

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework



Cranbrook Conservation Area Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted
June 2010

Preface	2
■ Chapter	
1 Introduction	1
2 The Planning Policy Context	3
3 Summary of the Conservation Area's Special Interest	6
4 Location and Landscape Setting	7
5 Historic Development and Archaeology	9
6 Spatial Analysis	13
7 Identity Areas within the Conservation Area	19
8 Building Materials, Textures and Colours: Key Unlisted Buildings: Public Realm	39
9 Conservation Area Boundary Review	45
10 Issues	46
11 Consultations	48
12 Sustainability	50

Preface

This document has been prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in partnership with the Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee, with particular thanks to Peter Allen and John Badcock.

The initial review draft was prepared by The Conservation Studio.

Dedication

To the memory of Brian Hayward, who was the Borough Council's Senior Design & Heritage Officer, and who initiated and implemented the Heritage Plaques referred to at paragraph 1.1 of this document.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Cranbrook Conservation Area substantially coincides with the tightly packed historic 'Town' element in the very large (10,000 acre/4,047 hectares) ancient parish. It was designated in 1972 as a 'distinguished' conservation area and shortly became one of only two Kent conservation areas where a Conservation Area Advisory Committee was set up, as then encouraged by central government, to give advice to the Local Planning Authority upon development and other issues. The Committee is one element in a very active local community with a vigorous Parish Council. The strong awareness of local heritage is reflected in voluntary work, which includes running the town's own museum, operating its famous windmill and publishing annually a 'Cranbrook Journal' devoted to local history. The Heritage Plaques on key buildings also reinforce the town's sense of history.

1.2 The initial Appraisal of the Conservation Area, involving full consultation with local groups, was published in 1997. Then, and subsequently, minor adjustments have been made to the Conservation Area boundaries. The present updating is designed to correspond with principles published by English Heritage in 2006.

1.3 The Conservation Area in effect comprises the heart of the parish, outlying parts of which include Sissinghurst and Hartley. At the end of the 16th century, Cranbrook, as centre of the important Kent broadcloth exporting industry, was one of the county's biggest towns, but its subsequent more modest role was as a small market town, with agriculture, including hop growing, as the principal source of employment until well into the 20th century. Very few Cranbrook people now work in agriculture, but the surviving views of countryside from some parts of the Conservation Area preserve a rural character, alongside the historic density of the 'town' population. The approximate doubling of Cranbrook's population since the second world war has impinged remarkably little upon the Conservation Area itself, as most of the modern housing growth has taken place on what was formerly agricultural land around the town centre. Formerly at the centre of the Cranbrook Rural District Council, Cranbrook retains an element of 'market' or activity focus for surrounding villages, although it has experienced the late 20th century tendency for small towns to lose central and local government outposts to larger centres, with some loss of genuinely local employment.

The Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

1.4 The first conservation areas were designated in England under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and more than 9,500 now exist. Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any "*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*"

1.5 Conservation areas are diverse in size and character, but in general it is the quality and interest of the area that is of importance, rather than the individual buildings within it. Such designation gives the authority greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements in the conservation area. It also brings certain responsibilities, however. Under the terms of the 1990 Act, local authorities have a duty to review the extent of designation from time to time, to designate further areas if appropriate, to bring forward proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas (with public consultation) and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.

1.6 It is not just the local planning authority that has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the residents and business people living and working in the conservation area who are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, which together contribute to the character of the conservation area.

1.7 Designation also raises awareness of an area's special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. Government planning guidance stresses that our built and natural heritage should be valued and protected for their own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that the responsibility for environmental stewardship is shared by everyone.

1.8 New development and change can take place in conservation areas, but designation should ensure that such proposals will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area.

The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal

1.9 The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Cranbrook Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the existing Local Plan, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the Conservation Area.

1.10 Other purposes include undertaking a review of the boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local planning authorities "*from time to time to determine whether any further parts of the area should be designated.*" The Appraisal also highlights particular issues and some of the elements that detract from the appearance or character of the Conservation Area. These provide the basis for potential future actions for improvement.

1.11 In turn, in order to provide a firm basis against which to assess proposals for development, the following key objectives for conservation areas have been established:

- to review the boundaries of the Conservation Area
- to define the key characteristics and features that contribute to its special character or appearance which should be preserved or enhanced, providing a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through planning decisions
- to record those principal elements that detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and to identify opportunities for enhancement, potentially to be delivered through management plans or other initiatives
- to inform key agencies, residents, etc, whose activities impact on the Conservation Area and to maximise the investment by all such stakeholders in the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area to the benefit of their social and economic quality of life
- to promote the public's understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment
- to protect and maintain biodiversity

1.12 This Supplementary Planning Document forms part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework, which is set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. In terms of the consultation process, this document followed the Statement of Community Involvement and its preparation has been subject to the involvement of key stakeholders, as well as a public consultation. This is set out more fully in Chapter 11 of this document.

1.13 This document has been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for development control purposes and will help guide the Council when making decisions about applications for development within, or on the edges of, the Cranbrook Conservation Area. The Appraisal will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the Cranbrook Conservation Area, such as the County and Borough Councils, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council, Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee and local businesses and householders.

Chapter 2 The Planning Policy Context

National Guidance

2.1 Government advice on the control of conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in [Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment](#) (PPS 5) (2010). Further advice about conservation area control, including the production of management proposals, has been produced by English Heritage in 2006 (www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications).

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan and Core Strategy DPD

2.2 There are two development management policies in the current [Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan](#) 2006 that relate to conservation areas in general: Policies EN4 and EN5. Further policies about the control of development within Cranbrook can also be found in the adopted Local Plan, principally Policy EN1.

2.3 Policy EN4 seeks to control the demolition of buildings within conservation areas.

Policy EN4

Development involving proposals for the total or partial demolition of unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character of a conservation area will not be permitted unless an overriding case can be made out against all of the following criteria:

- 1. The condition of the building, and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use;**
- 2. The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, including efforts to find compatible alternative uses;**
- 3. The merits of alternative proposals for the site, and whether there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment; and**
- 4. Whether redevelopment will produce substantial planning benefits for the community, including economic regeneration or environmental enhancement.**

2.4 Policy EN5 sets out criteria for determining whether a development is appropriate within a conservation area.

Policy EN5

Proposals for development within, or affecting the character of, a conservation area will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces and vegetation which combine to form the character and appearance of the area;
2. The siting of the development would be similar to adjoining building frontage lines where this is important to the character of the conservation area;
3. The layout and arrangement of the building(s) would follow the pattern of existing development and spacing of adjoining plot widths where this is important to the character of the conservation area;
4. The scale, massing, use of materials, detailing, boundary treatment and landscaping would preserve or enhance the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;
5. The use, or intensity of use, would be in sympathy with the character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;
6. The proposal would not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; and
7. In meeting the parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.

2.5 The adopted [Core Strategy](#) Development Plan Document, at Core Policy 4, states that "*The Borough's heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites and Historic Parks and Gardens will be conserved and enhanced and positive regard will be had to their settings.*"

2.6 The detailed character appraisal contained in this document will assist in the interpretation of these policies.

Other Local Plan Policies

2.7 There are a number of other general and specific policies in the Local Plan that are relevant to the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Specific policy designations are set out in detail in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and the Proposals Map. They can be accessed via the Local Plan link on the Borough Council's website at <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk>. They can be summarised as follows:

- EN1 Design and other Development Control Criteria
- EN6 Shopfronts
- EN8 Outdoor Lighting
- EN10 Sites of Archaeological Interest
- EN21 Areas of Important Open Space
- EN22 Areas of Landscape Importance
- EN23 Important Landscape Approaches
- EN25 Rural Landscape Protection
- CR10 Comprehensive Development of land at Stone Street/High Street

- CR11 Cranbrook Primary Shopping Area
- R1 Retention of existing recreation open space
- TP25 Retention of public car parks in Cranbrook

Chapter 3 Summary of the Conservation Area's Special Interest

3.1 The distinctive features of the Cranbrook Conservation Area include the following:

- its rural setting, retaining many views of countryside, large gardens and other important green spaces within, and contiguous to, the Conservation Area
- the high concentration and good state of preservation of buildings of historic or architectural interest, including many relating to Cranbrook's cloth industry in the medieval and early modern periods
- the survival of the historic street plan and dense development form, with the commercial core containing many premises, some of them listed, and with relatively few damaging alterations
- the juxtaposition of varied building forms, including prominent use of local materials and vernacular styles from every post-medieval century
- the historic roofscape of steeply pitched Kent peg tiled roofs of the two- or three-storey buildings, largely uninterrupted by modern materials and features
- well preserved front gardens and forecourts that complement their buildings, usually bounded by simple, unassuming treatments such as picket fencing or delicate railings
- well-defined areas of early and late 19th century urban expansion using national styles
- landmark features, which include the prominence and grace of the huge early 19th century Union Mill and the mass and group value of the central Cranbrook School buildings
- the historic and visual significance of the large grade I listed parish church, substantially unchanged since the 16th century, and its churchyard setting
- preserved buildings related to the historic agricultural economy
- minimal unsympathetic modern development visible from within the Conservation Area

3.2 All these are combined with everyday vitality, as the town centre retains a remarkably high number of small shops and offices in addition to its supermarket, as well as pubs, cafes and restaurants, Parish and Borough services at the Weald Information Centre, a large secondary school and primary school, library, medical services, active churches and museum. Most of these are within, and the remainder close to, the Conservation Area. High numbers of people employed within the Conservation Area include many who commute to Cranbrook daily.

Chapter 4 Location and Landscape Setting

4.1 Cranbrook lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at distances from 15 to just over 20 miles from the four larger towns of Tunbridge Wells (approximately west), Maidstone (north), Ashford (east) and Hastings (south). Larger in the past than at least two of these, it has historically been a cloth industrial centre, as well as a market for the villages surrounding it. Agriculture was, until well into the 20th century, the region's main source of employment and income; today fruit acreage is less, and hop acreage much less, than in the past, but mixed agriculture, together with horticulture and game rearing, continue to characterise this part of the AONB. There is still much of the woodland that gave the Weald its name, including Angley Woods within the western part of Cranbrook itself and the large coniferous plantation of Hemsted to the east.

4.2 Although its rural setting forms so important an element of its character, the Conservation Area's heart is essentially a very compact urban development, huddled along what was formerly the single King's High Road, but is now separately named as High Street, Stone Street and Waterloo Road. This runs from south-west to north-east, with a big loop at the town centre, and includes the main part of the Conservation Area. The remaining parts are two small branches at either end of Stone Street, one leading to the old Horse Pond and the present Museum, the other extending past the great windmill on the road towards Tenterden.

4.3 Although traffic is heavy in the Conservation Area, the main north-south flow along the A229 from Maidstone to Hastings lies to its west, bypassing central Cranbrook.

4.4 The meandering Crane stream, flowing mainly in the south-west to north-east direction, is one of several small waterways that were of much economic importance at the time of Cranbrook's great cloth industry. Although the raised pavements of lower High Street are a reminder of days when water cascaded down it, the streams today make little other visual impact upon the Conservation Area. The dip at St David's Bridge, however, marks the location of an earlier ford and the culvert of the Crane itself, which subsequently flows through Sissinghurst and thence into the river Beult. A section of the Crane lying quite close to the Conservation Area, south of the supermarket, is a Local Nature Reserve, recognised as such under Policy EN14 of the Borough's 2006 Local Plan, and managed by the High Weald Partnership on behalf of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council.

4.5 Cranbrook lies within the area of Lower Cretaceous geological deposits that form the Hastings Beds and comprise sedimentary sand and clay deposits. Although the big St Dunstan's Church (the so-called 'Cathedral of the Weald') is built of Wealden sandstone, the town itself historically had few sources of building stone, as is reflected in the choice of building materials. Naturally enough in the Weald, the main tradition has been one of timber-framed building, ideally in oak, as may be seen in so many surviving older buildings within the Conservation Area, many of them weather-boarded also with local wood. Local red brick, in addition to clay for tiling, has also been much used.

4.6 Being within the High Weald AONB confers national importance on the landscape. The town itself, with its local natural mellow colours, weathered materials and dense vegetation, nestles harmoniously within its landscape setting. Wedges of countryside penetrate right into the town, particularly along the Crane valley.

4.7 The undulating topography, dense belts of trees and general low building height ensure that the town is generally hidden from view, with occasional glimpses of the key landmarks: St Dunstan's church tower, Union Mill and the cupola on Cranbrook School.

4.8 Within and abutting the Conservation Area, belts of trees and shrubs contribute greatly to its character and provide an important visual separation from more recent developments. These belts of vegetation include a high proportion of evergreen species, including holly, yew, pine, sequoia, holm oak and Lawson cypress, which give the town an exceptionally green appearance, even in winter.



Figure 1 Aerial view of Cranbrook (n.b. with original Conservation Area boundary)

Chapter 5 Historic Development and Archaeology

Before the 14th century

5.1 Cranbrook lies within the ancient Weald, or forest, which stretched some 120 miles from East Kent to today's Hampshire. When the Romans first came, north and east Kent had an advanced culture, observed as such by Caesar, but Wealden Kent remained very sparsely populated and difficult of access then and for centuries subsequently. There is evidence of prehistoric man in what is today's Cranbrook, but the few findings are not associated with the Conservation Area.

5.2 The quest for iron was a major reason for the successful Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD, and it was for the transportation of iron, as well as other heavy goods, that a south-north Roman road was built running through the eastern part of modern Cranbrook from the Hastings area towards Rochester and London, to which was added a branch going eastward in the direction of today's Ashford and Canterbury. Within Cranbrook, close to the south-north road, a substantial Roman iron-working establishment, using the Wealden ores, was at its height in the 2nd century AD.

5.3 No other clear evidence of permanent occupation and cultivation within Cranbrook itself has yet been identified during the Roman period, but there is no doubt that drove ways into the forest from north and east had long been established and that a number of them converged upon Cranbrook. In the post-Roman period when, for three centuries, Jutish monarchs ruled the independent Kingdom of Kent, numerous 'dens', or clearings, along the routes used by the drovers who brought in their pigs for autumn acorns and beech mast, formed the basis for subsequent settlement. One of them was the den of which the name 'Cranbroca' survives in a document of the 11th century. The name is thought to refer to crane and brook. The den almost certainly was where the church (probably built in the 11th century) stands. Together with numerous other nearby dens, under the ownership of various manors, it became the nucleus of the developing community of Cranbrook, which, although not mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book, was by 1290 already a sufficiently urbanised trading community for a market to be established, under the licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Cranbrook's broadcloth industry

5.4 The most remarkable period of Cranbrook's history, when the area was transformed from one of the poorest parts of Kent into one of the richest, runs from the early 14th to early 17th century. Edward III (1327-1377) promoted the efficient production of exportable cloth by encouraging the immigration of skilled foreign workers, as well as by prohibiting the export of wool. Cranbrook, with no regulated manorial field system and a wood-pasture economy giving adult and child labour some freedom and time, was particularly well able to respond. A major exporting broadcloth industry, centred on Cranbrook, brought prosperity and growth of a population that had reached around 3,000 at the beginning of the 17th century.

5.5 Within the Conservation Area, the growth is clearly reflected in the successive 15th and 16th century enlargements to St Dunstan's Church, largely thanks to financial and materials contributions by affluent clothiers. The little Church House building facing it was originally a charity school founded by a Tudor clothier benefactor. The Conservation Area's many other surviving secular buildings of the period include cloth halls, in either residential or commercial use today, hall houses and cottages. Cloth halls and hall houses were generally built with their long sides facing the street, while the cottages are generally located in narrow, elongated plots. The quite numerous inns included the pre-Tudor George and the White Lion. Adjacent to the market, shops grew in number and by the early 17th century a few of the more prosperous shopkeepers came near to matching clothiers as leading citizens and office-holders in the town.

The pre-1850 market town

5.6 The collapse of the broadcloth industry in the second half of the 17th century was accompanied by poverty, population fall and reversion to a small, largely self-sufficient rural market town. The present Conservation Area contains few buildings of the late 17th or early 18th century. When agricultural prosperity returned, particularly during the Napoleonic wars when imported corn was unavailable, more building recommenced, including that of the Calvinist Providence Chapel in 1803 and the General Baptist Chapel, now the Cramp Institute Club, in 1807. Like the slightly earlier Particular Baptist Chapel on the Hill, they indicate the strength of the nonconformist Protestant churches in Cranbrook throughout both the 18th and 19th centuries. Cranbrook had always lacked gentry families of sufficient dominance to induce most people to support Church and King; the robust nonconformists may be seen as the heirs of earlier Cranbrook Puritans and Roundheads.

5.7 Towards the end of the agricultural boom of the Napoleonic wars, the great smock mill was built, shortly to be followed by severe depression and bankruptcies, including that of the family who built it. Up to and including the 'hungry forties', there was little new building, although the work of the resident architect, Thomas Dearn, included both the elegant Waterloo Terrace (in Waterloo Road) and five distinctive houses, one of which is now 'Dearn Villa', on the south side of High Street, as the historic centre edged uphill.



Figure 2 Extract from Andrews, Dury & Herbert map, 1769

Since 1850

5.8 Rising prosperity and a new civic energy combined to enable construction of town centre buildings, including the surviving Vestry Hall, Congregational Church and police house (now Spring Cottage) in the 1850s. Perhaps surprisingly, little significant further construction took place until the 1880s, when agriculture's best years had passed forever. Late 19th century Cranbrook, with Anglicanism and conformity in the ascendant while nonconformity gradually lost ground, was socially dominated by the genteel and the unthreateningly artistic. Thomas Webster and Frederick Hardy were the ablest of the nationally famed 'Cranbrook Colony' of genre painters; specialising in innocent rural scenes, many of them with Cranbrook cottage interiors, they are associated with houses including the Old Studio and Webster House in High Street. Both men were school governors at the old Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School (now 'Cranbrook School'), its boarding size expanded to an extraordinary extent by the charismatic Dr Charles Crowden, headmaster from 1866 to 1888, responsible for the two dominant late Victorian school buildings of School Lodge and Big School in lower Waterloo Road. The school's size fell sharply when Crowden left; it required very little new building construction for many decades thereafter.

5.9 Crowden's fine Big School was an early work of T G Jackson, one of several able architects, including Norman Shaw, who worked in Cranbrook during this period. Designer of a number of buildings within the Conservation Area was Shaw's pupil, W W Neve, whose work included School Lodge and the block of four houses comprising West Terrace in upper High Street. The present Raffles Restaurant was designed in 1879 by Neve as a coffee tavern to promote temperance among working men.

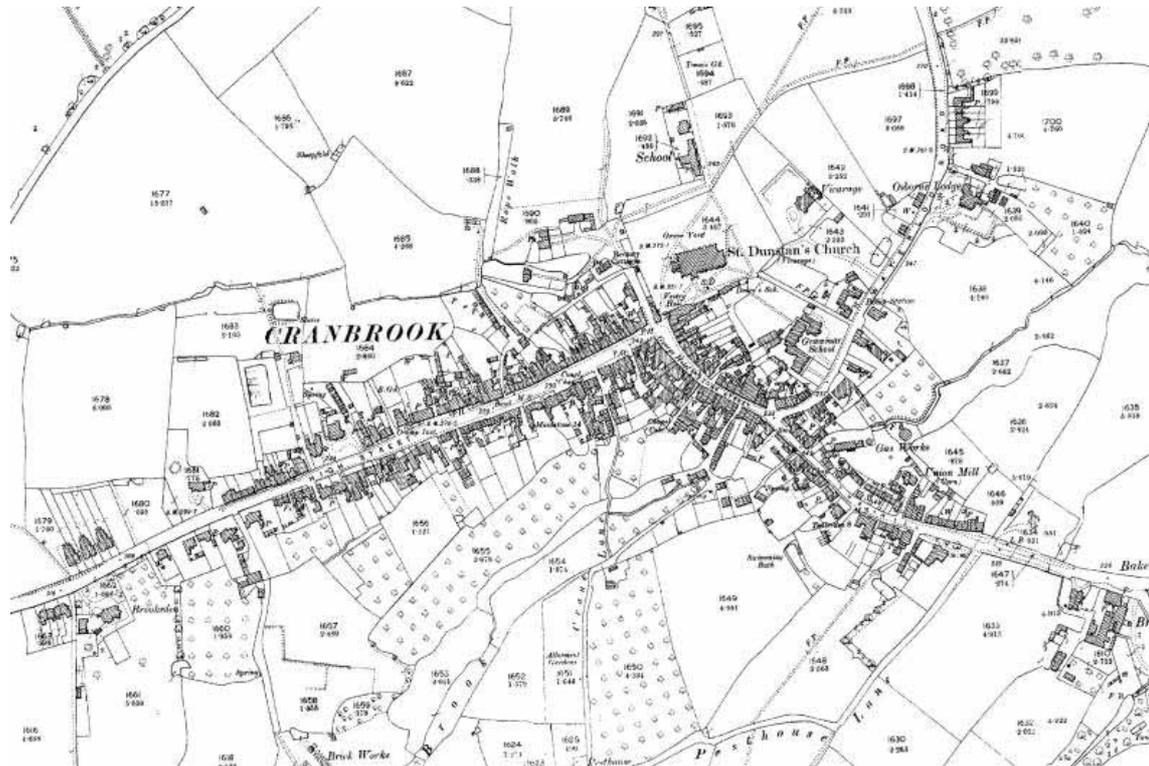


Figure 3 Ordnance Survey map, 1898

5.10 In the early years of the 20th century there was no real recovery from agricultural depression. Cranbrook's population, which remained more or less stable over a long period from early 19th to mid-20th century, actually fell slightly as agricultural employment declined. The limited amount of building in this period included further extension at the upper end of High Street, where the block of eight Victorian villas was erected on the north side.

5.11 More substantial change took place in the 1950s and early 1960s, when historic properties, including both inns and cottages, were demolished and the Conservation Area's least distinguished buildings at the lower end of High Street's south side were erected. In Stone Street, the demolition of property still leaves a large gap in the frontage, used for many years as a garage forecourt.

5.12 A much more caring attitude to conservation dates approximately from the early 1970s, when the Conservation Area was designated as such, the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council largely replaced the Kent County Council as Local Planning Authority, and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee was created. Since that time, there has been limited development within the Conservation Area, including some increase of shops in Carriers Road and of offices behind High Street's north side and the replacement of an industrial building by housing adjacent to the windmill. While Cranbrook's population and housing stock have much increased, the expansion has mostly been outside the Conservation Area with no direct impact upon it other than contributing to vitality and trade in the town and adding to the traffic. Cranbrook's partial solution to the problem of vehicle parking has been the creation of a large free car park, abutting the Conservation Area but detracting from the rurality of views south and east from High Street. The car park is adjacent to Cranbrook's supermarket, built in 1988, and currently owned and recently expanded by the Cooperative Group. The location of the supermarket itself, while convenient for shoppers, is such that it stands just outside the Conservation Area and does not directly impinge upon it.

5.13 In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Cranbrook's many attractions, including its rural setting and educational establishments, have made it so desirable a location that private house prices have been very high. Paradoxically, Cranbrook has, at the same time, been one of the poorest parts of the

Tunbridge Wells Borough, with a high proportion of social housing and generally rather low incomes obtained from local employment. The town provides employment not only for many of its own residents, but also for many relatively local commuters.

Archaeology

5.14 Archaeology, which includes standing remains and built structures, as well as buried deposits, can add another layer of understanding to the evolution and present day significance of the settlement. Every building in the Conservation Area potentially contains information about how the building came to its present form, although this might be hidden below layers of later alterations and additions. Any activity that disturbs these layers may therefore provide an opportunity for new information, research, interpretation and education. Before granting permission for further changes, however, and as set out in PPS 5, Policy HE6, the Borough Council will expect an applicant to provide an appropriate 'Archaeological Evaluation' of the building to help the Council reach an informed decision about the proposals.

5.15 The consistent presence of the building line and roads, which form the core of Cranbrook, will have prevented the build up of sub-surface archaeological deposits over the past three to four centuries. Past activity is often preserved in retained structures, particularly cellars and foundations. To the rear of these, however, where there has not been a significant impact from subsequent development, there may be good potential for the presence of sub-surface remains of ancillary buildings and structures relating to the main buildings and dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods. These would be of interest in illuminating the economic history of the town and this part of the Weald by providing evidence of the agricultural and craft activities undertaken.

5.16 The local historic environment record (HER) is held by Kent County Council and includes a record of finds and past archaeological investigations. For Cranbrook, the entries include all of the statutory listed buildings. Cranbrook has been the subject of a study under the Kent Historic Towns Survey, which evaluated the existing archaeological, topographical and historic evidence as a basis for informing decision making in the planning process. The final Archaeological Assessment Document was published in December 2004 and is available on the Borough Council's web site or through Kent County Council.

Chapter 6 Spatial Analysis

Townscape

6.1 Much of the distinctiveness of Cranbrook's Conservation Area derives from its rich townscape character, as well as the intrinsic architectural and historic value of its individual buildings. The range of building frontages comprise an eclectic mixture of styles, ages and materials, reflecting the town's rich architectural history. Whether or not this Appraisal highlights the particular qualities of each building, each must be analysed and understood in the context of its particular location. Such analysis should form part of any Design and Access Statement accompanying an application.



A mixture of styles

6.2 The plan form of Cranbrook can be described as a cranked linear row, with the church and churchyard at the angle, set back from the main thoroughfare and occupying a more elevated position. The historic part of the town is mainly on the northern slope of the Crane valley, running roughly parallel to it along High Street, Stone Street and Waterloo Road. St David's Bridge is a continuation from Stone Street across the valley to Baker's Cross in the south-east.

6.3 The original town was developed to a single depth on narrow and deep plots. There is therefore a tight grain and density to the central area, particularly Stone Street and lower High Street. This higher density within the central core is reinforced by the tightness to the street of many of the buildings, at the back edge of sometimes narrow pavements. Most are in commercial use, many with sympathetic shopfronts. High Street's raised footway helps to establish its significance in the hierarchy of spaces.

6.4 The Conservation Area essentially covers the urban core that existed up to the early 20th century before lower density developments of suburban character began to appear. Centrally, residential properties usually have shallow front gardens with picket fencing, railings or paved forecourts. The outer Identity Areas, such as Waterloo Road and upper High Street, are more open grain, with larger front gardens.

6.5 A key characteristic of the centre is the network of alleyways, with almost no dead ends, which add significantly to its character and permeability, as well as to the accessibility of each part. They also allow further views of the rear elevations and sides of buildings, as well as glimpses of what lies beyond.



Off Stone Street



Chittenden Alley

6.6 While very many of the buildings contribute positively to the Conservation Area's character, the concentration of listed ones is particularly high. Several of these, such as Vestry Hall, terminating the long vista down High Street, Church Gates, closing the view from Stone Street, and Hill House, a focal point at the outside of the curve on The Hill, have particular townscape quality.

6.7 In some parts of the Conservation Area, trees have major landscape importance. They include those at the south end of Baker's Cross, firmly asserting rural character, the limes of Waterloo Road and round the churchyard, and the several trees in front of the former council offices and fire station, which mitigate the potentially unsympathetic impact of these large modern buildings.



Waterloo Road limes



Fire Station

6.8 Numerous valuable surviving spaces within the Conservation Area, of which the churchyard is the biggest, are described in the separate analyses (Chapter 7) of the six Identity Areas. Many of these contribute strongly to a surviving feeling of rurality and provide a reminder of the agricultural livelihood on which most inhabitants depended, even in the town's industrial age. Modern demands and developments have, however, caused loss of some of the open space, which has been made still more precious by the increase of traffic and parked vehicles.

Approaches

6.9 The Baker's Cross entry to the Conservation Area is between houses well set back on either side of the road. On the left, Rammell playing field provides a large open green space until, at the Frythe Way junction, a wide pathway north alongside Scott House offers a different view of playing fields and countryside. Thereafter, the road funnels and begins to fall steeply, imparting a more definite sense of arrival.



Rammell Field

6.10 From the north, the downhill approach to the Conservation Area via Waterloo Road retains much rural character, with mature parkland to the left and playing fields to the right. After entry to the Conservation Area, there is a fine view of the tree-lined Crane valley across the large green sports pitch to the left. On the right, valuable green wedges remain, designated as an Important Open Space, with views beyond, between school buildings.

6.11 On entering the town from the south-west, down High Street's gentle gradient, trees, shrubs and ample gardens frame the view, while frequent glimpses of wooded open country to the south sustain the rural ambience. This is enhanced by generous spacing (and sensitive planting) in front of the former council offices and the fire station, and the wide gaps between the Regency-style houses opposite, as the road narrows. The density of development increases, creating a series of thresholds towards the centre.



The Hill



Entry from north



Crane valley



Entry from south-west

Spaces

6.12 Throughout the Conservation Area, the street-scene is punctuated by key spaces, of which the most important, at the very centre, is that in front of Church Gates. A marking in the road indicates the location of the market building, which stood there from 1812 to 1863. Surrounded and dominated now by important tall buildings, this junction between High Street and Stone Street still gives some sense of the town's market centre. High Street's grandeur owes a good deal to its width, but Stone Street, by contrast, quickly narrows as it leaves the junction and its buildings crowd in on the thoroughfare. A sense of space, however, and of the unexpected, is created by the alleys and passageways leading away north and south.



Former market space



Stone Street east



Three roads' junction, St David's Bridge

6.13 The unpretentious Carriers Lane leads to one of the Conservation Area's most striking open spaces, at the end of the pathway leading to the Museum. Here the carefully cultivated garden provides a splendid setting for the historic building itself and offers a fine view over the large Horse Pond, now tree-lined, which was of such importance in the centuries of horse-drawn coaches and other vehicles. Jockey Lane, opposite, on the edge of the Conservation Area, is wide and pleasing, with extensive churchyard views to the right. Despite the cars, there is plenty of space and, at the top, the view ahead is of the Ball Field. Nothing urban is visible in that direction. To the south lies St Dunstan's Church and its churchyard, the latter being the biggest and most significant open space of the Conservation Area. Criss-crossed by paths in constant use by pedestrians entering or leaving town and school, it provides ample green space with handsome trees, to wander through or to sit down in with views of the church.



Horse Pond



View to Ball Field



Churchyard

Key views, vistas and landmarks

6.14 Many of the spaces and gaps so far identified make an indispensable contribution to significant views and vistas within the Conservation Area, and of the landscape beyond. The varied topography allows views across the town and out across the valley to the south and beyond. The roofscape, too, punctuated by chimneys, is an important characteristic feature when viewed, for example, down the High Street from the west and from the Frythe Estate across the valley. Of importance also to Cranbrook are the views of the rears of properties. These often exhibit a cascading roofscape, with a diminishing scale stepping down from the main front building to rear wings and eventually to various outbuildings located further to the rear.



The Smock Mill



Big School Cupola

6.15 On the wider scale, three key landmarks dominate views, especially those from considerable distance outside the Conservation Area. These are the great windmill, the tower of St Dunstan's Church and the cupola on top of the Big School building of Cranbrook School. They help to provide orientation, and one or more of them features in most of the views outlined in this section.



St Dunstan's Church

6.16 Sequential and unfolding views are part of the rich townscape features that are a consequence of the curving streets, the changes in level and the alleyways. There are several viewpoints on the Conservation Area thoroughfares that highlight distinctive, and sometimes unexpected, aspects of the town. The elongated curve on the main south-west/north-east axis, the right angle at the junction of High Street with Stone Street, the sharp dip down to the stream at the Tanyard and several alleyways and passages all contribute to the rich variety of views and unfolding vistas, of which the following are most noteworthy:



Lower Waterloo Road

- a. down Waterloo Road (from the north), including the school buildings, the mature trees lining the Crane and glimpses of the mill
- b. from the pavement in front of the school, through the gaps either side of Neve's School Lodge to a striking mill view
- c. from the crest of The Hill, steeply down towards Stone Street, with Big School and School Lodge prominent to the north
- d. from the Tanyard, east to The Hill, with terraced cottages and presiding mill, and northwest to the looming Stone Street buildings
- e. from Stone Street, east for the classic mill view and north from the George Inn to Church Gates and the climb to St Dunstan's beyond
- f. from the top of Jockey Lane across the Ball Field and down through the churchyard
- g. from the Museum garden, across the Horse Pond, with a glimpse of The Moat
- h. from Rectory Lane, looking south, a striking vista of the jumbled roofs, chimneys and rear elevations of the lower High Street, and the snaking path to Horse Entry
- i. down lower High Street towards Vestry Hall



Lower High Street



A glimpse of countryside

6.17 Other views of the Conservation Area, generally from outside its boundaries, include:

- a. from the diagonal path across the Ball Field, heading south, although the view is compromised in winter by the bulk and colour of the school's Sports Hall

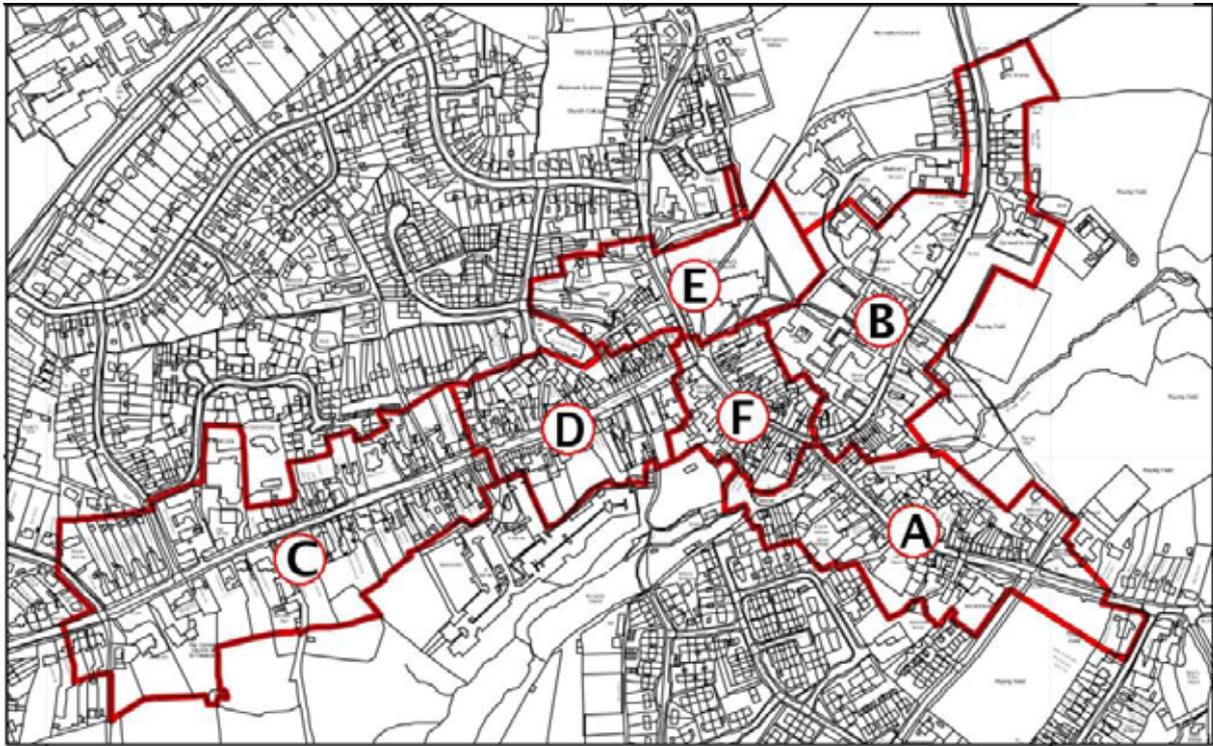
- b. from Brookside and Brickenden Road in the Frythe Estate, looking north-east towards the gardens and fine trees at the rear of Lloyds Bank and Bell House in the lower High Street
- c. from the upper levels of the main car park, where the three landmark buildings dominate the sky-line

Chapter 7 Identity Areas within the Conservation Area

7.1 The Conservation Area's distinctive historic and architectural elements have already been described in Chapter 3 and its everyday vitality and special features outlined. To a greater or lesser extent, these can all be found throughout the Conservation Area, but to place each in its specific context, this Appraisal has identified six special 'Identity Areas':

- Identity Area A - Baker's Cross, The Hill and St David's Bridge
- Identity Area B - Waterloo Road and Cranbrook School
- Identity Area C - Upper High Street
- Identity Area D - Lower High Street
- Identity Area E - Carriers Road, Jockey Lane and St Dunstan's Church
- Identity Area F - Stone Street

7.2 For each Identity Area, in addition to a general description and appraisal, reference will be made to particular 'detractors' and causes for concern. Some of the most important of these will be further addressed in Chapter 10: Issues.



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Figure 4 Cranbrook Identity Areas

Identity Area A: Baker's Cross, The Hill and St David's Bridge

7.3 With its wealth of listed buildings of various periods, including cottages listed for their major group value, the principal characteristics of this Identity Area of the Conservation Area are its unplanned heterogeneity, enduring rurality and evidence of different building styles over time.

7.4 The entry from the east to the Conservation Area is, at first, quite rural in character. Discreetly tucked behind significant trees and just outside the Conservation Area, is the cluster of the old Brewery buildings between Tilsden Lane and Dorothy Avenue. Their intrinsic interest is recognised by the 18th century Bakers Cross House being listed. Although early or middle 20th century houses on the north side of Baker's Cross immediately suggest entry to the town, a rural feeling is retained by the designated Important Open Space of Rammell Field on the south side and, facing it, the hedges and trees of Shrewsbury Cottage and Scott House, behind a village-like green verge which is designated as an Area of Landscape Importance. Although these two buildings are undistinguished in comparison with the listed Little Baker's Cross and Sheafe House on the other side of the road, their gardens make a valuable contribution to the Conservation Area.



'Area of Important Open Space'

7.5 When Frythe Way and the uncompromising brick east wing of Rammell House are reached, there is suddenly much more of a sense of urban enclosure as The Hill narrows and descends as far as the former Crane ford, before the final climb to the junction with Stone Street and Waterloo Road. Here, almost all of the many buildings, diverse in period, style and size, contribute positively to a road of striking character and beauty. The most numerous are the surviving cottages, including those with hung tiles over ground floor brick in Tippens Close (next to Rammell House), the row facing Rammell House, and Jenner Cottages (behind The Crest). Further down the north side of The Hill, the whole fine group, extending from Borough Cottages to Mill Cottage, is set well back behind mature mixed hedges, which themselves are of great value to the Conservation Area.



Tippens Close

Weatherboarding, generally white, has been used on a minority of the cottages, as well as other buildings, and the white increasingly preponderates towards St David's Bridge, where important contributions include those of Glebe Cottage, the Strict Baptist Chapel, the Old Bakery and Forge House.



Cottages on The Hill



Strict Baptist Chapel

7.6 Most of the elements forming the street-scene adjacent to the former ford make positive contributions. They include the high railed pavement on the south side and the listed properties behind it, Raffles Restaurant and even the Tanyard Car Park; logic might suggest that this should be replaced by buildings, but it in fact provides an acceptable green gap, thanks to the many well-placed trees. No less acceptable is another gap in the frontage created by the neat car park of the Strict Baptist Chapel.



Chapel car park



Tanyard car park

7.7 Between and among the cottages are the larger buildings. Rammell House itself, rebuilt with Arts and Crafts features in the 1880s, is one of three buildings of that period with much in common, the others being the Sunspot Tours offices, formerly occupied by 19th century lawyers, and the sympathetically maintained Raffles Restaurant on St David's Bridge, built as a temperance coffee house. Of other houses, the most distinguished is the former cloth hall of Hill House, while other listed buildings include the majestic Crest House and the trio of The Corner House, Ashleigh and Hundred House with their single hall house origins. Of much less architectural distinction, the sturdy Mill House provides a satisfyingly weighty entrance point to the mill. Even the square, brick-built Spring Cottage, built in the mid-19th century as a police house in style alien to the setting, makes its own contribution of historic interest.



Hill House

7.8 Finally, and above all, the great smock mill (listed Grade 1) splendidly dominates its immediate environment. Its setting has recently been enhanced by the imaginatively designed housing of Russell's Yard immediately to its west, replacing an industrial building.



Smock Mill



Russell's Yard

7.9 Complete buildings that do not enhance the Conservation Area are the unremarkable early or middle 20th century houses at the eastern end of Baker's Cross and the more recently permitted pair east of the mill. More serious detractors are:

- the massive red brick east end of Rammell House
- the ugly front extension that so badly damages the fine Sunspot building
- the high group value of the cottages west of the mill is reduced by the variety of materials, porches and window styles that has been allowed to develop

- the unsympathetic brick wall and close-boarded fence at the corner of Dorothy Avenue are damaging both to the rural aspect of this part of Baker’s Cross and to the setting of the immediately adjacent listed Sheafe House
- the frequent line of parked cars along the frontage of Scott House much detracts from the rurality of that part of Baker’s Cross and the charm of the grass verge in particular
- the poor quality and condition of the railings in front of the Old Bakery

7.10 Enhancements that should be considered include better enclosure and more tree planting along the edges of Rammell Field and especially a planting scheme to soften the impact of the east end of Rammell House.

7.11 Stronger controls might be considered over window, door and porch styles on the non-listed properties (particularly properties listed as of group value). In conjunction with transport authorities, consideration should be given to the prohibition of parking along the frontage of Scott House.

7.12 The derelict gasworks beside St David’s Bridge, although fairly unobtrusive, offers real scope for enhancement and views along the Crane.

Identity Area B: Waterloo Road and Cranbrook School

7.13 In common with many other parts of the Conservation Area, this Identity Area contains a diversity of visual character and building styles. Its northerly section is generally open, with green views between much of its varied architecture, whereas the southern section is more urbanised, with listed and unlisted housing of different styles and period together with the dominant Cranbrook School buildings.

7.14 The attractive downhill entry from the north has the green of Ball Field to the right and the mature parkland of Oak Hill Manor (formerly Great Swifts) to the left. Entry to the Conservation Area coincides approximately with entry to the 20 mph area, with road ‘bumps’ to check speed and normally with parked cars on one side or the other of the road nearly as far as Barham Drive on the right.



Waterloo Terrace

7.15 The group-listed Waterloo Terrace, immediately on the left (east) side upon entry to the Conservation Area, is a well preserved early 19th century terrace of houses of architectural grace and harmony, with consistency of brickwork, fenestration and slate roofing, if slightly marred by the variety of front doors. The brick retaining wall common to each house is an important element in the unity of design, despite some variation in the brickwork, but the condition of this wall in some places is a matter of concern.

7.16 Facing Waterloo Terrace, and below the tall mid-20th century houses that lie just outside the Conservation Area, although the gardens are included, the buildings of Cranbrook School begin with the bland Crowden boarding house, which has Blubery house behind it. Erected in the second half of the 20th century, their mock weatherboarding represents an acceptable attempt to match local vernacular finishes. Immediately past them, a green inlet, with sympathetic tree planting, offers an attractive view into the school campus.



Campus tree planting



Cornwallis House

7.17 On the other (east) side of the road, Crowden House is faced by Cornwallis House and its neat little residential Osborne Cottage. Both contribute positively and, in the case of Cornwallis House, significantly, to the Conservation Area. Seen from Waterloo Road, the comfortable brickwork of mid-19th century Cornwallis House, well back from the road but unhidden thanks to the gardening scheme chosen, has not been seriously marred either by the unattractive outbuildings to be seen behind and to its left, nor by the

inevitable boarding house extension to its rear. The former stables of the house have been sympathetically adapted for academic use. Two fine old cedars survive in the front garden and a no less impressive one not far from the boarding extension.

7.18 Along the Waterloo Road frontage, much of the former large garden of Cornwallis House is used as an all-weather pitch for hockey and other sports, but the first 40 metres in from the roadway remain as garden, with good hedging, well pollarded trees and big azaleas, which can all be appreciated from the roadway. Behind them, the hockey pitch has been reasonably well planned, in light green with black netting and posts, to harmonise with the important views of the tree-lined Crane valley behind it, although a blue edging to the pitch detracts somewhat from the harmony.

7.19 Back on the west side of the road, opposite the long Cornwallis gardens, are the listed Hamilton Cottage and The Spotted Dog, thought to have been a 16th century inn. Below them, The Danes, replacing a much older building, sits well in its location, although of no architectural distinction. The mellowing of its red brick garden front wall and the maturing of its gardening scheme, together with removal of cars from in front of the house should, in the course of time, enable it to make a more positive contribution to the Conservation Area than it does at present.



Hamilton Cottage and The Spotted Dog

7.20 Immediately south of The Danes is a sizeable pond, fronted by an important line of lime trees, with another attractive green view into Cranbrook School, including Barham House and the remarkable tall fir tree adjacent to it. All these elements are of considerable value to the Conservation Area.

7.21 After the pond, Barham Drive, a public right of way, is the entry to the school grounds for school coaches, buses and other vehicles, although further down Waterloo Road the many parental cars still sometimes cause hold-ups to traffic when school days begin and end. Along the left side of Barham Drive, the kitchen, classroom block and gymnasium buildings certainly make no positive contribution to the Conservation Area, but the Gym Lawn on the far side of the gymnasium provides a very welcome remnant of green space in the inevitably built-up central part of the campus. To the right of Barham Drive, the informal garden is another invaluable green space, past which can be seen the imaginatively designed music and drama centre, its roof design echoing the Big School cupola. Barham Drive itself passes the solid and mellow Barham House, the former vicarage, sympathetically extended recently.



Barham House



Green setting for school buildings

7.22 South of Barham Drive is the school’s Queen’s Hall, built in the third quarter of the 20th century as combined theatre/assembly hall and dining hall, on the site of Cranbrook’s Victorian police house; outlines of the police cells have been kept in the rusticated stone retaining wall in front of the dining hall. The low, restrained design of the theatre/assembly hall is pleasing and an imaginative attempt has been made to use its long wall to show sculpture. The fenestration of the dining hall is quite sympathetic to its location. Appropriate planting in front of, and adjacent to, the big building has gone some way to softening its impact on the adjacent environment.



Queen’s Hall planting

7.23 Over on the east side of the road, more private houses come between the school’s many properties. Danemead and Oakmead formerly comprised one large dwelling, apparently mainly of 18th century construction. Although marred by their heavy 19th century bow windows, they contribute positively to the Conservation Area, as do the listed and finely maintained former corn factor’s buildings just below them, the barn at the front, now a private house, and the big granary store behind, used at present as auction rooms. Between Oakmead and these buildings, the rural view characteristic of many such gaps between Cranbrook’s buildings is partially blocked by the fencing and gateway of Waterloo Yard, a large modern house. Continuing down Waterloo Road’s east side, little of weatherboarded Concord can be seen other than its graceful railings, but Blackbirds and Rose Cottage are both attractive in themselves and also pleasingly small-scale in relation to the massive school buildings adjacent to them.



Granary store



Corn factor's barn

7.24 The two dominant Cranbrook School buildings, in Victorian red brick, are Jackson’s fine Big School, capped by its cupola, behind the school yard on the west side of the road, and Neve’s School Lodge, very heavy but with abundant period character and flourishes of design. Big School was originally intended as one of three sides of an incomplete quadrangle; finance for this was insufficient, but the early 20th century wing at right angles to it is a harmonious addition. The chestnut and oak at the front of the intended quadrangle, as well as the garden in which the oak stands, much enhance the view of Big School, while the smaller limes in front of School Lodge soften the front of that building without diminishing its weight.



Big School



School Lodge



School House

7.25 Facing School Lodge, set back and less insisting on attention, is the listed School House, rebuilt on the foundations of the Tudor house bequeathed by the school's founder. Original and replacement buildings have been occupied, and for centuries were taught in, by the Master (now a Head Teacher), since the school's foundation. The early Georgian front, to be seen through a fine gateway within the low brick frontage, is set off well by the long front garden where Victorian schoolboys played.

7.26 Continuing down the east side of Waterloo Road, Waterloo Cottages, in white weatherboarding (regrettably, plastic in part) are in striking contrast to the massive school buildings. At their south end, Mere Cottage is taller but complements them. Through the last of several gaps in the frontage may be glimpsed one more view of the great windmill, before the taller Wellington Cottage and finally Forge House, both white weatherboarded, together with the houses facing them, give the narrow last forty yards of Waterloo Road the closed, urban feeling that the rest of the road lacks.



Waterloo Cottages

7.27 More or less opposite Wellington Cottage and Forge House, white weatherboarded cottages stand either side of the taller, listed (and confusingly named) Waterloo Cottage, with its prominent frontage and steps standing out among its modest neighbours. The cottages below it have, in the past, been shops; those above it are now in the ownership of Cranbrook School. All contribute positively and significantly to the Conservation Area.

7.28 Principal detractors in Identity Area B are the following:

- Cranbrook School's sports hall, seriously marring views across from the Ball Field and badly needing screening
- some of the other 20th century buildings of Cranbrook School, although these are mostly out of sight from viewpoints off the campus itself
- at present, the bold red brick wall in front of The Danes and the neglected frontage between the house and the pond
- the unsympathetic gateway and red brick of Waterloo Yard
- some inappropriate modern windows and plastic weatherboarding on Waterloo Cottages
- the condition of the railings in front of Waterloo Cottages
- Unattractive speed cushions

Identity Area C: Upper High Street

7.29 Entry to Cranbrook from the south-west, the longest and grandest approach to the town centre, starts where the town's war memorial and a distinctive sign mark the junction with the bypass at Angley Road. From here, the long, wide and gracious High Street descends gradually through the Conservation Area, where buildings whose date of construction ranges from the 16th through to the 20th century can

be seen on either side of the road. On the north side at first, large early 20th century houses are glimpsed behind tall, clipped hedgerows, while an increasing sense of green enclosure is created by a well-modelled bank on the south side, with its line of mature trees.

7.30 At the entrance to the Conservation Area, the imposing Arts and Crafts structure of West Terrace provides a moment of drama. Set closer to the road on the south side, with open gardens and few formal boundaries, the properties retain their characteristic detailing and all the original joinery; the crisp white paint against the rich red tiling accentuates their presence in the street-scene. At this point, there is a clear sense of entering both the town and the Conservation Area, as High Street sweeps down into more closely-knit development. To the right, mature trees, shrubs and hedging crowd the front garden of Brooksden and fringe the approach to the Roman Catholic Church, set back from the road. All these, and the well-trimmed hedge and bank of Brooksden Bungalow, help to retain the air of rurality and to frame the view.



West Terrace

7.31 Almost opposite, just beyond the distinctly rustic vegetation and hedging of the unmade New Road, stands a striking group of eight semi-detached late Victorian houses; these vary in specific detailing, but share general characteristics drawn together by the retention of original dormers, ornate bargeboards and fascias, timber sash windows and ornamental brickwork. The natural slate roofs and mellow brick elevations are essential to their character, as are the brick walls and wrought-iron gates at the front boundaries. The laurel hedging and shrubs are also important features, reflecting the formality of the buildings behind.



Late Victorian villas

7.32 Beyond Mark Haven, at the Wheatfield Drive junction, the sense of enclosure created by buildings, landscaping and boundary treatments is briefly interrupted by the former council office site and the adjacent fire station, with its sloping forecourt. Both buildings are set back from the road, partly screened, as is the practice tower, by intelligent planting. The former council offices, however, although rightly applauded in the mid-1960s for their original design, have not worn well; the canopy fell down in the 1980s, leaving odd-looking projecting beams on the High Street façade, the wheelchair ramp unbalances the steps up to the front entrance and the roof has sprouted metal appendages to meet Health and Safety requirements. By contrast, the adjoining BT building, although large, is richly tile-hung and barely visible from the High Street and has weathered well at the end of its winding access road.

7.33 Opposite lies a short run of substantial, detached, Regency-style villas: Cranehurst, Chilworth and Beemans (all listed), with painted render finish and natural slate roofs. Nestling between them, Dearn Villa, of a later date, was probably the work of Thomas Dearn, distinguished artist, architect and surveyor, a Cranbrook resident in the early 19th century and designer and builder of several houses in the area. Glimpses between them to the fields, woods and oast house beyond re-emphasise the wider rural setting.



Cranehurst



Dearn Villa



Chilworth and Beemans

7.34 Between Myrtles and the elegant facade of Little Shepherds, on the north side, High Street's sense of enclosure is restored by a row of cottages (mostly listed) set close to the road, which itself markedly narrows here. The scale, form and detailing of each building varies considerably, but the use of Kent peg tiles, some mathematical tiling, tall chimneys and the general application of white paint, helps to unify this charming, eclectic grouping of buildings. The simple, white-painted picket fences reinforce the theme. Facing the row on the south side, another unmade farm track affords, between its mixed hedging, a view along to the now converted Cornhall farm buildings and the countryside beyond. Just below, Cranbrook Lodge and East Lodge together form an imposing brick building, with limits distinctly defined by boundary walls and railings. As with many properties in this stretch of the High Street, glimpses can be seen of outbuildings behind and beyond – in this case, a coach house, which, although converted to residential use, still demonstrates the original importance of such outbuildings and their relationship to the main residential property. The street-scene at this point is marred by a metal-clad telegraph pole serving the properties on both sides of the street.



Upper High Street cottages



Mathematical tiling, Briar Cottage



The Abbey

7.35 The appearance of Candlemas Cottage, further down, is regrettably compromised by exposed pipe-work on the front elevation, which distracts attention from the unusual course of 'lion-head' bricks directly below the weatherboarding.

7.36 Next door, Farthings, Farndale House and Wilton House form a small group which retains, in its joinery, materials and design detailing, much of its original character, despite the occasional vehicular clutter in the gap between the houses. Below this stands the imposing Abbey (listed), probably a clothier's house in origin, with traditional hipped, tiled roof, hung tiles to the façade and two modern bays.

7.37 Here the road widens, buildings are set further back from the pavement and a sense of space is restored. This change of character adds variety to the Conservation Area and is emphasised by the York stone paving on the north side. For centuries, Shepherds (2* listed 16th century cloth hall), set in a large plot, has presided over this part of the Conservation Area. Its grand 18th century front of mellow brick distinguishes it from other High Street buildings, but the recently planted yew hedge has been allowed to grow so prolifically that the façade is effectively screened from the road, and the street now dominated by the dark growth. The space around Shepherds, and to some extent the adjacent Jersey House and Braeside, contrasts sharply with the close-knit development in the rest of this stretch of the High Street and provides a welcome relief from its intensity.



Jersey House and Braeside



Shepherds



Shepherds in 1990s

7.38 Deacons, on the south side, designed by Dearn in 1842, retains its original joinery, roofing materials and boundary railings. These railings continue in front of the next few properties, where their 18th or 19th century rendered or brick facades and hidden roofs contrast with the strong roof shapes so characteristic of Cranbrook. Webster House's (listed) red brick frontage is particularly prominent here, and the driveway at the side leads to Norman Shaw's spacious extension. By contrast, Old Cottage (listed), tucked between its taller neighbours, has an elevation of exposed close studding unusual in Cranbrook, with strong roof lines and chimney clearly visible. Next door, the undertaker's building (once a wheelwright's shop), thrust forward to the pavement, imposes itself on the street-scene, but glimpses of courtyards, outbuildings, mature garden trees and the wider rural setting beyond continue to show how deeply the countryside penetrates into the centre of the town.

7.39 Opposite, on the north side, stands another neat row of linked, timber-framed cottages (all listed), whose vernacular facades and roof lines, intriguingly dovetailed, contrast with the box-like frontage of Rangers, which abuts the pavement.

7.40 Looking back to High Street from Causton Road, which leads away north-west past mature hedging to modern housing, the Old Studio (a listed former cloth hall) is an important focal point. As a building of great character in the street-scene, this house also provided studios for two distinguished members of the Cranbrook Colony of artists, Thomas Webster and F D Hardy, who painted there in the 19th century (see Chapter 5). The central carriage entrance has great charm, its attractive brick and stone surfacing leading through to the hidden cottages beyond. The adjacent group of elegant cottages, Laurel Cottage (listed), Fern Cottage and Little Polmood, retain much of their original material and their railings.



The Old Studio

7.41 Here, High Street starts to widen again and the Cramp Institute on the north side tends to dominate the street-scene through its tall brick elevations and protuberant front extension. Fortunately, the recently planted limes soften the building's bulk and help channel the view into the heart of the Conservation Area. Further down, the original windows, materials and boundary railings of The Limes and Fenton House also contribute to the ambience, as do the recently converted Prince of Wales House (listed) and the wider pavement, with its attractive planting.



Cramp Institute

7.42 Facing them, on the south side, the access and exit roads from the car park isolate Lyndhurst Cottages, a group of white-painted, 16th century weatherboarded cottages (all listed), with varied roof profiles, interrupting the otherwise continuous building line and increasing their impact on the street-scene. Behind the cottages stretches the town's main car park, with spaces for about 300 vehicles, and an ugly electricity substation. The car park's landscaping is poor, while the greenery planted to screen the substation will take years to be effective. Fortunately, the extensive rear gardens of Bell House and Lloyds Bank abut the tarmac to the east. Much of this attractive green space,

with shrubbery, hedges, fine trees and variegated foliage is designated as an Area of Landscape Importance EN22; it preserves a landscape framework for the Conservation Area and contributes hugely to its structure and rural character.



Lyndhurst Cottages



Rear gardens by car park

7.43 Identifiable detractors affecting this Character Identity Area include:

- Brooksdens' outbuilding/stable block, badly in need of repair and maintenance, particularly to its roof
- the former council offices, and in particular the ramps, canopy beams, roof railings and industrial screening along Wheatfield Drive
- the close-boarded Cornhall Oast gate, which truncates the previous view of the countryside beyond
- the metal-clad telegraph pole at Cranehurst
- the solar panels prominent on Jersey House and Braeside
- Shepherds' overpowering yew hedge and metal-clad entrance gate
- the telegraph pole outside Deacons
- maintenance of some railings on the south side of the street
- Causton Road's surface
- The Cramp Institute's unsympathetic front extension
- frequent lorry damage to the side wall of the listed Lyndhurst Cottages, often caused by delivery lorries unable to complete the tricky left-hand turn because of parked vehicles. Parking restrictions opposite the exit might help solve the problem
- the view from the Conservation Area towards the car park and the unscreened substation

Identity Area D: Lower High Street

7.44 The entry to the car park and the pinch-points on High Street's carriageway mark the transition to the commercial part of the Conservation Area, although residential use is still common. This mixed usage continues down into the heart of the town and is an important feature of the Conservation Area. From here, and in Stone Street, most of the commercial buildings along the principal shopping walks are converted older structures, including cloth halls, houses and inns. From Golding House dental practice to No. 65 High Street, on the north side, the original 16th century timber-framed, tile hung buildings (all listed), with their striking carriage archways, have been adapted over the years to a variety of uses, both residential and commercial.



Bank Street entry

7.45 Facing them, on the south side, a line of Victorian cottages with gabled dormers also combines residential with commercial usage and leads down to another long 16th century structure (listed), originally the Bell Inn, but now a mixture of shops (including Bell House) and residential accommodation, timber-framed, and with a carriage archway centrally placed. Weatherboarding, render and joinery, all white painted, with bays tied together by a canopy roof, create a distinctive building here.



Former cloth hall

7.46 Opposite, on the north side, Bank Street, formerly Brewhouse Lane, is flanked by two very different buildings, although both have parapets to the roof. Nat West's imposing bulk signals the start of the commercial area proper, while the Crane Dental Surgery (listed), with its plain 18th century styling and proportions, introduces a long line of buildings (all listed) of architectural and/or historical interest, most of which follow the traditional pattern of narrow frontages with pedestrian access to the rear. Vegetare, Ubertogs and Banghams are all part of a divided cloth hall (2* listed), while further down, beyond the colonnaded Quilters, Phillips Man Shop and HSBC occupy a fine 16th century, two-storey (listed) building with a jettied frontage and tall chimney stack; this stands out as a long, low structure within an area of taller 18th century buildings. The bank's modernising design is notably less successful than the clothier's; Buss Murton's is even more out of keeping.



Quilters



Phillips Man Shop and HSBC

7.47 Most of the shop fronts at street-level follow traditional design principles, while the upper storeys are used for residential or storage purposes. Two unified shop rows at Buss Murton, Pages, Thresher and Purdy and Power, (destroyed by fire in 1840 and rebuilt) and at Findings, Siete, Coco and Mumtaz Mahal (all listed) have long, parapeted three-storey façades of brick or tile-hanging and make a significant contribution to views along the lower High Street.



Post-1840 brick construction

7.48 In general, materials and rooflines are varied and, although many buildings have been re-fronted, the overall effect is of strongly cohesive groupings. Small-paned sash windows also provide a linking feature, although many shops in High Street and Stone Street have installed plate glass windows to display their goods. The quality of signage and window display, however, not infrequently fails to match that of the buildings themselves.

7.49 The pavement on the north side is raised above street level as the road itself descends; weathered stone steps lead down at intervals to the road surface. Horse Entry’s narrow passageway provides the only break in the continuous line of frontages and leads the pedestrian off the raised pavement into the scene behind High Street. The footpath wanders past cottages, outbuildings and gardens, some tidy, others not, with varied views of rear elevations and jumbled rooflines, all contributing to the character of the Conservation Area. Finally, the White Horse, with its exuberant, moulded terracotta, red brick and dressed stone detailing, provides a bulky end-stop to the north side of the High Street.



18th century row



Raised pavement



Horse Entry Passage



The White Horse

7.50 On the south side, beyond the gated entrance to its rear gardens, with their variety of mature trees, the heavily restored Lloyds Bank (listed), set back from the pavement on a grassed bank, dominates the scene. Its exposed close studding and oak-framed windows are not typical features for Cranbrook, but its signage is discreet. Further down, Clermont (listed 18th century), with its three storeys, matches Lloyds Bank for height; its tall, black-painted railings are a little daunting in their context.



Lloyds Bank, former cloth hall

7.51 There follows a group of buildings (all listed) of mixed scale, form and materials: Lambert & Foster, Berics and No. 35 all contribute in different ways to the vitality of the street-scene, as does the wider pavement. Crane Books (listed 17th century) has exposed close studding at first floor level, but was truncated by the construction of the Congregational Church (listed mid-19th century), a most unusual addition to the townscape, with its gothic styling, yellow brick and two 2-light traceried windows.



Congregational Church



Crane Books

7.52 Crane Lane, which cuts between two unprepossessing 20th century developments and is much used by Royal Mail vans, merely hints at the open space beyond. Its high walls block out the important view of St Dunstan's Church; its flanking buildings lack quality of design and materials and it makes the link to the town's main car park a dismal trudge. The same is true of the drab, industrially-clad White Lion Lane between the George Hotel car park and Lloyds Chemists (listed former cloth hall). The heart of the Conservation Area was badly served by architects, designers, developers and planners in the 1960s. Across White Lion lane and beyond the neat façade of Shersby Jewellers, Millstone (listed) was originally part of the hotel: its three-storey front was added to the earlier timber frame and its carriage entrance is attractive.



Corner House

7.53 Finally, at the junction of the town's two main streets, stands Corner House. Detailed restoration work to the tile-hanging, joinery and brickwork has greatly enhanced this focal building, which now plays its full role in the street scene.

7.54 Features that can be identified as detractors in this Character Identity Area include:

- the off-street parking space between Lloyds Bank and Clermont, which daily inserts a vehicle into the building line
- Crane Lane, as above
- White Lion Lane – soon to be an area of possible re-development
- some shop-front design, as at Buss Murton, HSB and Welcome
- some shop window display, at street and first floor level
- some shop signage – materials, colours and lettering
- long-term empty shops with no window display
- first floor storage and advertisement, which commercialises window treatments

Identity Area E: Carriers Road, Jockey Lane, St Dunstan's Church and Churchyard

Carriers Road

7.55 Where High Street turns right into Stone Street, Carriers Road leads away north-northwest in a curving incline towards one of the town's main residential areas. The White Horse and Church Gates flank the junction, but the road itself looks uninviting, lined with modern buildings of little architectural interest. Soon, however, the western boundary of the churchyard, a high brick retaining wall, with its line of mature lime trees, imposes itself on the street-scene and defines this part of the Conservation Area. Beneath it, the single-storey buildings and car parking, both unsightly, are dwarfed in scale.



Carriers Road

7.56 Across the road, the roof styles and boarding of the modern buildings reflect the vernacular, but the preponderance of dark stain emphasises their structural bulk and makes the atmosphere unnecessarily sombre.

7.57 In contrast, Rectory Lane, just beyond, feels almost rural – the unmade track, lack of pavements, the jumble of buildings and the large maple tree contribute to its character, threatened now, regrettably, by the loss of hedgerow to make way for car standings outside the pleasant line of cottages.

7.58 Further north, one of the town's most secluded and tranquil enclaves encircles the Horse Pond (see Chapter 6), and includes The Moat and Cranbrook Museum (both listed), originally 16th or 17th century farmhouses. The Moat, strikingly situated in its pond-side garden, is timber-framed with painted wattle and daub infill and a steep, plain tiled, roof. The admirably maintained Museum, also timber-framed but clad in red brick with hipped tiled roof, was once the Rectory farm. Its wooden, lead-lattice, casements and varied panes are a significant feature, while the west-end gable offers ornamental timbering and the initials and dates "C.E. 1683. W.T.N. 1889". These two distinguished buildings can be only glimpsed from the main thoroughfares, but the persistent pedestrian, approaching the Museum along a tree- and hedge-lined path will suddenly find the whole of the front elevation revealed and a fine view across the Horse Pond; a delightfully sequestered space.



Rectory Lane



Cranbrook Museum

7.59 Detractors in the Carriers Road area include:

- the nondescript single-storey buildings at the foot of St Dunstan's church wall
- the preponderance of dark-stained boarding on the west-side shops

- the grubbing out of hedges/shrubs in Rectory Lane to make way for car standings
- the unattractive surfacing and treatment of the parking spaces beneath the churchyard wall
- the narrow and dangerous pavement alongside Church Gates

Jockey Lane

7.60 During much of the week, the rows of cars using the Jockey Lane car park inevitably limit any positive contribution that it can make to the Conservation Area. When they are absent, that contribution becomes clear. Most of Jockey Lane lies just outside the Conservation Area, but the upper part of it is included in the 'spur' leading to the doctors' surgeries within the Conservation Area. Reference is included due to its significance to the setting of the Conservation Area which it borders, and because it is the access to the north eastern spur.

7.61 On the right hand side when starting from the lower end, the modest flower garden immediately signals departure from the commercial premises of Carriers Road. The fine subsequent views to the right are of churchyard and church. A great oak tree, planted with ceremony in 1862, stands at the top of the slope.



Upper Jockey Lane

7.62 On the left side, the siting and design of the Clinic are generally appropriate and restrained and beyond it, in the Conservation Area 'spur', the former primary school buildings have been sympathetically converted to surgeries. Any further substantial development on this side of the road would be seriously damaging to the degree of rurality that survives in spite of the parked cars.

7.63 It is likely that the rural view to the east from the top of Jockey Lane has little changed over centuries, apart from the addition of the children's playground.



Former primary school

St Dunstan's Church and Churchyard

7.64 The great churchyard, with ample green spaces between many of the older tombs, is a haven of green space in the heart of the town, criss-crossed by paths, mainly in York stone. Its constant users include those who live north and east of the church, as well as those involved with Cranbrook School and the Church of England Primary School.

7.65 The Grade One listed St Dunstan's Church is the most important building in the Conservation Area. Striking and distinctive features of the church may be seen from any direction. Perhaps the two finest views are; from the Ball Field entry to the churchyard, the bays of perpendicular windows, with the graceful clerestory above them and; from the south, the porch, capped by the parvise known as 'Baker's Gaol', where Protestants were held during Queen Mary's reign.



South porch and parvise

7.66 Church Steps, at the south-west corner of the churchyard, lead up to where a lych-gate once stood, while the cobblestones to their left formed the old route for hearses. Some historic character is retained by the battered brick pillars with their stone caps, together with the simple handrail on the steps. Behind the cobblestones is the fine front of the listed house now known as Church Gates. Planting and cultivation, both in front of this building and in the corner between the steps and the Vestry Hall, soften the impact of stone, render and brick.

7.67 The mass of Vestry Hall, with good Victorian brickwork, extends from Church Steps along the southern edge of the churchyard, giving a feeling of solid enclosure. Beyond it, south-east of Baker's Gaol, the listed Church House was formerly a charity school offering elementary education to a fortunate minority. Over the centuries, successive extensions have been added to the original Elizabethan school

building at the west end, where the timber frame has largely survived above varied brickwork. Despite its diverse styles, the whole long building of Church House contributes significantly to the Conservation Area, although its east end terminates with the least interesting extension and then brick wall.



Church Gates



Church House

7.68 Many of the churchyard graves are of historic interest; these include not only over 20 listed tombs (most of these 16th or 17th century 'table tombs'), but also the non-listed graves of important Cranbrook people, fully worthy of at least local listing.

7.69 The trees greatly contribute to the beauty of the churchyard. They include the lines of limes that frame its western and northern sides, the quartet of hollies and yews to the south, and the magnificent bird cherry, in addition to more yews, to the east. At this eastern end, behind many of the Victorian and early 20th century tombs, the boundary wall borders part of the Cranbrook School grounds that includes Barham House, the former vicarage. Yet more yews, mainly on the school side of the stone wall, partly screen its Victorian brickwork, as well as the modern senior students' centre and sports hall to its east.

7.70 There have been no burials since 1935 and maintenance of the churchyard is now the statutory responsibility of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council. Arboricultural advice is obtained and acted upon, walls and fencing are well maintained, and the grass is cut regularly. The low brick wall at the western end of the perimeter is inconspicuous and neat, the wooden fencing along Jockey Lane acceptable and the low stone wall bordering Ball Field and Cranbrook School strongly enhances the Conservation Area.

7.71 The trees make the churchyard an important urban nature reserve, with at least 16 species of bird known to nest there and up to 40 visiting more or less regularly.

7.72 The Parish Council's responsibilities do not extend to the upkeep of graves. With local contribution, the Borough Council financed major restoration work of the listed graves in 2002, but the condition of some other notable tombstones is a cause of some concern, although locally-generated projects have remedied this to a limited extent.

7.73 Most of the footpaths within the churchyard are the responsibility of the Kent County Council. In York stone, they are pleasing and, for the most part, in good condition. The same cannot be said of the red brick section in front of Church House, for which the Parochial Church Council is responsible.



Churchyard

7.74 Four detractors to the churchyard are:

- the deteriorating condition of a number of important non-listed tombs, in some cases accelerated by hollies being allowed to grow within them

- the frequently litter-strewn entry point to the school property, with a lamp post and an urban-type finger post in close proximity on either side of the boundary
- the inappropriate rendering and design, at first floor level, of that section of the Vestry Hall complex immediately west of the tile-hung part
- the poorly designed church notice board at the top of the steps

Identity Area F: Stone Street

7.75 Stone Street lies at the heart of the town and represents the most densely built section in the Conservation Area. Traffic from High Street and Carriers Road converges at its north-western end, while the north-east and south-east approach roads meet at its eastern extremity. The majority of its buildings are listed for their architectural or historical interest, many from the 15th and 16th centuries. The narrow building plots certainly date back to the medieval era and, in consequence, later development has taken place at the rear of the main structures. The jumble of outbuildings and extensions that resulted is a significant feature of the Conservation Area. So are the alleyways that lead off Stone Street mainly to the south, linking some of the town's residential areas and the Tanyard car park to the shops and offices.

7.76 At the junction of High Street, Carriers Road and Stone Street, the carriageways and pavement widen to form what was once the town 'square', at the heart of the commercial area, with a medieval market cross, replaced in turn in the mid-17th century by a timber-framed market house and by an octagonal stone one from 1812 to 1863. From a viewpoint outside the George Hotel, the variety of buildings is notable; the ornamented façade of The White Horse, the elegance of Church Gates/Country Stile (listed 17th century construction with 18th century additions), looking confidently out along Stone Street, and the (listed) Vestry Hall. This unusual building, brick-built on a stone plinth in neo-Tudor style, was once a fire station at ground floor level and is now the Weald Information Centre, headquarters of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council, and outpost of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Between them, beyond the worn steps, rises the tower of St Dunstan's Church, which focuses and dominates the view.



Former market square

7.77 Looking back from the church steps, the George Hotel (listed 2*) quietly imposes itself on the scene. This magnificent structure, an inn from the late middle ages, has an eye-catching wrought-iron balcony and, inside, a fine timber staircase. The area's Justice Sessions were held here for centuries, in an upstairs room, and Queen Elizabeth I may briefly have been a guest. The tile hanging of the Corner House, recently restored, enhance the fine Stone Street facade, though the shop front at the east end is unsympathetically styled.



George Hotel

7.78 Starting from Vestry Hall, along the characterful row of small shops (Stationery Express, Riders Boutique, Spice and Perfect Partners), set in two fine, three-storey listed 16th century houses, the street-scene is opened up by a gap in the building line next to The George. Here, the remains of a garage forecourt are evident, together with a sprawl of buildings to the rear and the undecorated (north-west) side elevation of the adjoining 16th century timber-framed Tudor House (listed), with its pleasantly proportioned gable to the street. This unexpected space, in the otherwise strong containment, reduces the sense of enclosure in Stone Street; the highest quality of design, materials and planning will be essential when any development of the garage site generally is considered (see Chapter 10: Issues, para 10.1).



Stone Street shops



Former garage forecourt

7.79 Soon the road and its pavements begin to narrow, where the intriguingly small scale mock-Tudor Calcutt Maclean Standen building faces the listed 16th century Old Printers House, with its strikingly curved ground floor shop fronts. Here, the feeling of constriction increases, as the pedestrian is brought closer to the traffic and overshadowed by tall buildings (often three storeys high), particularly on the north side of the road. Most of the buildings are listed and clad generally with white-painted weatherboard or render, although some joinery has recently been painted in deeper colours set against a pale background. Rooflines are irregular, with a mixture of roof styles facing the street at different heights, some with dormers. The large box-dormer over Clarité (listed), although uncharacteristic in design, provides an element of surprise on the southern façades, where the long row of shops, including Clarité, Apicius, Peter Jones, Cranbrook Sports and Stoneydale, represent another fine example of a converted and sub-divided 16th century building, Weaver’s House.



Irregular roofs

7.80 The balcony of The George Hotel is echoed by those over The Find and at Wilkes Butchers (both listed), where it extends over a corner-set doorway. At this point, the vista suddenly opens to provide the pedestrian with a striking view of the Union Mill, riding splendidly over the rooftops of St David’s Bridge.



The Mill, from Stone Street

7.81 Most intriguing, and strongly characteristic of Stone Street, are the alleyways, lanes and passages that lead away from the main thoroughfare:

- a. alongside Wilkes Butchers, an alleyway drops down to the extraordinary (and seriously dilapidated) Providence Chapel (listed 2*), with its seven-sided front, faced with timber grooved to look like stone. The original was prefabricated in London in the early 19th century and transported to be erected on-site in Cranbrook. Subsequently, it was enlarged to provide more seating for the vast and enthusiastic congregations of the celebrated preacher Isaac Beeman. Barely visible behind the chapel lies the paddock where, for centuries, cattle were reared for local slaughter and the butcher’s slab. The field marks the end of a green wedge of countryside that penetrates to the very centre of the Conservation Area from the south-west
- b. almost opposite, Printer’s Yard provides the only break in the building line on the north side, but the central wall and sympathetically converted outbuildings help maintain the feeling of enclosure, while the curve to the right creates an element of surprise



Providence Chapel



Printer's Yard



Covered Chittenden Alley

- c. close to Clarité and The Find, a tiny passageway winds down to the Tanyard car park, passing Hatter's Cottage, a remarkable three-storey early 19th century factory, a vertical oblong of brick, where William Tooth made beaver and other hats
- d. a few paces further along Stone Street, between Stoneydale and Albert House (both listed), a wider lane, nicely re-surfaced, offers a pleasing vista of the trees and vegetation at the edge of the Tanyard car park and of the wooded slopes beyond
- e. the open forecourt and access lane in front of Bird-in-Hand cottage (listed), at the junction with Waterloo Road, reveal poorly designed extensions behind the adjacent building



The Hat Factory

7.82 Stone Street embodies much that is distinctive in the Conservation Area; the street's gentle curve creates several fine, subtly changing views, notably those of the Windmill and St Dunstan's, and the variety and quality of its buildings are of a very high order. The narrowness of its pavements and the constriction of its carriageway (two large cars can only just pass each other) are, however, discouraging to pedestrians and shopkeepers alike.



Stone Street

7.83 The quality of surfacing in some of the attractive alleys and passages could also be improved. The Stoneydale alley to the Tanyard is a good example of what can be achieved.

7.84 The following features are the principal detractors from this Character Identity Area:

- the deteriorating condition of Providence Chapel, which demands urgent attention
- the condition of the render and paintwork of Church Gates, a key building in the High Street/ Stone Street scene
- the lighting and surfacing of some alleyways
- the narrowness of some pavements, which brings the pedestrian and the motor vehicle into uncomfortable proximity
- the view, across the Bird-in-Hand forecourt, to the unfortunate extension at the rear of Jackson-Stops

Chapter 8 Building Materials, Textures and Colours: Key Unlisted Buildings: Public Realm

Materials

8.1 Cranbrook's historic buildings rely heavily on locally-sourced materials and represent several styles in the vernacular tradition. The majority of them are timber-framed, although such framing is rarely visible; where it is exposed it makes a strong visual impression. Many of the older buildings have cladding of white weatherboard, red brick or hung tile, probably renewed or added to in the 18th and 19th centuries, when more elaborate façades were sometimes also added. The cladding material often changes between ground and first floor levels. White painted weatherboarding tends to predominate in lower High Street, Stone Street and St David's Bridge, while upper High Street, The Hill and Baker's Cross make greater use of tile-hanging. 'Mathematical' tiles are less common, but there are some striking examples, notably at Briar Cottage. Brick (often locally made) was more widely used on the 18th century buildings and 19th century cottages in the residential areas. In upper High Street, stucco commonly features and gives coherence to the group of Regency-style villas opposite the former council offices.



Mathematical tiling



White brick and weatherboard



Red brick and tile hanging



Decorative hung tiling

8.2 Clay, peg-tiled roofing is widespread throughout the Conservation Area; most town centre buildings have tiles, whereas the 19th century houses in Waterloo Road and upper High Street often used slate. The roof forms tend to be steeply pitched, particularly on 16th century buildings; these include a range of gabled, half-hipped and gambrel roofs, with hipped roofs appearing in the 18th century. The undulating topography of the Conservation Area also has a major impact on the roofscape, by creating variations in roof lines and building height, together with a lively interplay between roof styles, dormer windows and chimneys. Dormers, often added to light attic space, are commonplace in the street-scene. By contrast, through planners' vigilance, there is a marked and welcome absence of Velux windows, although much clearer and consistent planning guidance is now vital for solar panel applications, which could jeopardise Cranbrook's roofscape.



Roofscape

8.3 Windows are generally a mixture of sash and casement, in timber with narrow glazing bars and relatively thick frames and boxes. UPVC is, thankfully, a rarity; once again, planning clarity is a prerequisite. Bowed, ground floor, multiple-paned windows can also be found, often built out under jettied upper floors. Window frames are generally painted white, and white paint is consistently used throughout the Conservation Area to protect joinery, brickwork and dressings; this creates a strongly unified impression. A limited use of black paint on windows, downpipes, railings, weatherboard and shop-front signage is also found.



All sash windows



Casement and sash

8.4 Gardens also make a sympathetic contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. In particular, the variety and exuberance of the cottage-style front gardens on The Hill and the High Street significantly enhance the street-scene, as do the hanging baskets, plots and troughs filled seasonally by the green-fingered volunteers of 'Cranbrook in Bloom'. Generally, the cottage gardens are enclosed by a variety of boundaries; white-painted picket fences predominate, although Waterloo Road and High Street also feature traditional iron railings. While there are some brick boundary walls, the use of railings and fences generally achieves transparency and offers a direct view through into the gardens, which allows the buildings and planting to dominate, rather than the boundary treatments themselves. Rear gardens of all sizes are also an important feature of many Conservation Area properties, although less readily visible from the thoroughfares. Their mature trees in particular help to create a green and varied framework for the adjoining buildings and for the Conservation Area as a whole.



Thyme Cottage



Forge Cottage



Prince of Wales House



Laurel Cottage

Key Unlisted Buildings

8.5 There are several key unlisted buildings within Cranbrook that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. These mainly date from the 19th and early 20th centuries and are marked on the Townscape Analysis map. Some are the work of architects well-known locally or nationally. As recommended in PPG15, these buildings should be protected from demolition or major alteration unless a special case (similar to that required for listed buildings) can be made. The most significant examples are as follows:

- a. West Terrace, built by William West Neve, and the row of Victorian villas almost opposite, gatekeepers to the Conservation Area in upper High Street
- b. Dearn Villa (mid-19th century), probably the home of Thomas Dearn (1777-1853), sits among the more elegant Regency houses in upper High Street. Its large decorative urns and 'acorns' are eye-catching
- c. Cranbrook Lodge (close by), an intelligently converted early 19th century villa, which marks the transition from the Regency to the small brick-built cottages below
- d. The White Horse, prominent and flamboyant: a major focus because of its position, size, materials and decorative detailing
- e. Waterloo Cottages, although undistinguished individually, make a strong contribution to the Conservation Area through their curving alignment, the row of unbroken weatherboarded façades, their traditional casements and sash windows and fine glimpses of the Mill
- f. School Lodge, immediately adjacent, built by William Neve, stands out in strong counterpoise to School House opposite, because of its height and heavy neo-Jacobean detailing, and represents a focal point for views both ways along Waterloo Road, and from The Hill
- g. Raffles Restaurant, also by Neve, the imposing Arts and Crafts structure built as a temperance coffee house for working men, dominates views from the Tanyard car park through its large, two-storey bay
- h. Millstone Cottages, which stand in a row behind a hedge on the north side of The Hill, are intrinsic to the setting of the Mill. Generally, they have retained their simple character, although there are some unsympathetic accretions: any further alteration or addition would jeopardise their appearance and threaten the context of the Mill
- i. Rammell House Stable Block, not readily seen from the Conservation Area thoroughfares, forms one side of Tippens Close and provides some interesting detail, including double barn doors with a tile-hung upward projection above, and blue and red brickwork, reflecting the materials used on the surrounding buildings. This enhances the value of the listed buildings that form Tippens Close

8.6 Of these significant but unlisted buildings, School Lodge and Raffles have some claim for at least local listing, while West Terrace, Waterloo Cottages and Millstone Cottages should be considered for their group value.

The Public Realm

8.7 The quality of public provision makes an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, especially to its open spaces. The design and maintenance of the public realm by Utilities and Highways should therefore be sympathetic to this. Flagstone pavings are widely used on High Street, Stone Street, The Hill and at Baker's Cross, and contribute to the historic feel of the area, despite the occasional unevenness for the unwary pedestrian, as outside Shepherds. Concrete sets are to be found on the lower High Street and on Stone Street, where their rough texture represents an improvement on macadam, as found on much of the upper High Street. The brick paviors recently inserted into the alleyway between Stone Street and the Tanyard made a substantial visual improvement. Given the extensive network of footpaths and side-roads, and the wide pavements of High Street, the Conservation Area provides a pleasant and secure environment for pedestrians in daylight. But in places, restricted road space and narrow (sometimes non-existent) pavements bring pedestrians close to traffic, as happens on parts of The Hill, Waterloo Road, Stone Street, Carriers Road and Causton Road. Poor surfacing of some of the alleyways harms the appearance of the Conservation Area and makes the pathways less inviting. Lighting of these footpaths could also be improved.



Concrete sets



York stone and brick paviors

8.8 Black painted metal bollards are located along both sides of the High Street. Near the Cramp Institute, one bollard has been replaced so that a traditional cast-iron hand-pump can retain its original position. The bollards in front of Shepherds in High Street, in the shadow of the yew hedge, often represent a hazard to pedestrians at night and their present purpose is obscure. Wooden bollards marking out a green area in front of Baker's Cross were installed to prevent parking and erosion.



Cast iron hand pump



Street furniture

8.9 Street lighting on the principal streets is provided by reasonably inconspicuous but unremarkable tall steel columns, painted black in the central area, but untreated elsewhere. The lamps, under circular shades, are suspended from arched brackets, with more decorative designs in the town centre. By contrast, telegraph posts remain an eyesore in places, notably, by the Mill entrance, by Hill House, by Deacons on the High Street and, perhaps ugliest of all, at the lane entrance to Corn Hall Farm in the High Street.



Detracting telegraph pole

8.10 Signage generally is reasonably restrained and the litter bins sympathetic in style, although not always well-used. A number of red Victorian letter-boxes can also be seen throughout the town, some of them listed.

8.11 Unpainted galvanised railings disfigure the street-scene to varying degrees along Waterloo Road, The Hill, St David's Bridge and around the former council offices.

8.12 The standard of road surfacing is unsatisfactory, and in places dangerous, especially to cyclists. The design of the exit road from the main car park causes difficulties for drivers of heavy goods vehicles, and particularly for touring coaches. The speed cushions in Waterloo Road and St David's Bridge, while beneficial for calming traffic, are unattractive and could be better designed. The use of thick and garish yellow lines for road markings throughout the Conservation Area also does not correspond with best conservation practice.



Detracting railings



Detracting road markings

8.13 Trees planted in the broad High Street pavement outside The Cramp Institute and The Crown vary and enrich the view, while the planting at the St David's Bridge edge of the Tanyard car park brings green interest to the area. On the other hand, half-hearted or unsuccessful planting schemes in the clumsily designed main car park have failed to mitigate the car park's negative impact on the adjacent part of the Conservation Area.



Successful High Street planting



Failed car park planting

Chapter 9 Conservation Area Boundary Review

9.1 As part of this Appraisal, the boundaries of the Conservation Area have been critically reviewed. It was concluded that, for the most part, the current boundary still adequately reflects the area of special architectural and historic interest.

9.2 Two minor changes have been made to the boundary in the north-east of the Conservation Area: one establishes a more logical line along the north-west edge of the Cranbrook School all-weather pitch. The other rationalises the boundary around the Vicarage to include all the building and its gardens.

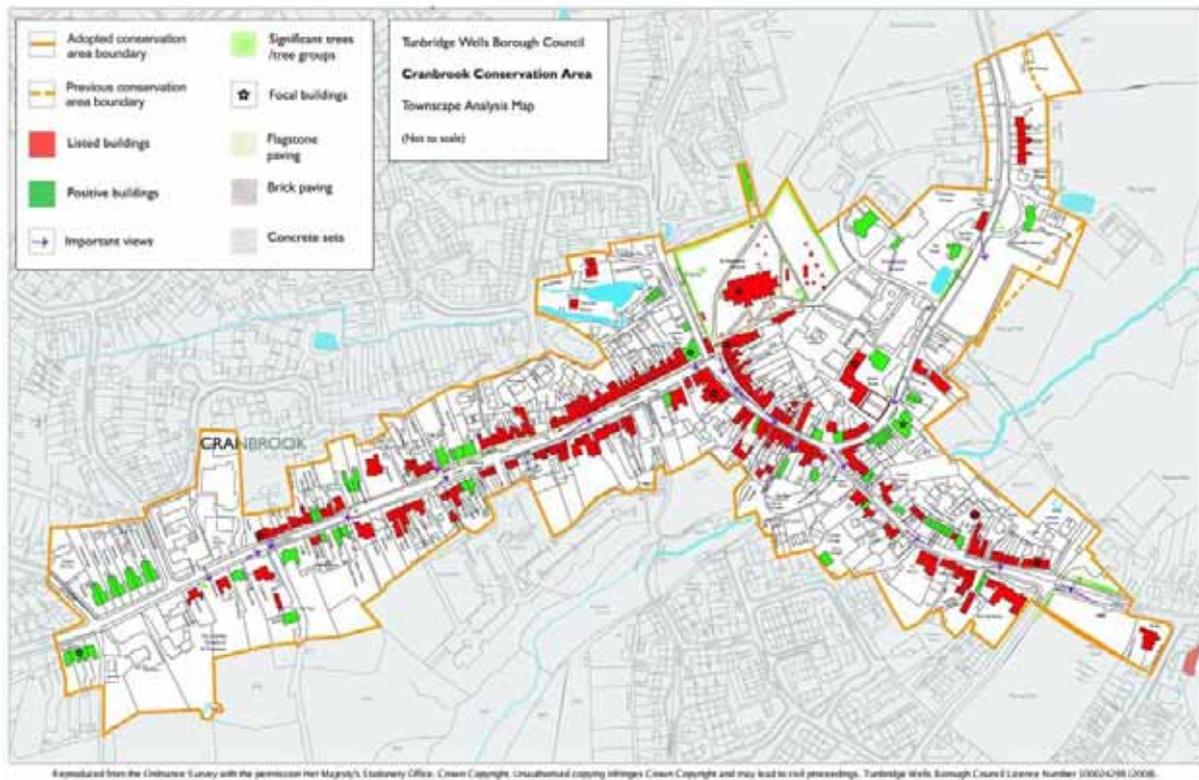


Figure 5 Revised Cranbrook Conservation Area Boundary

Chapter 10 Issues

10.1 The single biggest issue for this remarkable Conservation Area is likely to involve the large area in the very heart of the town, where major new development will almost certainly be proposed. This area includes the previously developed land of the former Cranbrook Engineering site, now containing very little of conservation value; in addition to it, other central sites may become available. This Appraisal makes no detailed or specific suggestions for development here, but any modern building scheme should contribute to the economic vitality and general liveliness that characterise the present Conservation Area, while fully harmonising with the historic and architectural elements identified throughout the Appraisal. Any development should acknowledge the variety of architectural styles that make up the Conservation Area and encourage high quality, good-mannered, modern design, sympathetic to the Area's existing spatial and/or historic lay-out. Development should maintain existing plot ratios, respect existing boundaries, sightlines and landscaping (particularly trees and shrubbery) and have a proper regard for vernacular stylistic features, including pitched roofs, window-to-wall ratios, compositional symmetry, simplicity and variety of form and the use of local materials and detailing. Development proposals should be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement which addresses the context.

10.2 Numerous detractors to the Conservation Area have been identified in the pages above. None is trivial, but it is suggested that the following seven are particularly significant, warranting immediate consideration:

- in Identity Area C, the many visual alterations and additions which have disfigured the formerly imaginative architecture of the Council offices
- in Identity Area D, many features of Crane Lane, and the construction of the two main 20th century buildings to either side of it
- in Identity Area F, the dilapidated condition of the listed Providence Chapel
- in Identity Area F, the former Cranbrook Engineering garage and its forecourt, breaking the Stone Street building line
- in Identity Area B, the prominence of the Cranbrook School sports hall, where lack of landscaping and screening has marred fine historic views
- in more than one Identity Area, telegraph poles which spoil views
- throughout the Conservation Area, the volume of traffic, including heavy lorries, delivery vans and the large number of parked cars

10.3 Realistically, no easy solution presents itself to some of the detractors, whether listed above or identified on earlier pages. Listed below, however, are proposals which represent practicable attempts to deal with some of them :

- in Identity Area A, planting policies for the edge of Rammell Field and the east end of Rammell House
- in Identity Area A, making sympathetic use of the former gasworks site on The Hill
- in Identity Area C, reducing the adverse visual impacts of the main car park upon the Conservation Area
- in Identity Areas D and F, repair and maintenance of key buildings including Providence Chapel and Church Gates
- in Identity Area B, landscaping and screening Cranbrook School's sports hall
- in Identity Area E, widening the pavement on the east side of Carriers Road
- working with British Telecom and other authorities to implement a programme of replacing conspicuously unsightly telegraph poles
- improving the quality of railings at the former Council Offices, in lower Waterloo Road and on The Hill
- introducing firmer controls to restrict unsympathetic shop front designs and materials.
- introducing policies prohibiting plastic weatherboarding and fenestration other than with timber

- seeking to prevent close-boarded fencing, high gates and very tall hedges which obstruct historic or rural views
- promoting adherence to the Local Planning Authority's guidance on the installation of satellite dishes, solar panels and wind turbines
- seeking traffic and parking solutions which will reduce the present number of vehicular detractors

Chapter 11 Consultations

Introduction

11.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) regarding preparation and consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents.

11.2 The most relevant Development Plan Policies are set out in this document at Section 2. This Supplementary Planning Document is intended to support these policies.

Consultation Process

11.3 The previous Conservation Area Appraisal, on which this document is partly based, was drafted in 1997. The initial preparation of the original document was through a working group made up of officers from the Borough Council and representatives from Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the Parish Council and other key organisations. Following full public consultation, the draft document was reported to the Borough Council's Technical Services Board of 6 November 1997 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Various alterations were also made to the Conservation Area boundary.

11.4 As part of the required review and in order to follow English Heritage guidance, this current appraisal document was originally drafted in spring 2007 following survey work in April 2007. The resultant informal initial draft Appraisal was then subject to scrutiny and input from Council officers and local community. As a result a number of significant changes were made.

11.5 The draft document was reported to the Borough Council's Local Development Framework Members Working Party on 30 June 2009. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning received the report and approved the draft Appraisal on 13 November 2009, as the basis for public consultation (Item 091120/029).

11.6 The document was subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks between 07 December 2009 and 18 January 2010 in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

11.7 Documents available comprised: The draft Cranbrook Conservation Area Appraisal SPD; Executive Summary; Statement of SPD Matters; Statement of Consultation; and map of the Conservation Area. These were available on the Borough Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk and at the Gateway offices, Tunbridge Wells and the Weald Information Centre, Cranbrook.

11.8 Some 100 organisations were notified by letter of the consultation and where the documents could be viewed or obtained, including the three Regulation 17 bodies.

Response to Consultation

11.9 The responses to the consultation were reported to the Local Development Framework Members Working Party on 6 April 2010 and to the Council's Cabinet on 10 June 2010 (Item 100610/CAB 008), where it was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. This can be viewed on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

Notices

11.10 A notice of public participation was placed in a local paper advertising the formal consultation period and where the documents were available.

11.11 On adoption, relevant notices were placed in the London Gazette on 9 July 2010 and a local newspaper, in accordance with S.70 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Chapter 12 Sustainability

12.1 Following legislation of 6 April 2009, the Borough Council is no longer required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) as part of the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.

If you require this document in another format, please contact:

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