



Foots Cray Conservation Area

Area Appraisal and Management Plan
November 2008

This document was produced by the

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

and approved by the Cabinet Member on the 10th November 2008.

A downloadable pdf version is available on the Council's website at bexley.gov.uk

Location of Conservation Area



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. Bexley Council 100017693 2008

— Foots Cray Conservation Area
— Borough boundary

Contents

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1	Introduction	2
2	Planning and policy context	2
3	Summary of the special character and appearance of the conservation area	2
4	Location, setting and boundary description	2
5	Historic development and archaeological potential	4
6	Spatial analysis	4
7	Character analysis	5
	Townscape Analysis Map	14

Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1	Legislative background	15
2	Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan	15
3	Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit.	16
4	Erosion of character	17
5	Trees, landscape and space between buildings	17
6	Setting and views	18
7	The public realm and enhancement	18
8	New buildings and building extensions	18
9	Solar panels and wind turbines	19
10	Monitoring change	20
11	Boundary definition	20
12	Community engagement	20

Appendices

1	General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas	21
2	Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage	24
2	Contacts	25

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Foots Cray Conservation Area was designated on the 29th april 1998.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Foots Cray Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

2 Planning and policy context

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

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

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of Foots Cray Conservation Area derives from the following features:
 - Village residential and commercial character in close juxtaposition.
 - Visual prominence and landmark quality of Harenc School with its bell tower.
 - Varied architectural and historic interest of the area’s buildings, particularly the collection of Georgian houses.
 - Valley location - historic association with stream/river aspect, with village developed at a crossing point.
 - The areas historic crossroads and street pattern.
 - The strong presence of trees and particularly those on Rectory Lane and adjacent to the River Cray.

4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

- 4.1 The Foots Cray Conservation Area is just outside Sidcup, which is situated around 15 miles south-east of central London.

- 4.2 The area lies at the busy junction of Sidcup Hill/Foots Cray High Street and Rectory Lane/Cray Road.

Street pattern and layout

- 4.3 The village and commercial/retail mix is key to the conservation area's varied character. The historic street pattern and River Cray remains and defines the layout of today's conservation area.

Landscape and setting

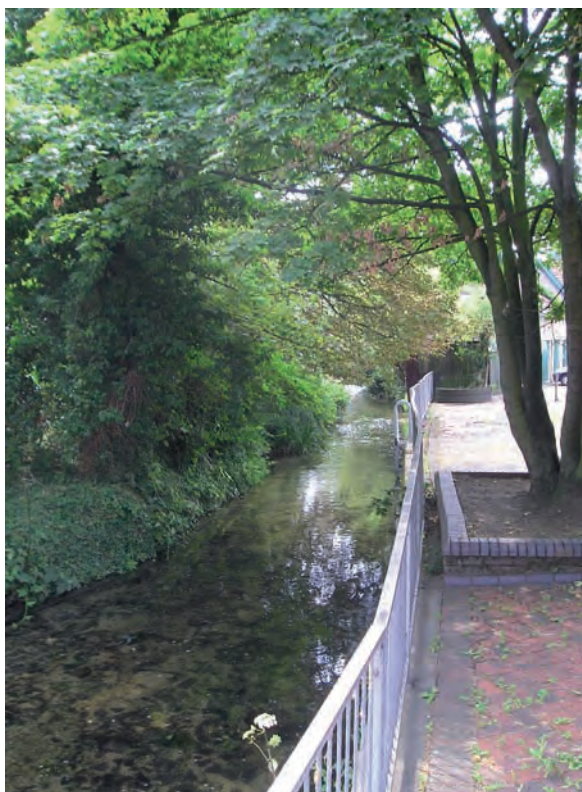
- 4.4 The River Cray around Foots Cray Bridge is a very important feature of the visual character of this conservation area. The sounds of gently flowing water is a key characteristic and the many historic buildings concentrated within the area add to the traditional village setting. Trees are an important feature within the conservation area particularly along the River Cray and Rectory Lane.

Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.5 The boundary of the Conservation Area has been defined to encompass the historic core of the village, including those areas which retain the village character or the original development form.

- 4.6 In most cases the boundary has been set to include complete properties. However, on some large sites, notably those on the northern side of the High Street and Hollytree Parade, the buildings fronting the street add to the character of the street scene whilst the service yards at the rear are unrelated. In such cases, these areas have been excluded from the designation. In some sites, the open frontage adds to the character of the area, whilst the buildings are less important, and consequently the frontage to modern developments have been included on Foots Cray High Street. In this way the designated area exhibits a more cohesive character.

- 4.7 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.



5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 Although there is evidence of Bronze Age and Roman settlement in the Cray Valley, Foots Cray is known to have originated as a Saxon settlement. Its name is derived from Godwin Fot, an Anglo-Saxon landowner, who had a farmstead in the vicinity of the River Cray. The Saxon Charter refers to “land in Cray”.
- 5.2 The Domesday Book refers to this estate having a farm, eight villagers and four cottagers, suggesting a small village, and a water mill. The evolution of the village related its location on the main London to Maidstone Road, and in later years the adjacent country estates of Pike Place, later Foots Cray Place. Many villages grew where roads forded rivers, and this was a factor in the growth of Foots Cray. The 1769 map of Kent shows a ford across the River Cray, with a pack horse bridge to the south of the ford on the approximate line of the present bridge. Another important factor in the growth of the village was its location at the junction with the route along the Cray Valley to Orpington.
- 5.3 The River Cray had a strong flow of water and over the years a series of water mills were developed along its length, including at Foots Cray. The last mill at Foots Cray was an important and substantial building providing much local employment. It was built in 1767 and used for paper making, and by 1851 it was employing 110 adults and 60 children. It was demolished in 1929. The site, to the north of the Seven Stars, retains part of the original old mill pond.
- 5.4 Although there were Roman settlements in Cray Valley, there is as yet no evidence of Roman roads. However roads from Foots Cray to St Mary Cray, Blendon and Bromley were established by the 15th century. The road from Wrotham to Foots Cray was turnpiked between 1751 and 1752 and from Lee to Foots Cray bridge in 1781. The Tollgate was reputedly near Walnut Tree Cottage on Sidcup Hill. Stage Coaches called in at the Seven Stars or Tigers Head on their way between London and Maidstone. The village tended to develop on the main road, with cottages spreading along Church Avenue (now Rectory Lane). Some of the best examples of Georgian houses in the borough stand in Rectory Lane.
- 5.5 As suburbia expanded and the use of the motor vehicle increased, a bypass was built to take through traffic out of Sidcup and Foots Cray. Industries developed and expanded alongside the Sidcup bypass and encroached on the historic centre of Foots Cray. However, within the suburban setting, Foots Cray has retained much of its village character.
- 5.6 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. Human settlement is thought to pre-date Saxon times. Given the early development of rural settlements within the Cray Valley, the area is included in the UDP within a known Area of Archaeological Search as it is an important location where there is a high likelihood that archaeological finds may occur.

6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

- 6.1 Development within the Conservation Area is a mix of retail/commercial and residential. The historical and visual association with the development of the area and the River Cray has now diminished, although there is a landscaped public open space adjacent to the river, which appears to be little used. Rectory Lane still retains a village feel,

whilst Foots Cray High Street has a more commercial feel.

Key views and vistas

- 6.2 Good views out and into the Conservation Area include:
- Looking northeast and southwest along Rectory Lane.
 - All directions from the Sidcup Hill/Foots Cray High Street/Rectory Lane junction.
 - At the bottom of Foots Cray High Street north and south along the River Cray and east and west.
- 6.3 Within the Conservation Area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses and streets. Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant but rather that there are so many different views. Some significant views are marked on the Townscape Analysis Map.

7 Character analysis

Definition of character areas

- 7.1 Foots Cray has buildings of various types and time periods, the oldest is along the old London to Maidstone Road and along Rectory Lane.
- 7.2 The Conservation Area centres on Rectory Lane and Foots Cray High Street, which exhibit rather different character, but together represent the historic core of the village. Rectory Lane retains much of the residential character of the village, while the High Street reflects the evolving business function of the village.
- 7.3 Rectory Lane, formerly known as Church Lane, is relatively narrow in places and is enhanced by several attractive buildings of different architectural styles and scales. It also has several mature trees, which enhance the variety of spaces formed by the varying set back of buildings and the spaces between them. The “lane” provides the transition between the urban village core and the rural countryside beyond.
- 7.4 Harenc School was founded by Benjamin Harenc, the 2nd of nearby Foots Cray Place, who gave the land in 1815 for a National School. Formerly known as the Foots Cray National School and the Foots Cray Church of England School, it marks the entrance to the former village from the countryside beyond from the north. The open vista of the Cray Valley and Foots Cray Meadows to the north now form part of London’s Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 7.5 Harenc School was rebuilt in 1883 (Nunns & Levy) in an unusual style with a low sweeping, patterned tiled roof, interrupted by three Gables and a tall very prominent clock tower with a pyramidal roof. The current 1882 building represents a strong definition of the change from the rural area to the urban form of the village.



Harenc School

7.6 On the opposite side of the road an interesting example of a small detached Victorian house (No 160) serves a similar purpose in defining the transition between rural and urban.

7.7 Whilst the buildings between Nos 160 and 170 Rectory Lane are of no historic value, by reason of their scale and setting, they echo the urban/rural mix characteristic of this part of the historic village core.

7.8 Adjacent to the School is the War Memorial comprising a stone Memorial cross on a plinth set in formal planting behind iron railings. This memorable feature makes a significant contribution to the streetscene and emphasises local identity by commemorating the loss of village citizens during the war years.



160 Rectory Lane

7.9 The adjacent community Hall is an important local facility but has only limited townscape merit. The Ivor House development, echoes the scale of the adjacent Belgrave Place and helps enclose the street. It was therefore included within the conservation area boundary.

7.10 The Old House, No 170, Rectory Lane, is an unusual low profiled Georgian house of two storeys plus an attic, with two plain dormers, in the hipped slate roof. Built in the 1820s but said to incorporate parts of an earlier Tudor structure, this house is now listed Grade II. The white stuccoed front elevation is covered with wisteria, whilst the exposed brick flank walls reveal more of the building's structure. The unusual timber boundary fence and the wooden stable barn alongside combine to make this house a significant feature in the street and the area as a whole. The set back from the street and the large surviving rear garden enhance the setting of the house.



The Old House, 170 Rectory Lane



- 7.11 Belgrave Place (Nos 180 to 188 Rectory Lane, above) is an attractive and imposing Georgian terrace built in 1737. It is listed Grade II. These tall red brick buildings with tiled roof to the front and deep slate slopes to the rear create a dominant element in the street scene and on the road junction, and benefit from consistent sash windows, cornice detailing, etc. Ground floor windows vary due to the former shop use of some of the houses, although no original doors remain, some follow the traditional six panel design. The tall roofs contain hipped dormers of consistent appearance and tall chimney stacks. One house still retains the remains of a bake-house in the garden, reflecting the former commercial use of the ground floor of some of these houses. Due to the scale of these houses and the visibility of both the front and rear elevations, they comprise a significant townscape feature in the core of the Conservation Area.
- 7.12 Footh Cray High Street exhibits a more commercial character and has the usual attributes, such as adverts and fascia signs, normally associated with a retail centre. It has evolved to include a succession of buildings, indicative of its changing uses and evolution over time.
- 7.13 At the eastern end of the High Street, the River Cray is crossed by a small twin-arched bridge which consists mostly of the original bridge, built around 1815. Although widened in 1909 the south side of the bridge retains its brick wall with stone parapet above the old brick spans of the bridge with a central breakwater, with stone dressing. The modern northern side incorporates a stone embossed "FOOTS CRAY" centrally on its northernmost edge.
- 7.14 Immediately to the north was a mill pond of historic interest, which powered the variety of mills formerly located on this site since the building of the first mill in the Saxon Age. However, only part of the pond remains and the character of the original mill pond area has changed significantly with modern development. It was therefore not included within the conservation area boundary.

7.15 On the north side of the High Street, the Seven Stars public house incorporates 16th Century elements, notably the weather boarded range at right angles to the road. The gable ended wing projects forward of all other buildings on the north side of the High Street, reflecting the former narrowness of this road. The wing parallel to the road is a mostly 20th-century addition. The garden behind overlooks the River Cray, former mill pond and the site of the old watermill.



Seven Stars Public House

7.16 Cray Buildings, No 2 to 8 Fooths Cray High Street comprises a simple but attractive terrace group of small shops and restaurants, most of which have kept their original appearance and some have retained their original arched ground floor windows (albeit some hidden by modern fascias). The series of gable roofs, some with half timbering, and the tiled hung upper floors echo the local historic form and add to the character of the terrace and the streetscene.



Cray Buildings

7.17 Lidl's supermarket is a larger scale modern building, but its design with interesting features such as arched canopies, and its use of brickwork, matching the older structures, helps to assimilate it into the historic village core setting



South side Fooths Cray High Street

7.18 The adjacent modern terrace of small-scale shops uses yellow stock bricks and the design features recessed balconies to provide rhythm to the upper floors. The cast-iron "Cannon" bollards set in the footway add to the character of the area far more than the incongruous concrete bollards installed elsewhere in the area.

7.19 On the south side of the High Street, east of Tudor Cottages is an area which is currently being redeveloped. This area was partly excluded from the conservation area. The area to the front of the site was included in the conservation area, as the design of the frontage of any proposed new building



Tudor Cottages

was considered crucial to the character of the conservation area.

- 7.20 Tudor Cottages are among the oldest buildings in Foots Cray, comprising a timber framed, much restored and altered Wealden Hall House with jettied upper floor, originally built in the late 15th or early 16th Century and listed Grade II. The building was restored in 1974 and the original roof form and chimneys and the surviving elevations still contribute positively to the character of the village.
- 7.21 Prospect House is a modern (circa. 1980) building, which lies between Tudor Cottages and the Red Lion. Its design incorporates a jetty upper floor to reflect the adjacent Tudor Cottages. It is a fairly typical piece of 1980s architecture. A surviving section of a much earlier building of red bricks with a tiled roof sits between Prospect House and the Red Lion Public House.
- 7.22 The Red Lion Public House comprises a pleasant group of buildings, whose size and character help define this part of Foots Cray. The main part of the public house dates from the 19th Century but was built around part of an earlier structure, probably dating from the 16th Century. From 1938 it incorporated an early 19th century cottage shop to the west. An ornate/decorative extended ground floor frontage was created to link both buildings and unifying the composition at ground level. The structure is on the Council's Local List and within the conservation area it is considered to be a Landmark Building.
- 7.23 Nexus House, built in 1982, occupies the corner of Foots Cray High Street and Cray Road on the widened road junction. Despite its dominant mansard roof, the design, scale, render finish and colour, generally relates sympathetically to the established character of the High Street. Its height relates well to the more open, spacious road junction and the long frontage revealed at this location. The splayed corner, enhanced by a black and gold clock on the upper floor, provides an interesting feature on this corner of the junction.
- 7.24 On the south side of Sidcup Hill are two groups of shops known as Hollytree Parade. Those nearest the junction comprise a range of small-scale Victorian buildings which have been added to, extended and re-faced over time. To the west, further up Sidcup Hill, numbers one to three comprise a group of typical shops of the interwar period with residential accommodation above. The small-scale shop fronts and red brick upper storey exhibit the character of purpose-built shops contrasting with the eclectic variety of the adjacent shops which evolved organically over many years. These shops mark the edge of the commercial shopping centre. Further west the character of the area changes to larger scale blocks of flats, although some interesting Victorian and interwar developments survive.



Hollytree Parade

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.25 The conservation area displays a mix of residential, retail, commercial and community uses.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.26 The conservation area has a memorable historic character and appearance deriving from a varied collection of historic buildings built with good quality traditional materials.
- 7.27 There are eight statutorily listed buildings (Grade II) in the area and an unusual assemblage of 'Buildings of Local Interest' i.e. buildings of local importance which are historic and contribute significantly to the townscape of the Borough. These are marked on the Townscape Analysis Map.

Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.28 The Townscape Analysis Map identifies many "buildings of townscape merit". These buildings vary, but are good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.
- 7.29 Statutorily listed, locally listed buildings, and landmark buildings help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area, which all of the buildings do.

Important open areas and spaces

- 7.30 On both sides of Sidcup Hill adjacent to the junction with Rectory Lane and Cray Road two small areas of public open space have been created which provide seating with tree and shrub planting. These offer welcome relief from the rather frantic and harsh traffic conditions at the busy road junction. In addition, there is a landscaped public open space on the south side of Foots Cray High Street adjacent to the River Cray.



Seating area at the corner of Rectory Lane

- 7.31 These open spaces have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It has not been possible to identify every important open area and lack of a specific reference does not imply that an area is not of value.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

- 7.32 There are several specimen trees, or groups of trees, which make a positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area, especially those in Rectory Lane and in the public open space adjacent to the River Cray and those along the river bank.
- 7.33 Important trees have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It is not appropriate or practical to identify every important tree that contributes to



Trees and open space adjacent to the River Cray also showing the the old Cray bridge on the south side of the High Street.

Below - illustrates the importance of trees, to the rear of Seven Stars and entrance to Lidl car park



the character of the area and lack of a specific reference does not imply that a particular tree is not of value.

Assets of Foots Cray Conservation Area (positives)

7.34 The positive physical assets of Foots Cray Conservation Area are listed below.

- Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings
- High concentration of historic buildings within relative small geographical area.
- Eclectic mix of retail, commercial and residential uses.
- Presence of very attractive stream around Foots Cray Bridge and historic relationship between river and the evolution of the village.
- Notable individual historic buildings including some very attractive Georgian buildings.
- Excellent restored and prominent Victorian school on Rectory Lane.

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

7.35 The main intrusion or negative features are:

- The high volume of traffic in the area is very intrusive, especially at peak times. Similarly the pedestrian guard railings in the area are utilitarian and seem to dominate the streetscene.
- Visually intrusive and particularly inappropriate shop fronts and signs.
- Bland mixture of road surfaces and clutter of road signs, which can obscure the historic fabric of the conservation area.
- The installation of satellite dishes in prominent flank walls on properties along Foots Cray High Street.
- Utilitarian highway style lamp columns which do not reflect the historic architecture of the conservation area.
- Intrusive and uncharacteristic concrete bollards opposite Nos 180-188 Rectory Lane.
- The spread of uncharacteristic UPVC doors and windows throughout the area is very unfortunate. Similarly, roof tiles and other unsympathetic materials have in some instances been used. These small incremental changes are eroding the special character of the conservation area.



General condition

7.36 Generally the conservation area appears to be in fairly good condition with the obvious caveats mentioned previously.

Opportunities for enhancement

7.37 There is considerable potential for enhancement of the detailed character of this area. In the retail/commercial core a number of shop fronts could benefit from changes to a more traditional style and colour. The area would also benefit from the removal of unsightly and redundant structures and signs. For example, where fascias obscure arched windows at Cray Buildings.

7.38 Historic building grants should be targeted at owners who are considering reinstating any historic features.

7.39 The Council should encourage the provision of a consistent form of boundary outside the listed terrace of houses at No.180 to188 Rectory Lane.

7.40 Within the public realm, there may be potential for the Council to undertake environmental improvements. This might include repaving, installing cast-iron street furniture such as litter bins, bollards and seats and removal of street clutter, including redundant street furniture, etc. The opportunity exists for partnership schemes to enhance forecourt and frontage areas as part of the regeneration of the area.

Potential for new development

- 7.41 This village centre retains a historic scale and character within which can be found a wide range of residential and commercial buildings of varying ages which reflect its historic development. Within this context, there are locations where sensitive new development may be accommodated, especially where it may replace poor or mediocre modern design.
- 7.42 As with any Conservation Area, there are key buildings where redevelopment would be resisted. Elsewhere there may be some potential for limited new development of modern and less sensitive buildings.
- 7.43 Any future alterations to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and planning policies. Any plans for alterations or extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.

Townscape Analysis Map



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. Bexley Council 100017693 2007

Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Legislative background

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

2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan

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

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

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

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

- 3.3 Furthermore, there must be satisfactory proposals for the redevelopment of any site before consent will be granted for demolition in accordance with adopted Unitary Development Plan and other guidance.

4 Erosion of character

- 4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.
- 4.2 In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations could pose a threat to the special character of the area.
- Installation of uncharacteristic modern shop fronts and advertisement signs.
 - Loss of timber windows and doors
 - Alterations to window and door openings.
 - Use of alien roof materials, removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
 - Alterations to the roofscapes.
- 4.3 Such alterations would require planning permission in most cases. In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.
- 4.4 In addition, as an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.
- 4.5 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings

- 5.1 On private land within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.2 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these trees

contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal. The Council will also seek to maintain the open spaces and views between buildings and breaks in the built environment

6 Setting and views

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

7 The public realm and enhancement

- 7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using a mixture of blacktop and precast paving surfaces. Lighting is provided by late twentieth century, utilitarian columns. A more co-ordinating approach to surfaces together with the installation of a more appropriate style of lamp column, in keeping with the character of the conservation area could significantly reinforce the identity of the area and the public realm.
- 7.2 In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area, and any redundant modern features should be removed. Resources permitting a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement.
- 7.3 In Footh Cray Conservation Area the high volume of traffic is very intrusive, especially at peak commuting times. Similarly, the pedestrian guard railings in the area are very utilitarian in style and appear to be unduly prominent in the streetscene. Should opportunities arise a critical review should be undertaken to assess alternative traffic management options, which may prove to be less intrusive and enhance the conservation area.
- 7.4 The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.
- 7.5 There is also scope to improve the current areas of public open space especially the area adjacent to the River Cray. Some form of interpretation of the site could reinforce the village's historical association with the river.
- 7.6 Resources permitting, partnership schemes with the village retailers could help to improve shop fronts, forecourts and introduce a more co-ordinated approach to advertisements and signage.

8 New buildings and building extensions

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.
- 8.2 This village centre retains a historic scale and character within which can be found a

wide range of residential and commercial buildings of varying ages which reflect the area's historic development. Within this context, there are locations where sensitive new development may be accommodated, especially where it might replace poor modern design. For example, the current redevelopment of the garage site on Foots Cray High Street, will be expected to respect its location partly within the Conservation Area and to provide for an enhanced frontage, including widening of the extremely narrow pavement.

- 8.3 As with any Conservation Area, there are key buildings where redevelopment would be resisted. Elsewhere, there may be some potential for limited new development of modern and less sensitive buildings. Schemes within or adjacent to the area will be expected to preserve or positively enhance the character of the area. Government advice and policies within the Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework expand on these issues.
- 8.4 There is considerable potential for enhancement of the detailed character of this area. In the commercial core a number of shop fronts would benefit from changes to a more traditional style and colour and the removal of unsightly and redundant structures and signs. For example, where fascias obscure arched windows at Cray Buildings. Separate guidance has been issued on shop fronts and signs building on guidance within the Unitary Development Plan.
- 8.5 Some buildings have suffered from unsympathetic alterations which have detracted from their appearance, e.g. changes of windows, doors and roofing materials. There is potential for re-instating original features on some buildings and controlling changes so as to restore a sense of unity, and this may be assisted by grant aid from the Bexley Heritage Fund. For example, the Council would encourage provision of consistent railings outside the listed terrace of houses at Nos. 180-188 Rectory Lane.
- 8.6 Within the public domain, there may be potential for the Council to undertake further environmental improvements. This might include repaving, installing cast iron street furniture, such as litter bins, bollards and seats, and removal of street clutter, including redundant street furniture and unauthorised commercial signs, etc. The opportunity exists for partnership schemes to enhance forecourt/frontage areas as part of the regeneration of the area.
- 8.7 The setting of the conservation area is enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Vegetation including especially trees, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.

9 Solar panels and wind turbines

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

10 Monitoring change

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

11 Boundary definition

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

12 Community engagement

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, "people make places". Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In predominately mixed areas such as Foots Cray Conservation Area, the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local businesses, residents and the Council is one way of helping owners and the Council to carry out appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.
- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local residents and any associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets subject to resources.
- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community:
- 12.4 Public consultation - The Foots Cray Conservation Area appraisal and management plan were subject to public consultation in July/August 2008. As part of the consultation exercise comments were sought from the Council's Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships, organisations such as English Heritage, etc., and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The document was also placed on the Council's website, in local libraries and contact centre. A letter advising of these arrangements was delivered to all properties in the area. The results of the consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text was revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available both as printed documents and on the Council's website.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local residents and where it can help and encourage local residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives.

Appendices

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

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

Roofs

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

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

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

Chimneys

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

Dormers

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

Fascias

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

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

Walls

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

Painting and stone cleaning

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

Windows and doors

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

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

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

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

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

Window and door materials

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

Rainwater goods

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

Boundary walls and railings

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

Minor additions

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

2 Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage

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

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

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

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

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

Alternatively call 020 8308 7789 or email gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk.

Donations to the Fund are welcome.

2 Contacts

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

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser

London Borough of Bexley,
Strategic Planning and Development
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,
Bexleyheath, Kent
DA6 7AT

Tel: 020 8303 7777

Email: martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk / gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage (London Region)
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1 8YZ

Tel: 020 7973 3000

Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

For information on Bexley's local history and archives:

Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre
Townley Road
Bexleyheath
Kent DA6 7HJ

Tel: 020 8836 7369

Email: archives@bexley.gov.uk

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

Email: info@spab.org.uk

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

