

YALDING CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft April 2021

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CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

- 1.1.1. The concept of conservation areas was first brought into being by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, but the relevant legislation now is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. This act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.1.2. Designation as a conservation area makes additional controls available to the local authority. Briefly these include the control of demolition of unlisted buildings, more restricted permitted development rights for single dwelling houses and protection of trees.
- 1.1.3. In addition to these enhanced powers, the local authority is also required when dealing with applications for planning permission to have special regard to the question of whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. (Section 72.1 of the Act) There is a presumption that developments which would not preserve or enhance this special character should be refused planning permission.



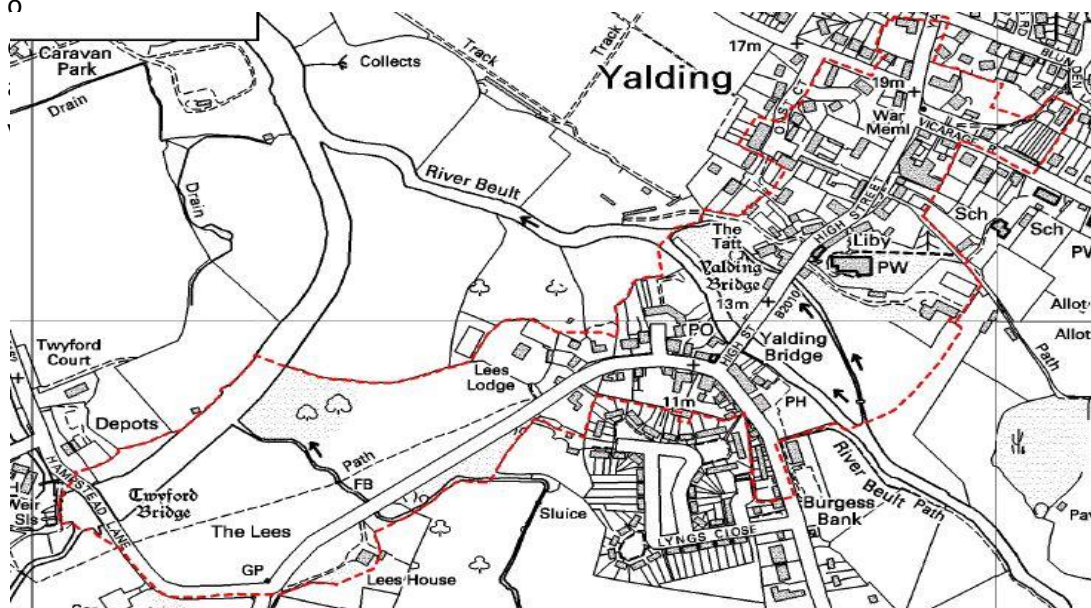
Contrast of brick coursing/poor mortar repairs – High Street

1.2. Background to the Appraisal

- 1.2.1. Local authorities are required, by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to carry out reviews of conservation area boundaries (Section 69.2 of the Act). This is to consider whether the boundaries should be increased or decreased depending on the continued contribution that the area to its special character. It will also assist in the process of making informed decisions on planning applications where it is important to value and take into account the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.
- 1.2.2. The most appropriate form for fulfilling these requirements is the production of a conservation area appraisal for each individual conservation area.
- 1.2.3. Historic England published an advisory booklet on the form which conservation area appraisals should take in February 2019 and this current appraisal has been prepared in accordance with these guidelines. It is intended to identify the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural character of the conservation area, to analyse how they interact and impact upon one another and to explain how the area has developed into its current form. It will also seek to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the conservation area and sites and features which detract from its character and appearance.
- 1.2.4. The clear understanding of the conservation area's qualities which the appraisal produces will provide suggestions for future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual proposals may be assessed

1.3. History of Designation

- 1.3.1. Yalding Conservation Area was designated by Kent County Council on 24 November 1977. Despite some development in the village and its surroundings it retains the same boundary t
n



Current conservation area boundary

2. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 2.1.1. There is something of a divide caused by the existence of the river which separates the conservation area into north and south. It is not a marked difference but it is there. The buildings which line the High Street to the north are predominantly C17 and C18 (with some of the C16 and a few earlier still) those that survive on the southern side are largely C18 (with some C19 and even a few from C20).
- 2.1.2. On a map the buildings to the north can look as if they have been dropped in a haphazard way to form a picturesque grouping. They do loosely line the High Street but this is not a tight urban form as is to be found in the High Streets of other Kent villages such as Sutton Valence or Lenham. Though still not densely built up the properties in the central part of Lees Road to the south of the river form a more urban scene being consistently placed in their relationship to the street and being of far more consistent height and scale. As with many generalisations this one breaks down – in this case travelling along Lees Road towards Twyford Bridge there is again a grouping of properties which, if there were a plan, seems again to be aimed at the picturesque.
- 2.1.3. There are also common features which stand out such as the virtual universality of red Kentish tiles on the roofs and white painted window frames. And then, of course, there is Town Bridge. This ancient stone crossing, the longest of its kind surviving in Kent is the true focal point of the village and conservation area and ties the two parts together as much as it divides them.



View of the High Street from the north

3. LOCATION AND SETTING

- 3.1. Yalding is a village and parish in the Borough of Maidstone. The village is situated 6 miles (9.7 km) south west of Maidstone at a point where the Rivers Teise and Beult join the River Medway. Yalding lies close to where the Greensand Way and Medway Valley Walk (both Long Distance Paths) cross. Yalding is situated south of the Greensand Ridge which runs across the county from east to west. It is within an area where the immediate sub stratum is Wealden clay with beds of brick earth and alluvium closer to the river. The village straddles the river Beult. To the north of the river the land slopes quite steeply so that the High Street rises from 12m OD to 30m OD. To the south of the river the land is generally level forming the flood plain of the rivers of the Beult, the Teise and the Medway.
- 3.2. The Greensand Way passes through the centre of the village and there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which cuts across the centre of the conservation area following the line of the river Beult.



View of Lees Road from the east

- 3.3. Flooding from the three rivers which pass through or close to Yalding is an unwelcome consequence of the location of the village. This document does not have the scope to discuss in depth this aspect of the setting. The forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan will cover this in more detail including plans for remediation. A statement by the Parish Council ahead of the completion of the neighbourhood plan says the following about the particular objective which aims to

Make the Parish resilient to all flooding events and manage the threat of flood by safeguarding the functional floodplain. The plan sympathetically yet robustly seeks to defend against inappropriate development in areas subject to severe flooding. It wholeheartedly

supports the continued cooperation with all agencies to seek a scheme for more robust long-term flood defences and promotes the rapid recovery from inevitable flood events across all corners of the parish.

- 3.4. Clearly the regular reoccurrence of flooding in the absence of the measures referred to above has an impact on the conservation area in complicating the upkeep of historic properties – indeed there have had to be some compromises agreed to provide for flood defences to individual buildings. This study supports the aims and intent expressed above.

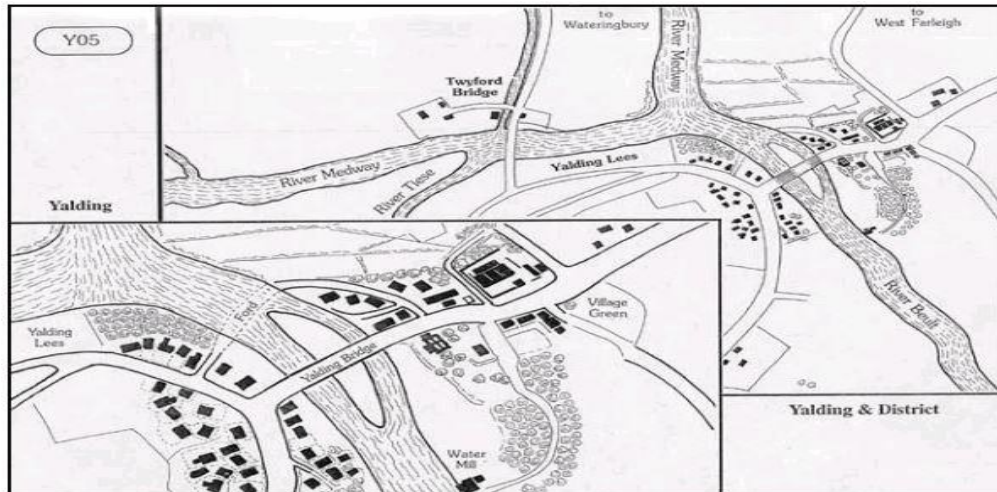
4. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Archaeology

- 4.1.1. There has been very little archaeological investigation carried out either within the conservation area or to the wider village. The only recorded work is a small scale exercise involving excavation around Yalding Town Bridge which took place in 1969. The investigation revealed that there is likely to have been a C13 timber bridge before the stone bridge (which survives) was constructed in the 15th century. The area of most of the conservation area is considered to have a high potential for archaeological remains.

4.2. Development History

- 4.2.1. The settlement was founded at an important river crossing place where the Medway and Beult have their confluence. There was a Saxon settlement here (probably a fort to guard the Medway crossing) from before the Norman invasion which went by the name of Ealdingas. The meaning is not clear as it could refer to 'old men' or 'chieftains' or possibly Ealda's people. At this time it would have been a den or woodland pasture coming under the auspices of the Bishop of Rochester.
- 4.2.2. An original Saxon village known as Twyford 'twin ford' was found where the Medway and Teise joined. It is believed that flooding caused the village to be moved to its present location on slightly higher ground. The bridge at Twyford was constructed before Town Bridge as this was the main crossing point of the rivers and would have been impassable during times of heavy rainfall.



Yalding Map from 1318

- 4.2.3. Following the death of Edward the Confessor and the victory and ascendancy of William I the area was passed to the FitzGilbert family (the lords of Tonbridge). The settlement is recorded in the Domesday Book with the name of Hallinges. At this time the village consisted of arable land and pasture, woodland, two churches (one at Brenchley), two mills and a number of eel fisheries. The population comprised sixteen villagers, twelve smallholders and fifteen slaves. This was a substantial manor for the time and it may well have been able to hold an informal market. The first hard evidence of a market and fair gives a firm date of 1318 as King Edward II granted the lord of the manor the right to hold a market weekly on Wednesday on the vigil days connected with the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (28 – 30 June). Fairs were a common feature of village life in Kent and some historians argue that it helped to undermine the feudal system in the county.
- 4.2.4. During the Medieval period the name of the village developed through a number of forms but the first known use of Yalding was post medieval in 1620.
- 4.2.5. The market was held in the area where the High Street widened close to the church. It is not known exactly where the fair took place at this time though probably the location was Yalding Lees which is the meadow on the south side of the river Beult and within its flood plain.
- 4.2.6. The FitzGilbert family held possession of the manor until 1314. After that it was held briefly by the Earl of Gloucester and then passed to Hugh de Audley. From the middle of C14 the manor was more settled and was in the possession of the Stafford and Buckingham families. In 1522 all their lands were confiscated (Edward Duke of Buckingham being tried and beheaded for treason) and lodged with the Crown until Henry VIII granted it to the Earl of Worcester.
- 4.2.7. A survey carried out in 1263 shows that the manor house was to be found on the west side of the High Street close to the site of the market. It is recorded as having gardens, pasture land (for horses, oxen cows and sheep), three water mills and a fishery.
- 4.2.8. The church is listed in Textus Roffensis which was produced in the 11th century but nothing of this early church remains. In the late 1100's Richard de Clare (a member of the Clare

family) gave the advowson (the right to nominate a member of the clergy) to Tonbridge Priory which he had recently founded. The church remained tied to the priory until the suppression imposed by Henry VIII. At this time the church was granted to Cardinal Wolsey but it was soon passed onto the Crown.

- 4.2.9. The church now standing is largely a C13 (or slightly earlier) construction of local Ragstone with dressings of sandstone – certainly the nave aisles, identical porches and transepts are of this date. No above-ground trace seems to survive of the original nave and chancel, though the walls of the present long nave may retain part of the fabric of the Romanesque structure. The earlier chancel was replaced by the present structure in the 13th century, and a blocked lancet on the north and two more lancets on the south are visible. During C15 new windows were formed in the aisles, chancel and porch. Then in C19 there was a significant restoration carried out under the direction of Martin Bulmer who was the designer of the Faversham Assembly Rooms and Kent County architect from 1860 to 1878.
- 4.2.10. Town Bridge which spans the river Beult is the longest surviving medieval stone bridge in Kent. Prior to the construction of the bridge the river crossing was a ford accessed from the High Street via the Tatt which also had a small wharf. Archbishop Stephen Langton complained in 1207 about the lack of a crossing across to either the Beult or the Medway. Whether it was in response to that complaint is unknown but soon after a wooden bridge was thrown across the Beult. Remains of this bridge were found in 1969 during excavations close to Town Bridge. The bridge in use today was built probably earlier than C15. It is built using Ragstone quarried from nearby. It has seven arches and together with the causeway which it incorporates is 150m long. It was when constructed it was 4.5m wide but was later widened to 6.5m.



Church of St Peter and St Paul Yalding

- 4.2.11. Twyford Bridge is earlier than Town Bridge having been built sometime during the late C13. It is very picturesque with its four irregular pointed arches and massive cutwaters. The

bridge is some 40m across and is 4m wide and has a causeway of a similar length. Traffic crossing this bridge is currently controlled by traffic lights but nevertheless there are frequent build ups of traffic and issues with finding somewhere to park.



Twyford Bridge

- 4.2.12. The market seems to have carried on weekly for some 300 years only failing in the early 1600's. The fair did even better and by C18 there were two annual fairs held on Whit Monday and 15 October. Later these fairs came to specialise in cattle and hops and they continued until finally closing down in the late C19. There is currently a Christmas fair held in the High Street early in December.
- 4.2.13. From its earliest beginnings the life blood of economic life in the village has been agriculture with a lot of good pasture land. Hasted writes *the land is kindly both for corn and hops, of which there are several plantations, and round the down there are some rich grass land*. In the medieval period the records show that agricultural labourers were the majority of inhabitants. There were also tradesmen who supported the rural economy – notably a blacksmith, a couple of brewers, a miller and two bakers. This reliance on agriculture continued through the centuries until in 1832 William Cobbett in his book *Rural Rides* could refer Yalding's *meadows, cornfields, hop gardens and orchards of apples, pears, cherries and filberts* (hazel nuts). At the time of his writing though cattle and hops were the principal activities as reflected in the nature of the markets referred to above. Oast houses sprang up in many locations. A significant array still survive behind Court Lodge but hops were eventually displaced by apple orchards. Symptomatic of this it was a retired brewer who created the Cox's Orange Pippin which became the predominant apple grown in Kent.
- 4.2.14. In the 1660's William Cleeve, who had made his fortune as a haberdasher in London, founded and endowed a school on land he owned in Yalding. The school and master's

house are situated in the High Street and remained in use as a school until 1921. The buildings are now respectively a community hall and private house.

- 4.2.15. In the 1780's a town cage (lock up) was provided on the village green. It is a small red brick building of about 10' (3m) square. It is a single storey windowless construction in Flemish bond and with a tiled pyramidal roof. Records show that for some time the village stocks were located adjacent to the lock up.
- 4.2.16. There were a number of mills operating in and around Yalding in the 1800's. Downs Farm Mill near Yalding Hill was a post-mill with a roundhouse base. It was demolished in 1870. Rugmore Hill Mill must have been an impressive site as it was five stories high with the sweeps six meters above the ground. It was also demolished in the 19th century. A third mill just outside the village on the east was an important mill in the life of Yalding. This mill which was powered by water supplied grain to Yalding.
- 4.2.17. Despite it's good trading links via the navigable Medway and the coming of the railway in 1844 Yalding has not developed in the same way as Ashford and Sevenoaks
- 4.2.18. However, the river did create waterlogged land which was difficult to use. This type of land was also a source of disease. In the 14th century malaria was a common problem in villages situated close to marshland. Yalding was hit several times with outbreaks of disease. One epidemic in 1510 killed over 50% of those people living in the village.
- 4.2.19. From the turn of the 19th century a certain amount of ribbon development occurred particularly along Vicarage Lane. There was also the construction of a number of larger houses such as Lees Lodge on Lees Road, Broomfield on Lighthouse Lane and The Elms – actually one of few insertions into the core of the village on the High Street. In the 20th century, while there have been some small scale additions in the heart of the village, most development has been contained within two reasonably sized areas on the fringes of the settlement area. These are at Medway Avenue on the north side of the village and at Lyngs Close to the south where the original gate posts (dated 1954) on Benover Road mark the pedestrian entrance. There has also been a smaller group of houses built behind the alms houses on Vicarage Road.
- 4.2.20. The main element of the economy today is provided by commuters who travel to Maidstone, Ashford and London. Yalding has remained essentially a village and has not experienced the major expansion that has happened in so many former villages. The development that has taken place has not impacted too severely on the village and conservation area and has certainly not destroyed its character. The economy has shifted, however, over the course of the last century from one which was still based on agriculture to one supported by commuters to Maidstone and London.

5. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS - HIGH STREET AND HINTERLAND CHARACTER AREA

- 5.1. The High Street is the principal thoroughfare in the village to the north of the river Beult. It has an eclectic mix of properties – mainly dwellings - very disparate in character and layout and with a very open feel. The space created between the buildings lining the street is wide

– a distant memory of the market which took place here until even though the last one was held some 400 years ago.

- 5.2. The High Street is characterised by buildings of different ages and styles where many different building materials are in evidence. There is much use of red brick but also weatherboarding – both white and black, Ragstone, render, painted brickwork, tile hanging and exposed timber framing. The element that helps tie the street together is the predominant use of red plain tiles for roofing although there are some examples of slate roofing and even one house with a thatched roof.



View of the High Street

- 5.3. The scale of the buildings is highly variable although there are no large institutional buildings. The scale can be seen as being rather small for the width of the road apart perhaps from Court Lodge and Church House and this adds to the feeling of openness. There is also a wide verge between most of the buildings and the roadway which contributes to the sense of spaciousness.
- 5.4. The condition of the properties is generally very good with few suffering from poor maintenance. A high proportion of the buildings lining the High Street are listed.
- 5.5. This is not a traditional High Street and does not operate as one. There are very few shops or other businesses to be found and the atmosphere does not feature the hustle and bustle one might expect. There is evidence of many more retail and associated businesses such as Bridge House being a butchers and slaughter house and there being a barber's premises in front of Randall Cottages. The pavements are quiet and parking is generally an easy process although there are times when parking is under pressure and local residents find it hard to locate a space. Although this was the site of a market the properties on either side of the street are, in the main, dwellings.

- 5.6. A feature of this part of the village is that there is a lot of historic back land development which gives depth to the High Street and adds to its character. They tend to be accessed by narrow lanes which results in a series of gaps in the street frontage. The church too is set back from the street and accessed by long paths which start as similar gaps between buildings.
- 5.7. The properties on the High Street are frequently spaced apart although there are a few short terraces. Some of the spaces between and in front of the buildings have the appearance of indeterminate ownership and lack of real purpose.
- 5.8. Mature trees are a constant backdrop to views across this part of the conservation area and are an important element in its character particularly in the medium and long range views.
- 5.9. The village green is located at the junction of Yalding Hill, High Street and Vicarage Road. It is small and crossed by access paths to adjacent properties on Vicarage Road. The most obvious feature of the green is the War Memorial. This is in the form of a stone cross on an octagonal plinth which is enclosed by a Ragstone wall, octagonal in plan. It has an opening facing the High Street and a stone seat on the remaining sides. It would seem to be a common meeting point. The green is further characterised by the presence of a group of large mature trees which provide a lot of shade to the areas of grass. A finger post which currently stands some way to the north was formerly close to the memorial and would be better re-sited in that location. A three ton limitation sign to Vicarage Rd is redundant and should be removed.
- 5.10. On the north side of the green is the C18 lock up. This is a windowless brick square building, with an iron studded door and Judas door, which butts against the boundary wall of Cleaves – originally the village grammar school but now a private house.
- 5.11. Immediately opposite on the corner of Vicarage Road the building which now houses the Village Tea Rooms was for many years the bridge toll collector's house – the hatch still evident on Vicarage Road.



The Lock Up

- 5.12. Vicarage Road has a similar character to the High Street with a similar mix of styles and ages and repeating the arrangement where some properties are built from the back edge of pavement while others are set well back. There is no obvious pattern to how this occurs and the result is an open, nonurban feel to the street. The boundary of the conservation area here is carefully drawn to exclude much of the road though a review would be appropriate to consider the inclusion of the primary school.
- 5.13. The only road within this part of the conservation area that runs parallel to the High Street is Oast Court and even here only a small stretch is within the conservation area. This is a road which has been created in the recent past to service the new development in this area. Part of that development is a terrace that incorporates a group of six oasts – five of which are square and very large and the sixth, somewhat detached from the rest is smaller, older and round. These oasts have been altered out of all recognition as part of the modern development but their roofs are still intact and offer a picturesque skyline from certain points in the High Street if not any longer an authentic taste of historic Yalding.
- 5.14. Possibly more interesting is the path which links Oast Court to the High Street where the listed barn, byres and dairy form an interesting group with other dwellings converted from out buildings of Court Farm. This stretch does give some idea of what the High St hinterland would have been like in the post mediaeval period.



View along Oast Court – formerly the farmstead of Court Farm

- 5.15. The High Street leads directly to Town Bridge and this with the river and its flood plain is the dominant feature of the lower part of the conservation area to the north of the river Beult.

- 5.16. External surfaces in the public realm are generally new replacement materials with extensive use of tarmac on the pavements of the High Street. In the paths that run away from the High Street there are several examples where there are residual areas of Ragstone paving. A good example is the path across the Green to Cleaves House another that running adjacent to Church House up to the church.
- 5.17. The amount of street furniture is thankfully restrained and reasonably unobtrusive. It is also of a consistent and coordinated traditional design so that finger posts, lamp posts, bollards and even bus stops are of the same style. There are some aerial wires impacting on the views.



Street furniture on the High Street

- 5.18. The High Street is not a trunk road (it is the B2010) nevertheless at times there is a considerable amount of through traffic and the disruption, noise and pollution caused by road vehicles is accordingly significant at those times. There are few parking restrictions and so there may be a case for considering limiting the High Street to residents' cars and excluding commercial vehicles.
- 5.19. The key features of this area are the open and spacious nature of the urban form within a very green environment. The buildings are an interesting mix of ages and styles visually united by a limited range of materials - especially the plain tiled roofs.
- 6. AUDIT OF ASSETS – HIGH STREET AND HINTERLAND CHARACTER AREA**
- 6.1. A detailed description of the significant buildings and sites within the conservation area follows. These descriptions are based on examination from the street and historic map analysis. Buildings have not been examined internally or from non-public viewpoints.
- 6.2. Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:
- Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
 - Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character

and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily

- Neutral - buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary.
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character where re-development would be advantageous.


Downs Farm House Kenward Road ME18 6JR	Grade II* 1348345	C14 or early C15, with C16 or early C17 alterations, restored in 1930s. Timber framed. Ground floor red brick in Flemish bond to end bays, red and grey brick to hall. First floor rendered, possibly in 1930s, with plain strips indicating two panels to the storey, and with herringbone combing to the panels. Plain tile roof	Essential
The Walnut Tree PH Yalding Hill ME18 6JB	Grade II 1069019	Public House C16 4 bay timber frame with rendered infilling 2 storeys and attic. Steeply pitched plain tiled roof	Essential
			
Walnut Tree Cottages 1, 2 and 3 High St ME18 6JA	Grade II 1366271	Late C17/early C18 with later alterations. Ground floor red and grey brick; first floor weather boarding or fish scale tile hanging. Plain tiled roof	Essential
Cleaves Hall, Cleaves House Vicarage Road ME18 6DJ	Grade II 1348520	Formerly school and masters house C15/C16 with additions in subsequent periods. Main parts timber framed and finished with examples of brickwork fish scale tiling and render. Plain tiled roof over 2 storeys and attic	Essential
Barn Vicarage Road	Grade II 1069015	C17 Central porch and jettied to front. Black tarred weather boarding. Open 2 bay timber frame Roof plain tiled.	Essential

The Village Lock Up The Green Vicarage Road	Grade II 1069014	Lock-up. Late C18 or C19. Red brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. Single storey, with dentilled brick eaves cornice and pyramidal roof. No windows	Essential
Rose Cottages 1, 2 Vicarage Road ME18 6DP	Grade II * 1348526	Farm House now pair of dwellings. Poss. early C15 with C19 facade. Timber framed faced with tarred weather boarding. Open 2 bay hall. Steeply pitched plain tiled roof with gablets	Essential
Memorial Cross The Green Vicarage Road	Grade II 1427690	Octagonal enclosure of low Rag stone walls with octagonal cross shaft on a plinth	Essential
Simmons Alms Houses Vicarage Road	Unlisted	1863 row of 6 almshouses raised for 'poor women of Yalding'. Red brick with 6 gables to front elevation with plain tiles roofs with barn hips to gables. Substantial brick stacks on party wall lines	Essential
Acton Place Cottages Vicarage Road	Unlisted	Early C19 row of 8 cottages brick to ground floor weatherboarding/tile hanging to upper storey. Plain tiled roofs with dormers. Single window each floor	Positive
The Old Barn High Street ME18 6HX	Grade II 1344060	7 bay timber framed barn weather boarded with plain tile roof. Front and rear aisles Converted 1980's into two houses	Essential
Court Lodge and Dairy House High Street ME18 6HX	Grade II* 1069066	Late C17. Chequered red and grey brick to both elevations and to gable ends, Plain tile roof. Double depth. 2 storeys, with cellar and attics.	Essential



Walnut Tree Cottages 1, 2 and 3 Yalding Hill	Grade II 1366271	Row of C18 cottages. Ground floor brick clad timber frame with weather boarding or fish scale tile hanging to first floor. Single room width. Plain tiled roofs Formerly known as Court Lodge Cottages	Essential
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1 High Street ME18 6JA	Unlisted	Probably C18 large L shaped cottage, brick stack on junction of two wings. Red brick ground floor with white weather boarding above. Plain tiled roof with barn hip to south gable. Now tea rooms formerly toll house for Town bridge	Positive
Prawle Cottages 4, 5 High Street ME18 6JA	Grade II 1344037	Pair of C18 houses. Rendered timber frame with plain tiled roof and dormers	Essential
6 High Street	Unlisted	C19 Gable fronted 3 storey house. Red brick in Flemish bond slated pentice over ground floor bay window. Slate to main roof	Positive
Leesden House High Street ME18 6HZ	Grade II 1318885	C18 house ground floor part stretcher bond brickwork infill and rendered first floor. C20 added porch.	Positive
Red House High Street ME18 6HZ	Unlisted	Original building was C16 thatched brew house replaced late C20 after destructive fire	Neutral
Randall Cottages High Street ME18 6HZ	Grade II 1069057	Prob. C16 timber framed and weather boarded row of houses. Brick plinth and thatched roof	Essential
The Hop Barn and Old Barn High Street ME18 6HX	Grade II 1069029	Formerly barn granary and stables now two houses. Prob.C17 Semi coursed Rag stone base with brick and weather boarding over. Plain tiled roof	Essential
Church Cottages High Street ME18 6HU	Grade II 1145918	Row of houses C17 with later alterations. Timber framed with brick infill at ground floor and rendered upper storey. Plain tiled roof	Essential
Church House High Street ME18 6HU	Grade II* 1344038	C17 house with C18 addition. Main range chequered red and grey brick with red brick dressings. C17 left section timber framed, clad with red brick in Flemish bond on ground floor, and with red and grey mathematical tiles in Flemish bond on first floor. Plain tile roof. C17 section of two timber-framed bays. C18 main range probably completely replaces a pre-C17 structure	Essential
Outbuilding High Street	Grade II 1145923	Early C19 Red and grey brick in Flemish bond 2 storeys and garret with plain tiled roof	Essential
The Coach House High Street ME18 6HU	Grade II 1344039	House. Early C19. Red brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. Double depth. 2 storeys, attic and cellar, on chamfered brick plinth.	Essential
Interphil House High Street ME18 6HU	Grade II 1069065	Early C19. Red brick in Flemish bond. Chequered red and grey brick at right end, continued from adjoining building to right (q.v.). Plain tile roof.	Essential
Walter Forknell and Coates High Street ME18 6HU	Grade II 1366269	House, now shop. Late C17 or early C18. Chequered red and grey brick. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys and attic on rendered plinth	Essential
Church of St Peter and St Paul High Street ME18 6HU	Grade I 1145919	C13 added to C14 and C15 restored twice C19 and C20. Small blocks of roughly-coursed Rag stone and sandstone to tower with later brick repairs. Uncoursed Rag stone and sandstone to north and south porches, north and south transepts, east gable of nave and (partly rendered) to north aisle.	Essential

		Chancel rendered	
			
Barn about 10 metres south of south transept of church of St Peter and St Paul High Street	Grade II 1344040	Probably C17. Timber framed, weather boarded, with plain tile roof. 3 or 4 timber-framed bays	Essential
The Forge High Street ME18 6HX	Grade II 1344061	Main range C17, with C19 facade. House and office, with working forge to rear. Timber framed. Tarred weather boarding to most of front elevation, and to gable ends. Central section of ground floor painted brick. 2 storeys and cellar, on brick plinth	Essential
Oak Cottage High Street ME18 6HX	Grade II 1069031	C17 or C18. Formerly shop now private house. Timber framed. Exposed framing to front gable end. First floor of right side rendered. Plain tile roof. Built at right-angles to road. 2 storeys	Essential
The Bull Public House High Street ME18 6JB	Grade II 1344062	Early C18, facade largely rebuilt (and left section possibly added) in circa 1901. Front elevation painted brick. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys, attic and cellar, on painted brick plinth	Essential
The Tatt Nos 1 and 2 High Street ME18 6HT	Grade II 1069032	Formerly a single house now divided into 2. C17 with C19 alterations. Timber framed. Exposed framing with red brick infilling to left of ground floor, red and grey brick in Flemish bond to right. First floor rendered. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys, on ragstone plinth	Essential
The Tatt High Street ME18 6HT	Grade II 1344063	Early C16 or earlier, with C18 and C19 alterations. Timber framed. Ground floor patched red and grey brick. Broadly-spaced studding with red brick infilling to right gable end. First floor tile-hung, tile-hanging	Essential
Swan House Swan Place	Grade II 1344064	Originally an Inn and now a house and shop. Late C17 or early C18, with late C18 or early C19	Essential

High Street ME18 6HS		additions and alterations. Painted brick, largely in Flemish bond. Chequered red and grey brick to left return. 2 storeys, attic and cellar	
Bridge House High Street ME18 6HS	Grade II 1069033	C18. The only building on the bridge. Ground floor painted brick, first floor rendered to front, weather boarded to left gable end. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys, attic and basement. Land slopes away to rear. Multi pane 'shop' window to right of main entrance.	Essential

7. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS - THE LEES CHARACTER AREA

- 7.1.1. South of the river Beult Lees Road/Benover Road performs very much the same function as the High Street to the north. It is really the only street in the conservation area and all life is here. Again, similar to the High Street, Lees Road has a wide variety of building styles although they are generally from the Georgian/Victorian periods or later. The scale of buildings in this part of the conservation area is much more uniform. Many of the properties have steps up to the ground floor which is a sure signal that this part of the town is subject to flooding.
- 7.1.2. The buildings lining Lees Road exhibit a limited range of materials. There is much use of red brick and painted brickwork and also a fair amount of weather boarding. Other finishes used but less frequently are tile hanging and render. What ties the street together is the uniform ridge height and the universal use of red plain tiles while the variation in material and colour of the external walls gives the street its picturesque nature.



Lees Road approaching Yalding from the west

- 7.1.3. This area has a much more urban feel than that to the north of the river. The buildings jostle together forming loose terraces and in the main rise from the back edge of the pavement. The sense of enclosure is reinforced by the closing down of long range vistas due to the curving street. There is an external 'room' formed at the heart of this part of the village by this sense of enclosure within which much of the activity that occurs happens here – aided by the presence of the shop (and post office) and the pub.
- 7.1.4. The condition of the properties is generally very good and maintenance appears to be carried out to an appropriate level. There are fewer listed buildings than the area around the High Street but still a high proportion has a listed status – largely at Grade II.
- 7.1.5. Trees and other flora are less apparent within the more urban streetscape of this part of the conservation area and the character is less green. However within a few steps in any direction open countryside is reached and here, particularly in the area of the Lees and along the banks of the river Beult trees take on a dominant role and there are some fine specimen trees.
- 7.1.6. To the east of the conservation area the properties are more spaced out giving a more open feel and there are occasional views out to the countryside beyond. As Lees Cottage is passed the views open up completely to give a vista of the extensive water meadows in the flood plain of the Medway and Beult. A short journey further brings you to Twyford Bridge and the southerly limit of the conservation area.
- 7.1.7. This part of the conservation area is subject to a high risk of flooding and as a result the Environment Agency has carried out modifications to a number of properties – work which includes the provision of supports for temporary flood barriers to doorways and the installation of sub floor vents with one way 'valves'. This will help alleviate the problem but a long term solution requires its tackling in a strategic way – see 3.3.
- 7.1.8. Twyford Bridge is a fine example of a medieval multi span bridge. It is constructed using coursed and dressed Ragstone with brick parapets. It spans the Medway and is 55m in length with four substantial cut waters which extend the full height of the bridge and provide pedestrian refuges at road level.
- 7.1.9. External surfaces in the public realm are generally modern replacements. There is extensive use of tarmac even in the repairing of the Ragstone pavements many of which survive. There is some recent replacement, with tarmac, to a historic pavement outside Kingsland Cottages where some bollards have been installed within the footpath. It is understood that KCC Highways have the Ragstone in safe keeping and are planning to reinstate to original surface. It would have been better if the paving had not been removed in the first place.




An area of surviving Ragstone paving

- 7.1.10. The amount of street furniture is restrained but sadly is not consistently of a coordinated design as is found in the northern part of the conservation area. There is a very prominent stretch of double yellow lines outside the George pub and Kingsland Cottages which seems somewhat unnecessary and could be reviewed particularly as some bollards have been installed (causing considerable loss of historic paving) to prevent pavement parking .
- 7.1.11. The wirescape, particularly around the area of the George, is intrusive and it would be a positive step forward to address this feature and remove overhead wires where possible.
- 7.1.12. Lees Road is the B2162 and does not connect any major settlements and should be reasonably quiet. It is actually busier than would be expected and sometimes there is a tail back at the access road to Town Bridge. The queue can extend right through the village and there is a pressing need to find some relief from the amount of traffic at peak periods.
- 7.1.13. The Lees part of the conservation area is a tightly composed urban street form with consistent roof form and height and a wide variety of building types and external wall finishes all creating an interesting and picturesque streetscape

8. AUDIT OF ASSETS – THE LEES CHARACTER AREA

- 8.1.1. Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:
 - Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
 - Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily

- Neutral - buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary.
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character where re-development would be advantageous.

Ladybird Cottages Benover Road	Grade II 1115417	Late C18 pair of houses. Ground storey raised with step access – red and grey brickwork. First floor is weather boarded. Steep mansard roof with dormers	Essential
Styles Benover Road	Grade II 1060626	C18 two bay timber framed house. Weather boarded with plain tile roof. Formerly known as Forge Cottage	Essential
Killicks Cottages Benover Road	Grade II 1115448	C18 Row of eight houses with red and grey brickwork (some painted) ground floors and weather boarded above. Accommodation in plain tiled roof with dormers	Essential
			
Woollets Cottages Benover Road	Grade II 1344426	Pair of houses – timber framed with three bays. Ground floor brick infill to exposed frame, upper storey rendered. Accommodation in plain tiled roof with dormers	Essential
Gabriels Cottages Benover Road	Grade II 1115434	C18 late. Pair of timber framed houses – weather boarded. Surviving multi paned sashes with fine glazing bars to ground floor	Essential
Cobblestones Restaurant Lees Road	Grade II 1060625	Handsome late C18 red and grey brick house (was a restaurant for a time). Timber framed range to rear of earlier date. Front range much altered in 19 th century. Rectangular bay shop window to front elevation	Essential
Bridge Cottage + Kingsland Cottages	Grade II 1060619	Possibly early C19 house group. Chequered red and grey brickwork to elevations with some tile hanging	Essential

Lees Road		at first floor. Plain tiles roof with small dormers.	
Telephone Box Lees Road	Grade II 1253803	Type K6 cast iron telephone box with domed roof and crowns in top panels. Designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (designer of Battersea Power Station) in 1935	
Yalding Post Office and attached ranges Lees Road	Grade II 1349100	Probably early C19 and now shop with residential accommodation. Mixture of red and grey brickwork (painted to High Street) and weather boarding over. Mainly a plain tiled roof	Essential
Block of Flats corner of Acott Fields Lees Road	Unlisted	Late C20 3 storey block of flats. Red brick but differs from area typical. Form, proportion and scale have no reference to conservation area	Negative
The Limes + The Lodge Lees Road	Grade II 1069040	C18 pair of houses – ‘modernised’ in C19 with replacement windows. Ground floor chequered red and grey brickwork with tile hanging to first floor and plain tiled roof	Essential



Vine House Lees Road	Grade II 1069042	C19 house in red and grey chequered brick. Set back from the road and at right angle to it. Unusually, for Yalding, has a slated roof	
Wisteria Cottage Lees Road	Grade II 1348707	Listed as Lees Cottage. C18 timber framed house with brick facing in an irregular stretcher bond. Pebble dash to first floor. Plain tiled roof with dormers	Essential
Barn east of Willow Grove Lees Road	Grade II 1069043	C19 timber framed barn, store and stables. Eight bays long with mix of red brick and weather boarded exterior	Essential
Willow Grove Lees Road	Grade II 1099926	Large Georgian style house built in stages from C18 to mid C19. Exhibits mix of external finishes with painted brick to front with slate roof and to the rear red and grey brickwork with plain tiled roof.	Essential
Lees Cottage	Grade II	C18 house – timber framed but clad with a mix of	Essential

Lees Road	1069041	render, weather boarding and tile hanging. Plain tiled roof. Built at right angle to road with raised ground floor.	
Lees House Lees Road	Grade II 1344067	C16-C17 large farmhouse with C18 or C19 additions resulting in a complex arrangement of wings and ranges. Front elevation is rendered over both storeys under a plain tiled roof.	Essential

9. APPROACHES AND VIEWS

- 9.1. Approaching Yalding from the north requires the navigation of a winding and sometimes steep descent along a road lined with established trees many of which reach across the road to form a complete canopy. This is picturesque Kent countryside but views are restricted by the curves in the road, the high banks and the tree canopy. Continuing the descent the village comes into view without any pre warning and few outlying properties. On the right is Downs Farm House though it largely hidden behind a screen of trees and then The Walnut Tree public house which together with Cleaves House on the left side effectively forms a gateway to the village. As the bend by the Walnut Tree unfolds there is finally a view which takes in initially the northern end of the High St and eventually just about the whole of it with Church House very prominent in the distance and the church tower rising above the buildings lining the High Street. The vista is terminated by a series of bends as the hill flattens out so a view of the bridge is not possible until the far end of the High Street.



The approach to Yalding from the north

- 9.2. Approaching Yalding from the southwest the road takes you through the flood plain of the river Medway from some way outside the village. This approach allows a crossing of the picturesque Twyford Bridge which marks the southern limit of the conservation area. From here the approach to the village continues over the meadows in the flood plain where there are long views along the shallow Medway valley. Any views of Yalding, which is similarly low lying, are obscured by the constant bends in the road and the trees that line it. At the last moment the village comes into view and there is an interesting arrangement of

buildings that exemplifies the range and variety of architecture that is found in Yalding. On the right hand side there is Willow Grove, startlingly white against the background of the sky, and the brooding presence of the black stained weather boarded barn jutting out into the field of vision. On the left is the dainty Lees Cottage and closing the vista is the chequered brickwork of the paired cottages – The Limes and The Lodge.



Approaching Yalding along Lees Road

- 9.3. The approach from Benover is very different again. Here the road meanders along between trees and hedges carefully selected and manicured fronting the properties which are interspersed along the way. There is no doubt that this is the approach to an urban area and arriving at Yalding simply means an intensification of that. The view as Yalding comes into view is dominated from this direction by white painted weather boarding and plain tiled roofs with Ladybird Cottages, Styles and Killick Cottages all in the forefront.

10. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

- 10.1. The character of conservation areas can suffer significantly from the cumulative impact of 'minor alterations' which can be carried out to single dwelling houses as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order without the need for planning permission. Such alterations can include replacement windows and doors and re-roofing using inappropriate non-traditional materials.
- 10.2. The Local Authority can seek to bring such minor alterations under planning control by the use of Directions under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order. Article 4 directions can increase the public protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. They are not necessary for works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments as listed building consent and scheduled monument consent would cover all potentially harmful works that would otherwise be permitted development under the planning regime. However, article 4 directions might assist in the protection of all other heritage assets (particularly conservation areas) and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets, including listed buildings
- 10.3. There are no Article 4 Directions currently in force in the Yalding conservation area.

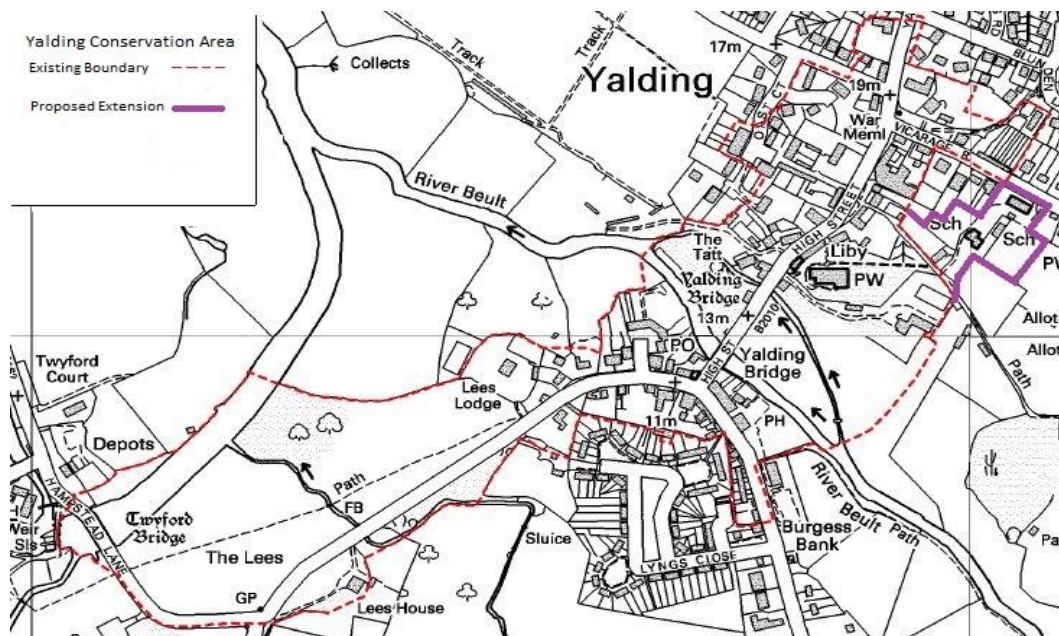
11. PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE

- 11.1. The Yalding conservation area is an interesting example of a traditional Kentish village. It has retained a high proportion of its historic development with many listed buildings. It is given its particular character by its siting on the floodplain of the local rivers in that the development generally spreads along the roads which connect the two bridges in the conservation area. Listed and unlisted buildings make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation areas and in many cases are essential to it. Within the conservation area modern developments and redevelopments have not resulted in any serious loss of character, most being discretely sited or of inoffensive design and largely built of appropriate materials. Acott Fields may be the exception. In fact, the major agent of character loss has not been redevelopment but the cumulative impact of individual relatively minor alterations such as replacement windows and doors and even changes of roofing materials and works carried out to the boundary treatments with little strategic focus and a lack of awareness of heritage integrity and value.
- 11.2. Yalding is, despite the comments made above, generally a well cared for village and problems of dereliction; dilapidation and disuse are very rare. The detailed analysis carried out in Sections 5 and 7 of this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for works and development for which the scope appears to be very limited. Those buildings or sites which are assessed as 'essential' or 'positive' will not normally be considered appropriate for demolition or redevelopment. Proposals for the redevelopment of 'neutral' sites will be required to match or to enhance the existing condition. No sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are not many where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There is little scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of, and view lines across, the conservation area. The design style of any replacement building is not predetermined. In this conservation area with a mix of building types and styles the focus will be on a high quality response to the existing context rather than there being a requirement for a particular appearance.
- 11.3. The character of Yalding seen today is at least in part set by the consistent use of a generally limited range of materials used on mostly small scale buildings. It is important that any future proposals for development or works should respect this. There are a few single storey buildings – even fewer with three storeys and accordingly developments of less or more than two storeys will generally be considered to be inappropriate while there will be a base line of high quality and contextually positive design. Conversion/extension of single storey ancillary buildings may be considered acceptable.
- 11.4. The loss of character if it happens is likely to come about through lack of maintenance or inappropriate repairs or replaced components rather than through any larger scale of intervention for which there is little scope. It is in the public domain that attention is most needed since so many agencies have a call on this resource. Further erosion of the quality of the streetscape needs to be avoided and opportunities taken to reverse some of the harmful practices that have taken place in the past. The focus needs to be on surface materials and street furniture to unify the former and using a more suitable material and reducing the clutter.



Historic view of the High Street with Ragstone paving

- 11.5. The current boundary of the conservation area would still seem to be valid in terms of the area and assets it encompasses. There are some buildings of significant interest beyond the boundary, particularly on Yalding Hill and Benover Road but these tend to be protected by an individual listing status and they are in any case surrounded by properties whose inclusion would be to change the nature and qualities of the conservation area. The one area where an adjustment may be valid would be to include the primary school on Vicarage Road. This is shown below.



- 11.6. Trees and green landscape are really significant contributors to the feel of Yalding and the quality of the environment and there are many well established specimens. They play an important part as Yalding is approached from any direction and are a key element throughout the northern part of the village and in the meadows adjacent to the river Beult -

also around the churchyard. They are also dominant in the layout of the Green and play an important part in the backdrop to views throughout the northern part of the conservation area.



View from Town Bridge looking north

CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 11.6.1. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69 of the 1990 Act also imposes the duty on the local authority to determine from time to time whether any further parts of the borough should be included within a conservation area.
- 11.6.2. Recent guidance from Historic England (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2019) suggests that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas should take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy setting objectives for addressing issues and recommendations for action arising from a previously published conservation area appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for their implementation. Such a strategy is generally given the title of a conservation area management plan.
- 11.6.3. It is important to note that a conservation area management plan cannot introduce entirely new planning objectives. Instead it will need to refer to the original legislation; to government guidance (mainly National Planning Policy Framework for heritage assets); to the adopted local plan policies; and to the emerging Local Development Framework. It can interpret established legislative provisions and planning policies and explain how they will be applied within the conservation area to ensure its preservation and/or enhancement. If any particular issues are identified which do require new policies to be drawn up, the management plan can indicate these and set a programme for their development as part of the Local Development Framework process.
- 11.6.4. This Management Plan for the Yalding conservation area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 11.0 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal, and outlines any proposals for boundary changes as also may be suggested by the Appraisal.



Church House

12. POLICY CONTEXT

12.1. National Policy

- 12.1.1. National policy and advice regarding conservation area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is available to at the link given below (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf).
- 12.1.2. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF points out that the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas . Paragraph 185 sets out the benefits that accrue from preserving the historic environment whether it be the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental advantages, the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution or the opportunities arising from an understanding of the intrinsic character of a place.
- 12.1.3. The Historic England guidance document ([Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016](#)) refers to the importance of keeping the boundaries of existing conservation areas under periodic review to ascertain whether any changes are required.
- 12.1.4. The document suggests that designation of a conservation area in itself is unlikely to be effective without the formulation of specific policy guidance, and reminds local planning authorities of the duty imposed on them by Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and for these to be submitted to a ‘public meeting’ in the area. Paragraph 4.16 points out that such proposals cannot realistically seek to prevent all new development and should instead concentrate on the controlled and positive management of change; indeed, it is suggested that there may be instances where redevelopment will be a means of enhancing character.

12.2. Local Policy

- 12.2.1. Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2017. (<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/local-plan-information>) A supplementary planning document to cover conservation areas has not yet been produced but there will be specific reference to heritage assets in the reviewed Local Plan due to be published in 2022. While this Management Plan indicates how national and local policies will be applied in the on-going management of the conservation area, it is not in itself a planning policy document but Local Plan policy DM4 refers to conservation area appraisals and management plans as supporting documents so they are material to planning considerations.

13. PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

- 13.1.1. The Appraisal above records that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. The primary school should be considered for inclusion within an amended boundary. See 11.5.

14. PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

14.1. Planning Considerations

- 14.1.1. Sensitive and responsive management of development pressure is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas. To this end, the Council will adopt the following principles when dealing with planning applications within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.
- 14.1.2. The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the further guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and any subsequent revisions, additions or replacement government guidance.
- 14.1.3. The Council will apply the relevant policies from the Maidstone Local Plan 2017 until such time as these policies are replaced by a future Local Plan or by policies in the emerging Local Development Framework.
- 14.1.4. The Council will require all planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough document setting out the reasons for the development, explaining how the design has been evolved and showing how it will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area; it should also cover any access issues which exist. There is guidance on preparing a Design and Access Statement produced by CABI (CABI was merged with the Design Council in 2011) (<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-and-access-statements-how-write-read-and-use-them>). In some cases a separate Heritage Statement will also be required. Historic England have published guidance on this aspect in 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>). The Maidstone web site gives advice on the content of a planning application – see [validations checklist](#).
- 14.1.5. Applications must be accompanied by clear and accurate drawings showing the proposed development in detail and illustrating how it fits in to its context. Drawings should clearly indicate materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of proposed buildings. Site plans should accurately depict the positions of trees on or adjacent to the site and show clearly those which will need to be removed and those which will be retained. Where trees are affected by the proposals the application should include a survey by a professional arboriculturist to comply with current British Standard BS5837, 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations'. It should also include details of any proposed works to, and methods for protecting, any retained tree. Photographs and other illustrative media are encouraged. Any applications which fail to provide adequate detail will not be registered.



View of Vicarage Road looking towards the High Street

- 14.1.6. Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.
- 14.1.7. The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications within the conservation area or affecting its setting.
- 14.1.8. The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether or not it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused. The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high quality contemporary design, subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail and materials of local tradition. The council encourages the use of the pre-application process which ensures that planning officers are aware of a proposal at an early stage and can give advice to ensure the appropriateness and quality of any design. See [pre application guidance](#).
- 14.1.9. In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and in this Management Plan. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being 'essential' to the character of the conservation area, and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as 'positive'; buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an

improvement over current circumstances; the redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context. Conservation Area Consent will not normally be granted to demolish buildings in the absence of an approved scheme of redevelopment.

14.1.10. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 states that the conservation area is appropriate for minor residential development as set out in Policy H27 – normally this would be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that it is appropriate within the context of the conservation area and will not harm its special character. It is considered that the scope for new developments within the conservation area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the following considerations in addition to those set out in point 14.1.8.



Historic view of the High Street

14.1.11. New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the conservation area – these include:-

- Red stock bricks
- Ragstone
- White lime render
- Clay plain Kent peg tiles for roofs or tile-hanging
- Painted timber windows
- White or black stained weather boarding
- Black cast metal rainwater goods and pipework

- 14.1.12. In the case of red stock bricks and tiles it will be important for them to be made of Wealden clays or clays of similar geological formation. Any material selected will be required to be demonstrably used widely on nearby buildings.
- 14.1.13. Buildings should respect the predominant scale, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 2 storeys in height (although attic accommodation may be acceptable).
- 14.1.14. Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, whether or not they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. All trees within the conservation area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size.
- 14.1.15. The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the conservation area.
- 14.1.16. In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:-
- 14.1.17. Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).
- 14.1.18. Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale and design. No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Depending on circumstances, dormers should either be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof or, in the case of smaller or shallower roofs, a flat lead roof above a traditionally-detailed cornice. They should not appear crowded together or be located too close to hip or gable lines. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.
- 14.1.19. Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same provisos as dormers in relation to numbers, position and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used.
- 14.1.20. Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- 14.1.21. Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be Ragstone walls, hedging, low brick walls or metal railings. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.



Lees Road looking east

14.2. Enforcement Strategy

- 14.2.1. Unauthorised development may seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area as well as causing other problems. The Council is therefore fully committed to using its powers under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to serve enforcement notices, where expedient, to allay breaches of planning control. [Section 9](#) of the Act sets out the relevant offences. Parallel powers to serve listed building enforcement notices regarding unauthorised works to listed buildings also exist by virtue of Section 38 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and these too will be used to their full. In suitable cases the Council may also exercise the legal provision to seek a prosecution for unauthorised works to a listed building or the unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building.

15. ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

15.1. Buildings in Disrepair

- 15.1.1. This is currently not a significant issue in the Yalding Conservation Area. However, there are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to significantly adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area or to endanger the future of a listed building. These powers are:
- 15.1.2. Urgent Works Notices (Section 54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such notices can be served in respect of any vacant building or, with the prior approval of the Secretary of State, a vacant unlisted building whose preservation is considered important to the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Works specified can only be the minimum necessary to make the building wind and weathertight and are thus essentially temporary in nature. The owner must be given at least seven day's notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

- 15.1.3. Listed Building Repairs Notices (Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These can only be served in respect of listed buildings. Full and permanent repairs can be specified. If an owner fails to commence work on the specified works within 2 months of the service of a Repairs Notice, the Council may start compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to the building; no other recourse is made available by the legislation.
- 15.1.4. 'Untidy Site' Notices (Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such a notice can be served in respect of any land (including a building) which the Council considers to adversely affect the amenity of the surroundings. The necessary steps to remedy the condition of the land and building need to be set out in the Notice and at least 28 days given for compliance. Failure to comply is deemed an offence and is punishable by a fine.

15.2. Trees

- 15.2.1. Trees are identified as important contributors to the character of the Conservation Area. All trees in a Conservation Area with a stem diameter generally above 75mm at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and six weeks formal prior notice to the Council is required for any proposal to cut down or carry out other work to such trees (a Section 211 Notice). Anyone who carries out unauthorised work to protected trees is likely to be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine. There may also be a duty to plant a replacement tree of appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as can reasonably be done. This duty may also apply if the tree has been removed because it was dead or dangerous.

15.3. Traffic Management

- 15.3.1. The impact of traffic within the conservation area is a critical factor. The build up of traffic elsewhere in the locality results in drivers seeking out alternative routes including through the heart of Yalding. There are at times build ups of traffic crossing Town Bridge which causes delay and disruption to local people including pupils trying to get to school. This is not an issue which can be solved locally but needs a strategic view of traffic over a wide area
- 15.3.2. Parking is generally not a serious problem in any part of the conservation area but there are times where some restriction would allow local residents to park

15.4. Reinstatement of Original Features

- 15.4.1. There are examples, though thankfully not too many in the conservation area of damage caused to the character of the conservation area caused by injudicious alterations to properties. Such alterations include re-roofing in inappropriate materials; replacement windows and doors of inappropriate design or materials and discordant surface finishes. The Council would like to see a process of reversal where this has happened though. This can only be by persuasion as there are no provisions to enforce reinstatement where the alterations are covered by permitted development. Nevertheless the Council will

encourage property owners to reinstate traditional forms and materials as part of ongoing maintenance.

15.5. Public Realm Improvements

15.5.1. Higher quality and more consistent street furniture to Lees Road area

15.5.2. Adjustments to street furniture in High Street/Vicarage Road

15.5.3. Parking restrictions in the High Street

15.5.4. Removal of double yellow lines to Town bridge

15.5.5. Removal of wheelie bins from Town bridge

15.5.6. Removal of overhead cables to Benover/Lees Road

15.5.7. A more positive use for the marginal areas of the High Street

15.5.8. Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings

15.5.9. Renovate existing area of Ragstone paving and reinstate lost areas

15.6. Article 4 Directions

15.6.1. The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions to withdraw permitted development rights. The individual permitted development rights which can be removed are limited to specific classes of development. Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is given in Department of the Environment Circular 9/95, which states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where firm evidence exists that damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area is likely to take place or is already taking place because of the exercise of such rights. The additional level of control that an Article 4 direction would bring to the Yalding conservation area is minimal as non residential building have very limited permitted development rights and most of the residential buildings are in any case listed and therefore subject to more stringent controls.

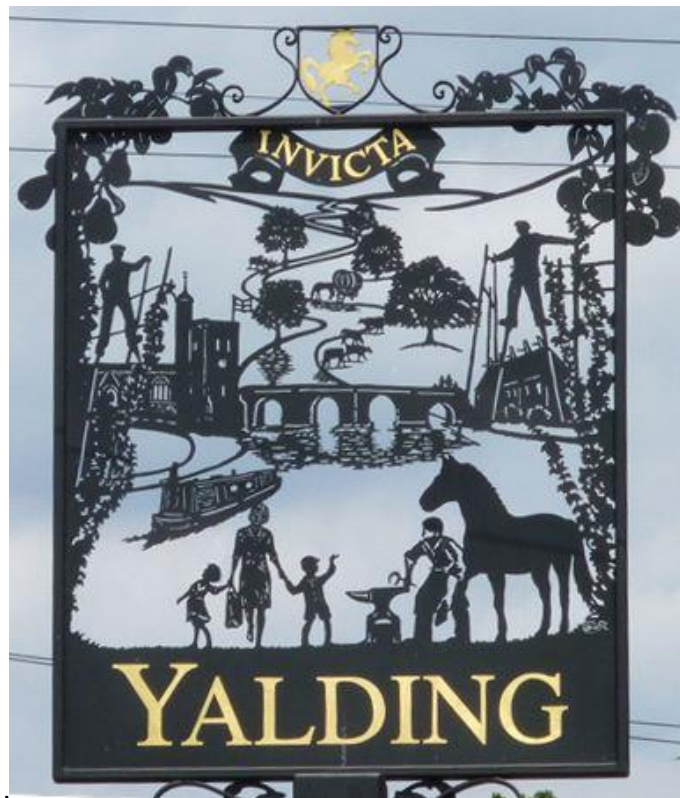
15.6.2. There are currently no Article 4 Directions in place in Yalding

16. REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES

16.1.1. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed after an appropriate period of not less than five years and any required amendments will be incorporated.

17. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Street Furniture	<p>Improve quality and consistency in Lees Road Area</p> <p>Carry out minor modifications to High St</p> <p>Remove wheelie bins from Town bridge</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p> <p>KCC Highways</p>
Traffic	<p>Parking restrictions to High Street</p> <p>Reduce traffic on Town Bridge</p> <p>Remove yellow lines from bridge</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p> <p>KCC Highways</p>
Wirescape	<p>Redirect overhead cables particularly at junction of Benover Road and Lees Road</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p> <p>Utility Companies</p>
High Street landscaping	<p>Address quality of highway margins</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p> <p>KCC Highways</p>
Inappropriate modifications	<p>Take steps to encourage reversal of inappropriate modifications carried out to buildings and frontages</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p>
Ragstone Footpaths	<p>Renovate existing and reinstate key areas of Ragstone paving</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p>
Flooding mitigation	<p>Seek long term strategic solution to protect the conservation area from flooding</p>	<p>The Environment Agency</p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Yalding Parish Council</p> <p>KCC Highways</p>



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