. It is considered that the setting of the Dower House and the lower part of Bunkers Hill are also important survivals of the historic development of the village and are part of the character of the area worthy of protection. This area has therefore been included. See Townscape Analysis Map for boundary.

## 5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 Local archaeological finds indicate continuous occupation from before Roman times. The parish of North Cray was in existence prior to the Domesday Book. The earliest inland settlements in the London Borough of Bexley are thought to be related to the river valleys. As settlements developed along the valley of the River Cray, North Cray Road developed as the main route linking the villages, which formed a small winding country lane prior to the widening and straightening of the 1960s.
- 5.2 The village grew very little, originally as a result of its remote location, the lack of a turnpike road in the 18th century and its distance from railways in the 19th century. Subsequent designation of the area as Metropolitan Green Belt secured its rural setting from development that may otherwise have followed the road widening. The village did indeed decline at times and some former cottages are known to have fallen derelict, the area having reverted to woodland.
- 5.3 The winding lane of North Cray Road was the main route along the Cray valley. However, as private car ownership and use increased and businesses in the area developed, traffic problems and congestion followed. The winding lane with no footpaths was considered inadequate in the 1960s, when it was straightened and widened to form the dual carriageway that exists today. This involved the demolition of many of the original properties on the eastern side of the road through North Cray Village. A timber framed hall house was carefully dismantled and later re-erected at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum near Chichester in West Sussex. Many properties on the western side of the original road remain, together with two short cut-off lengths of the original lane.
- 5.4 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. Human settlement is thought to pre-date Roman times. Therefore, the area is included in the UDP within a known Area of Archaeological Search, given the early development of a rural settlement, it is an important location where there is a high likelihood that archaeological finds may occur.

## 6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

- 6.1 This historic village is subdivided by the A223, however, Foots Cray Meadows and the River Cray to the west and open countryside with paddocks to the east ensure that the conservation area retains much of its rural setting. It presents rare glimpses of the rolling upland meadows between river valleys that characterised this part of Bexley before the spread of interwar suburbia. Many of the properties are close to the former main highway. Valuable spaces within the conservation area therefore tend to comprise front gardens and remaining sections of the original lane. Hedgerows and mature trees contribute significantly to the area and where new hedges have been planted to border North Cray Road.



*Leafield Lane*

## Key views and vistas

- 6.2 Because of the significant tree cover in the area, long views are limited. Perhaps the main public viewpoints are looking out from the conservation area; at the south end of Leafield Lane across parkland and meadows towards the Five Arch Bridge and St James's Church; and from Loring Hall across the sports fields. There are also views across the dual carriageway, eastwards towards Dower House and horse paddocks, and to the west, from Dower House across the dual carriageway towards surviving historic buildings on the west side of North Cray Road.



*Foots Cray Meadows from Leafield Lane*

- 6.3 Within the Conservation Area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses. Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant but rather that there are so many different views. Some significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

## 7 Character analysis

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.1 North Cray Village Conservation Area is mainly for residential uses. Although the area also contains associated community uses in the form of the Scout Hall and the White Cross Public House. In addition, Contract House in Leafield Lane is occupied by a commercial business.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.2 Within the overall village pattern, a high proportion of the individual buildings are of notable historic interest and character. On the western side of the road, the northernmost development is Loring Hall (formerly Woolett Hall) and its outbuildings. Loring Hall, a former home of Lord Castlereagh, is Grade II statutorily listed and dates from 1760. It is a large two storey house with rendered walls and a slate roof, set within extensive grounds, walled to the front and side which give the house a secluded setting. Also within the grounds is a fine matching gate lodge. To the rear is the former stable block together with a modern sports pavilion. The main house is occupied as a nursing home, whilst the outbuildings are used by Goldsmith's College in conjunction with a sports field at the rear.
- 7.3 Other historic buildings more closely relate to the road frontage. The White Cross public house, a locally listed building, dating from the early 19th Century, is a two storey brick building, with mostly painted walls and a slate roof. A recent extension seeks to echo this by adopting a coach-house style.





*Nos. 152 and 154 North Cray Road - Grade II Listed*

7.4 Adjacent to the White Cross are two timber-framed cottages (Nos.152 and 154 North Cray Road, Grade II Listed). These cottages probably date from the 16th or 17th Century. With their weather-boarded walls and tiled roofs they provide a reminder of the local vernacular that characterised the medieval Kent countryside.

7.5 Further to the south, another notable building is Pear Tree Cottage (No.166 North Cray Road, circa 1790) is a locally listed building. This cottage has walls of painted brick and a low hipped slate roof. The central doorway has a fine Victorian wrought iron porch, whilst the windows are leaded-light casements. This building contrasts with the orange-red bricks and steep tiled roof of the former Church of England school on the adjacent site (Nos. 168 -170 North Cray Road), now converted into two houses. The building dates from 1860 and saw use as the village school until 1959.



*Pear Tree Cottage*

7.6 On the east side of North Cray Road, on a higher level, is the Grade II Listed Dower House, a large two storey L-shaped building of yellow stock bricks below a hipped, low slate roof. The property, which is now divided into flats, lies adjacent to Bunkers Hill a narrow lane of rural character.

Buildings of townscape merit

7.7 The Townscape Analysis Map identifies many buildings of townscape merit. These buildings vary, but are good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. There is also a red George VI post box in a wall in Water Lane, which adds to the character and is worthy of protection.



*Loring Hall built circa 1760 Grade II Listed*

7.8 Whilst clearly it is the group as a whole that contribute to the character of the conservation area, it is still worth making reference to one or two buildings as distinct examples of exemplar architectural style. In this respect Loring Hall and The Dower House, also a local landmark building, make a significant contribution to the area. Similarly, The White Cross Public House represents a good example of a local landmark building.

7.9 The area has local landmark, statutorily listed and locally listed buildings, which are all buildings of townscape merit; this helps create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic character. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

7.10 Green spaces within the conservation area and around the existing built environment contribute to its ambiance and rural character forming a network of biodiverse corridors that are inter-connected to the Cray River valley. These spaces, including private front and back gardens and the wooded areas within Leafield Lane and Water Lane, are important characteristics, which are intrinsic to the appearance of the conservation area.



*The Dower House*

7.11 Open green areas such as those to the rear of Loring Hall and across the sports

itches facilitate significant long views to and from the conservation area. Mature trees within the conservation area and along the boundary with North Cray Road form a visual barrier and help screen the area and minimise the impact of the road.

Assets of North Cray Village Conservation Area (positives)

7.12 The positive physical assets of North Cray Village Conservation Area are listed below:

- High concentration of period properties in relatively small geographical area, juxtaposition with green open areas, establish a rural character and appearance.
- Architectural and historic interest of each individual building and the diversity of vernacular building types.
- The back-water street scenes, front gardens, trees, landscaping and views between buildings are especially important.
- Regular roof tops and spaces between them offer a pleasing symmetry in the streetscene.

The extent of intrusion or damage to the conservation area (negatives)

7.13 The main intrusion or negative features are:

- The dual carriageway is clearly the major negative factor. There have however been attempts at traffic calming in the form of a speed camera and constriction of the road to single-carriageway just before Bexley Village. Future initiatives, properly managed, could serve to benefit the Conservation Area and promote road safety.
- Changes of use have affected the character of some of the buildings. Loring Hall's use as a care home has resulted in a functional landscape. The conversion of Nos.168-170 North Cray Road from school use to residential has resulted in private front boundary treatments and outbuildings. The building of the dual carriageway has also caused changes to front gardens which disrupt the original unity of the buildings as a functional group.
- A number of alterations have caused harm. A proliferation over time of buildings to the east of Loring Hall, associated with the playing fields, have cluttered Loring Hall's setting, In particular, a highly visible and incongruous UPVC conservatory attached to No. 2 Water Lane, protrudes above the historic boundary wall.
- The boundary and setting of Loring Hall is compromised by the closed boarded fencing between Loring Hall and the White Cross Public House and the hard landscaping and clutter within the grounds of the public house. The boundary with Loring Hall would benefit from a stock wall to match its existing front wall.



*Trees in Water Lane  
at the entrance to Loring Hall*



*View west along Water Lane  
showing the rural character of the area*

- Metal mesh panels above the crash barrier on North Cray Road provide an unfortunate visual barrier between Dower House and the western side of North Cray Road. Large modern retaining walls also separate the building from the dual carriageway suggesting that the gardens once sloped gently downwards towards the village into a bend of the road.
- A number of the buildings have painted brickwork, which can obscure the colour, texture and possibly design of clay brickwork. It may fail and cause spalling of bricks if it is not breathable masonry paint. Inappropriate features include UPVC windows, the White Cross has an ageing internally illuminated sign, inappropriate front door and a 1989 extension, which would benefit from render or cladding to obscure its stark concrete brickwork.
- The grounds of the White Cross Public House could benefit from soft landscaping, consolidation of services to reduce clutter, removal of fencing to the rear and landscaped beer garden to take advantage of views across the playing fields towards the River Cray.
- Contract House has an incongruous boundary fence and its setting is significantly degraded by hard standing and parked vans. The Scout hut opposite serves an important community use but modernisation or replacement of this building in connection with landscaping improvements could benefit the site.
- A proliferation of directional signage advertise Loring Hall, Woollett Hall Farm and its entrance from North Cray Road. The majority of these should be removed and replaced by a more sympathetic sign, to enhance the amenity of the area and improve highway safety.



*Road and wall separates Dower House from the rest of the conservation area*

#### Problems and pressures

7.14 The main problem and pressures are as follows:

- There is a high volume of traffic on the North Cray Road. In addition on-street car parking associated with some of the commercial businesses causes clutter and detracts from the appearance of the conservation area.
- The main pressure for development generally takes the form of residential extensions, roof extensions, garages and infill or backland development, which will have an adverse affect on the unity and harmony of the existing development.
- Increasing pressure from owners to make changes to the fenestration of their buildings causes a minor yet cumulative impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

#### General condition

7.15 The area is generally well maintained, but the grounds of The White Cross Public House, the boundary treatment to Loring Hall, green spaces around Leafield Lane and Contract House are suffering from neglect and would benefit from maintenance or enhancement.

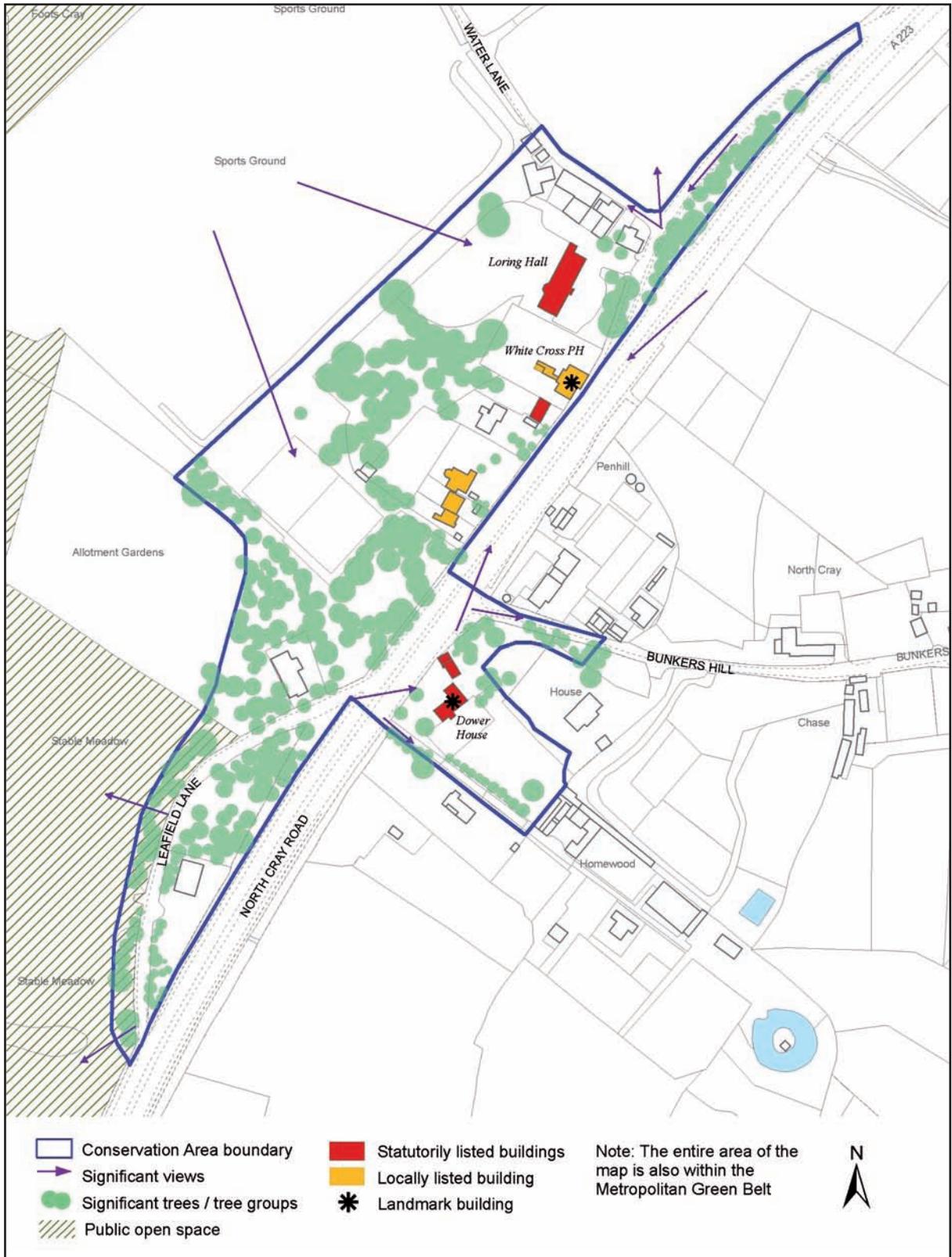
#### Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.16 There is an opportunity to encourage the discreet restoration of architectural detail, so that some of the unifying features, which have been lost to past development, are incorporated back into the shape of the street.
- 7.17 Enhancement of buildings on Leafield Lane, the grounds of the White Cross Public House and some outbuildings at Loring Hall.
- 7.18 Enhancement opportunities exist for the replanting and maintenance of green spaces.

#### Potential for new development

- 7.19 Uncontrolled new development would harm the traditional form and character and open spaces in the area. No new dormers should be visible from the street either at the front or to the side and careful consideration is required to rear extensions, especially where the property backs on to public open space.
- 7.20 Additional developments to the side or at first floor level should not normally be permitted due to closing the space between buildings.
- 7.21 Only developments, which respect the special interrelationship of spaces, built form, detailing and materials of the existing buildings, are likely to be appropriate. It is possible that single storey extensions could be incorporated to the rear of many properties without detriment. Indeed, this would utilise the existing enclosure to the rear of many properties.
- 7.22 Any development or alterations to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and planning policies. Any plans for alterations or extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.

# Townscape Analysis Map



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# *Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan*

## **1 Legislative background**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Management Plan is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process and this guidance draws upon that information. Both the Appraisal and the Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and review.
- 1.2 The document reflects government guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and English Heritage's, "Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas" (August 2005). It is important that the development control process ensures the preservation of the special character of the conservation area and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements. The key aims of the Management Plan, supported by the Character Appraisal, are to:
- raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage;
  - identify distinctive built environment character areas within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out objectives to preserve and enhance buildings, structures and features;
  - identify distinctive public realm character areas within the conservation area, provide guidance and establish key actions to preserve and enhance the landscape, open spaces and streets;
  - provide tailored design guidance and set out actions for the enhancement of the conservation area;
  - 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; and
  - propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance of public spaces.
- 1.3 The Management Plan encourages the Local Authority, developers, development professions (e.g. planners, architects, landscape architects, highway engineers) and the local community to engage in the preservation and enhancement of the local historic environment. This will help secure the long-term viability of the conservation area as an important heritage asset.

## **2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan**

- 2.1 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the 'preservation and enhancement' of the area. The local plan policies form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions. Also, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there are a number of extra controls, which apply to existing buildings in conservation areas. Consent is needed for:
- Demolition of a building (apart from some minor exceptions).
  - Demolition of walls, gates or fences of over a metre next to a highway or over two metres in other locations.

- 2.2 Where a property lies within a conservation area, planning control is extended so that planning permission and conservation area consent will be required, for example:
- A dwellinghouse enlarged by more than 50 cubic metres or over 10% of the size of the original building, whichever is greater.
  - The construction of a detached building, enclosure or pool of over 10 cubic metres in the grounds of a house.
  - Cladding any part of the exterior of a property in stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
  - Enlargement of a house by additions to or alteration of its roof.
  - The installation of a satellite dish or antenna on a chimney, on a building over 15 metres in height or on a wall or roof slope, which fronts a highway (refer Government publication “A Householder’s Planning Guide for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes”).
  - Notification must be given of felling or lopping of trees.
- 2.3 Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or substantial demolition of buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.4 Any application for the demolition of a Statutorily Listed, Locally Listed Building or Building of Townscape Merit will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification stating why the building should be demolished. The Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that:
- the building is beyond economic repair;
  - the building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price; and
  - if vacant, that alternative uses have been sought.
- 2.5 Where alterations are proposed, the reinstatement of original detailing and composition will be sought to reinforce the unity and cohesive quality of the townscape. The Council will seek to ensure that new development within the conservation area serves to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in accordance with the adopted planning policies, the emerging Local Development Framework and other published design guidance.
- 2.6 Furthermore, the Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the characteristic and appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

### **3 Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit**

- 3.1 Within the North Cray Village Conservation Area there are many fine historic individual buildings of townscape merit, including Listed and Local Listed properties. In addition, all properties collectively form a unique ‘rural’ townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status. The principal buildings are shown on the Townscape Analysis Map.
- 3.2 In considering planning applications for Statutorily Listed, Local List, buildings of townscape merit and local landmark buildings it is important that any alterations or extensions should be of matching scale, design and/or materials.

## **4 Erosion of character**

- 4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.
- 4.2 In a similar manner, the context of the original roofscapes is an important feature, which adds rhythm and continuity to the streetscene and the conservation area. Roof extensions, dormers or rooflights to the front or rear can be particularly disruptive where visible from the street and from the public open space to the rear. It is critically important to protect and retain the original roofscapes.
- 4.3 In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations could pose a threat to the special character of the area:
- Loss of timber windows and doors;
  - Alterations to window/door openings;
  - Removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features;
  - Additions to front boundaries including walls and fences are eroding openness characteristic;
  - Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers.
  - Side extensions filling the gap between buildings and closing off the space and views.
- 4.4 Such alterations would require planning permission in most cases. In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.
- 4.5 As an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.
- 4.6 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

## **5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings**

- 5.1 On private land within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.2 It is also essential to maintain the juxtaposition of these historic building types. The space between these buildings offers significant views to trees and greenery beyond. It is important to retain this continuity and conserve these open views as breaks in the urban built environment. The green verges, trees and open spaces make a welcome break from the urban environment and make a significant contribution to the conservation area. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance these natural features and characteristics.
- 5.3 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these contribute to the setting of the conservation area or views identified in the appraisal.

## **6 Setting and views**

- 6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views, into and from the conservation area, will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

## **7 The public realm and enhancement**

- 7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using modern paving materials. Lighting is provided by late twentieth century, utilitarian columns. A more co-ordinating approach to surfaces together with the installation of a more appropriate style of lamp column, in keeping with the character of the conservation area could significantly reinforce the identity of the area and the public realm.
- 7.2 In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area, and any redundant modern features should be removed. Resources permitting a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement.
- 7.3 The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.

## **8 New buildings and building extensions**

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.
- 8.2 In the North Cray Village Conservation Area the main pressure for future development might generally take the form of residential extensions, which could have an adverse affect on the harmony of the existing development. Further development might be permissible in some instances, as long as the proposals utilise current enclosed areas at ground floor level to the rear and are designed in a way that is sensitive to scale, detail and materials.
- 8.3 Rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope or visible side elevations

would detract from the character and appearance of the area and conflict with the fundamental aim to “preserve or enhance” the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.

- 8.4 Any form of development which erodes the openness of the conservation area and the spaciousness of individual sites will be resisted.

## **9 Solar panels and wind turbines**

- 9.1 In general terms, the installation of solar panels and/or wind turbines within or adjacent to a conservation area would introduce alien features and by their inherent design they will be visually intrusive. In terms of the main conservation principle that any proposed development should “preserve or enhance” the character of the conservation area any installations may be problematic. The Council has published guidance, which provides information on the subject. Please refer “Solar Panels and Wind Turbines: A Householder Guide on the Need for Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval” (Jan. 2007).

## **10 Monitoring change**

- 10.1 It is recommended that the physical environment of the conservation area and key sites adjacent to the conservation area is monitored by carrying out detailed surveys, including a dated photographic record, on a regular basis, so as to identify any unauthorised work and consider whether enforcement action should be taken.
- 10.2 Any previously unreported unauthorised development or work identified by the detailed survey would then be considered by the Planning Control Enforcement Team for action, resources permitting.

## **11 Boundary definition**

- 11.1 Since designation, the boundary has proven to be robust and generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historic significance and special character. The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and periodically review the boundary of the conservation area as part of future reviews in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.

## **12 Community engagement**

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, “people make places”. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In predominately residential areas such as North Cray Village Conservation Area, the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local residents and the Council is one way of helping owners and the Council to carry out appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.
- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local residents and any associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets subject to resources.

- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that the appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community.
- 12.4 Public consultation – North Cray Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation during August to September 2008. As part of the consultation exercise, comments were sought from the Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships (as appropriate), organisations such as English Heritage, etc., and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The document was also made available: on the Council's website; in local libraries; at the Contact Centre in Bexleyheath; and at Wyncham House in Sidcup. A letter advising of these arrangements was delivered to all properties in the area. The results of the consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text was revised and the document adopted. Copies of this document are available both as printed documents and on the Council's website.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local residents and, where it can, help and encourage local residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives.

# *Appendices*

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## **1 General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas**

Note: Before starting any work, property owners are advised to contact the Council.

### **Roofs**

The roof is often an important feature of a historic building and the roofscape can often make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The retention of its original structure, shape, materials and features is important. Historic roof materials and features such as chimneystacks, chimney pots, dormers, roof lights, as well as details such as decorative ridge tiles and finials all form an integral part of the character of the building and the area. The loss or inappropriate alteration of historic materials and features is likely to be harmful to the appearance and character of historic buildings and areas.

The Council encourages the retention and reinstatement of traditional roofing materials. When roofing materials are replaced, it is important that as much as possible of the original material is re-used. When practical, original material should be re-used on visible areas, with matching new materials on other parts.

The addition of modern features, such as roof lights, is likely to be harmful to its character and appearance of the building and area, and should be avoided at all times. When replacement of materials and features becomes necessary, the replacement should respect the design and material of the original and the age and character of the building and/ or the area.

### **Chimneys**

Chimneystacks are both decorative and functional features of the roofscape and can be important indicators of the age of a building and its internal planning, and they should normally be retained, even when no longer required. Chimney pots can sometimes be significant decorative features in their own right and can be important as part of the roofscape, which will be damaged if they are removed or replaced with an inappropriate type.

### **Dormers**

Original dormers should be retained and carefully repaired. If beyond repair they should be reconstructed using traditional materials with all historic features reproduced. Enlargement of existing dormers on principle elevations should be avoided. Any new dormers should respect the symmetry of either an individual building or a terrace. Where new dormers would be inappropriate to the type of building or the proposed position, new, recessed 'conservation' roof lights may be acceptable, but not on prominent or generally visible roof slopes.

### **Fascias**

Features such as timber bargeboards and fascias should be preserved and, if replacement becomes necessary, it should wherever possible replicate the design and material of those original to the building. The addition of bargeboards and fascias to buildings that did not

previously have such a feature will normally be resisted, where they would detract from the character of the building or the area.

## **Walls**

Walls are the main structural fabric of any building. Alterations to the wall surfaces will have a significant impact on the overall appearance of a historic building. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use original facing brickwork and stonework. Alterations or repairs to external walls should respect the original material and endeavor to match it in appearance. Particular care should be paid to re-pointing brick or stonework. Methods should be employed to minimize damage to historic building materials: an appropriate lime mortar mix should be used and should match the appearance of the original pointing. Brick or stonework should not normally be rendered unless the surface was rendered originally. It may be necessary to remove more recently applied render if this is damaging the surface beneath.

## **Painting and stone cleaning**

Painting or re-painting involving a change of colour will affect the character of a historic building. Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over. In many cases, the colour of the paint may be less important than the first application of an unsuitable covering, which could damage the original fabric and be damaging to remove. Cleaning can have a marked effect on the character of historic buildings and affect the historic fabric. The cleaning of an individual building within a terrace would obviously affect the appearance of the terrace as a whole. All cleaning methods can cause damage if carelessly handled. Cleaning with low-pressure water and non-abrasive brushes is often the preferred method. Other methods including abrasive and chemical cleaning can damage wall surfaces and destroy detail and should generally be avoided. Consideration should be given as to whether such cleaning is either necessary or worthwhile to remove corrosive dirt or to achieve a major improvement in appearance.

## **Windows and doors**

Door and window openings establish the character of an elevation; they should not generally be altered in their proportions or details. The depth to which window frames are recessed within a wall is a varying historical feature of importance and greatly affects the character of a building - this too should be respected.

**Windows** - The size and shape of window openings, window frame details, arrangement and detail of glazing bars, and the method of opening are important characteristics of a historic building or an area. The traditional material used for windows in most historic buildings is timber, although occasionally the original windows are metal. It can often be difficult to introduce new materials without altering the appearance or character of the area.

Wherever possible, original windows should be retained and repaired. Improved heat and sound insulation can be achieved in unobtrusive ways by draft-proofing and soundproofing measures, rather than replacement of the original window. When necessary, replacement or repaired windows should accurately replicate the size and shape of original timber frames and glazing bars in all respects.

**Doors** - Doorways form an important element of historic buildings and can add to the character of conservation areas. Together with the door surround, fanlight, steps and original door furniture, doors can provide a significant and prominent feature. In recent years there has been a trend towards the replacement of historic timber front doors with modern doors

of inappropriate materials and design. To preserve the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas, it is important to retain the original front door, door surround, fanlight and other features wherever possible. When necessary, replacement or repaired doors should accurately replicate the original design in all respects.

### **Window and door materials**

In most situations timber should be used for the replacement of historic windows and doors; generally UPVC cannot satisfactorily replicate the historic detailing and character of these features. UPVC windows and doors can degrade and discolour; they are not completely maintenance free and can be difficult to repair. Developments in timber preservation, finishing materials and manufacture can produce timber windows and doors with a significantly longer life than UPVC.

### **Rainwater goods**

Original rainwater goods are an integral part of the design and character of an historic building. They will normally be cast iron, which if properly maintained should last many years longer than replacement plastic goods. Cast iron gutters, down pipes and hopper heads etc. should be retained wherever possible. Where rainwater goods are required to be renewed, the replacement should replicate the original in all respects. Suitably profiled cast aluminium may be an acceptable alternative to cast iron in certain situations. However, plastic rainwater goods should be avoided on buildings where cast iron has been previously used. Additional rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and should not disturb or break through any decorative architectural features.

### **Boundary walls and railings**

Boundary walls and railings are important architectural and streetscape features. The loss or alteration of these features over time has been detrimental to the overall character of the Borough's historic areas and buildings. Distinctive boundary elements include brick and stone walls, gates, cast iron railings, and stone and brick plinths piers. Historic boundaries should be retained, repaired or reinstated as necessary using appropriate techniques and detailed to match the original. Particular care should be taken to repair or reinstate existing walls using appropriate techniques and materials. Stonework if appropriate should be locally sourced. Special care should be taken to use the correct lime mortar mix and method of pointing in brick and stone walls.

### **Minor additions**

Features such as aerials, satellite dishes, burglar alarms, cctv cameras, heating system flues and vents should be kept to a minimum, and where necessary should be installed in locations and in a manner that will not harm the appearance or character of the building or area.

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## **2 Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage**

The London Borough of Bexley is fortunate in having a fine heritage of notable old buildings and historic areas. These, besides being of importance in their own right, help make the borough a pleasant and attractive place to live and work.

The Bexley Heritage Fund can offer grants to assist with the additional costs associated with restoration works which arise from the need to preserve, enhance or restore the buildings special character.

Grant aided schemes may be for the restoration of complete buildings or alternatively small scale projects to restore original features such as timber sash windows, decorative stonework, etc. Grant aided works should normally be visible to the public. Normal building maintenance, alterations or building new extensions are not eligible.

Any applications for grant aid must be made before work commences. Detailed notes for the guidance of applicants are available on request from:

London Borough of Bexley  
The Bexley Heritage Fund  
Strategic Planning & Development  
Wyncham House  
207 Longlands Road  
Sidcup  
Kent DA15 7JH

Alternatively call 020 8308 7789 or email [gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk).

Donations to the Fund are welcome.

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### 3 Contacts

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas in the London Borough of Bexley.

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser

London Borough of Bexley,  
Strategic Planning and Development  
Wyncham House, 207 Longlands Road,  
Sidcup, Kent  
DA15 7JH.

Tel: 020 8308 7785 / 020 8308 7789

Email: [martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk) / [gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk)

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage (London Region)

3 Bunhill Row  
London EC1 8YZ

Tel: 020 7973 3000

Email: [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

Email: [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)

For more information on Bexley's local history and archives:

Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre

Townley Road  
Bexleyheath  
Kent DA6 7JH

Tel: 020 8836 7369

Email: [archives@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:archives@bexley.gov.uk)



If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference:

