

# Harbledown Conservation Area Appraisal





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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Local authorities are required by law to preserve or enhance their conservation areas and part of that process is the production of a 'Conservation Area Appraisal' to explain what it is important about the area, and what improvements are needed.
- 1.2 This Appraisal follows the format suggested by English Heritage in their document 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' 2006.

### **Key Characteristics**

- 1.3 This Appraisal concludes that the most significant features of the Harbledown Conservation Area are:
- The unspoilt rural setting, of pasture and fruit farming in the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value;
  - The intimate topography and the dominance of trees and open views to surrounding farmland;
  - The high points around the village, Golden Hill and Duke's Meadow, from which the village settlement can be appreciated in its agricultural landscape setting.
  - The 41 listed buildings, together with the Locally Listed buildings and those identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. These, together with their curtilages and within the landscape setting define the character of Harbledown;
  - The rare leper church and St Nicholas' Hospital at the centre of the village, is of ancient foundation and probably the reason for the villages existence;
  - The winding village street has a strong sense of enclosure with remarkably contained character areas;
  - The mellow variety of building materials, including brick and stone, tile and slate roofs;
  - The belts of trees which form a backdrop to Church Hill and which visually enclose the orchards and landscape to the south and the woodland to the north.

### **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. However, it also brings certain responsibilities. 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 and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.

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- 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 who live and work in a 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 its own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that everyone shares the responsibility for environmental stewardship.

### **The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal**

- 1.8 The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Harbledown Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements which contribute to the special historic and architectural character and that should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the 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.
- 1.9 Other purposes included 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.
- 1.10 This document will be a background paper to the City Council's Local Development Framework, which is set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. In terms of the consultation process, this document has followed the draft Statement of Community Involvement and key stakeholders have been involved in its preparation as well as a public consultation being undertaken with the local community. The Parish Council will be consulted and all residents will be written to and asked for their comments.

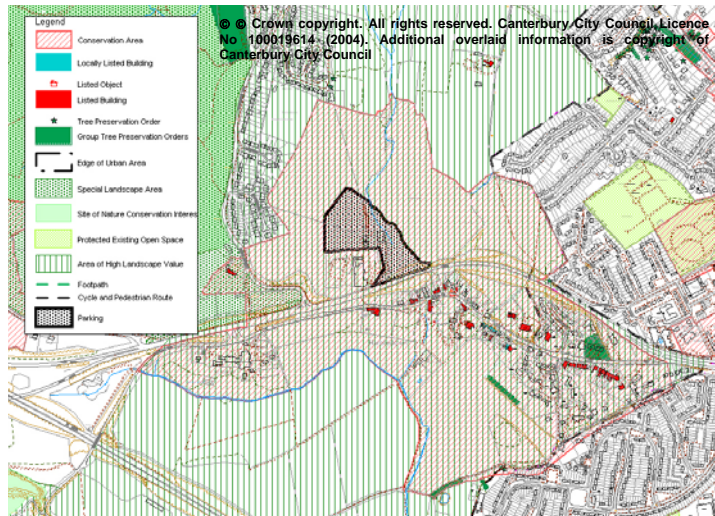
### **National and Regional Guidance**

- 1.11 Government advice on the control of conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.
- 1.12 The new draft South East plan places importance on the protection of the historic environment and acknowledges the role that the historic environment plays in contributing towards sustainable development, regeneration, tourism and social inclusion. Policy BE7 requires local authorities to adopt policies and proposals, which support conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 1.13 The Kent & Medway Structure Plan policies also provide the general strategic policy context. Policy QL6: Conservation Areas, sets out specific policy with respect to conservation areas.
- 1.14 The Kent Design Guide provides a starting point for good design that is well considered and contextually sympathetic amongst other things. It emphasises the need for the

layout and appearance of new development to be based on an appraisal of the existing character.

## Canterbury City Council Local Plan

- 1.15 Paragraphs 6.83-6.93 of the Local Plan deal with conservation areas and include policies BE7, BE8 and BE9. Policy BE7 provides the primary guidance to developers about conservation areas.



## 2.0 Location and Setting

- 2.1 Harbledown is located on the northern edge of the North Downs just one mile from Canterbury city centre. It lies on the old main road from London to Canterbury, the route of pilgrims celebrated in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. In the Manciple's tale Harbledown is referred to as "a litel town, which y cleped is Bob up and down, under the Blee, in Canterbury waye". The conservation area, designated in 1974 and extended in 1987 and again in 1994, is now widely drawn, encompassing the length of the village street and extensive farmland to the south, following contours down to the stream and along tree screens, and much more extensively to the north, essentially to the ridge of the adjoining hills. The population of Harbledown ward according at the 2001 census was 2,593 and throughout most of its history it has grown steadily but slowly. In 1801 the population was 473, rising to only 900 by 1931. The more recent growth is due to Post War housing outside the historic settlement. Most of the historic development runs off the village street, loosely and informally arranged with a small amount of development along The Mint, a narrow lane behind St Nicholas' Hospital. The population within the conservation area is estimated to be about 500 people.

### Topography & Geology

- 2.2 Harbledown developed as a nucleated settlement on the road into Canterbury from London, the last hill before the view of the city was revealed. It lies on the north fringe of the North Downs, cut through by the Stour valley to the south and with hills to the north rising to the London Clay plateau of the North Kent Plain. The topography in the immediate vicinity is complex and hilly and the farmland is a mixture of sheep grazing, on the hills north of the village and fruit growing towards the Stour valley to the south west. The village itself comprises the main street rising steeply up the hillside with the majority of development confined to its fringes. Harbledown is within the designated Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value.
- 2.3 The geology is mixed but Thanet beds overlain with River Gravel Terraces predominate.

### Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

- 2.4 Harbledown, by passed since 1976, is surprisingly tucked away. The rising land to the north and east, together with a mature tree screen, hides the main village street from

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the main road and from Canterbury. The valley to the south-west, fed by a tributary of the River Stour, is the only point where the village street has views out over farmland. Hasted, in his 'History of Kent' 1800, wrote 'the whole is very unequal ground of frequent hill and dale, affording continued picturesque and pleasing prospects over the neighbouring country.'



- 2.5** Although the by pass runs close to the village street, it runs through a cutting, is separated by a tree screen and is not especially intrusive. The main damage the by pass causes is that it severs the village street from the playing fields and farmland to the north and it has destroyed the setting of Hall Place which no longer relates visually to the village.
- 2.6** Approached from the west the village is revealed only gradually, as the street winds and eventually opens to the main vista up the hill. The effect remains that of a small rural village. By contrast, approached from the east the effect is of a continuation of the outer suburbs of Canterbury. Indeed tentacles of suburbia extend south and north of the historic settlement but are fairly well screened by the topography. Much of this suburbia dates from the years after World War 2 and it was reported in the Kent Messenger of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1955 that the village 'is slowly being engulfed by suburbia.' Subsequent planning policies have succeeded in holding back the tide.



Approach from the west



Approach from the east

### **3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology**

#### **Historic Development**

- 3.1** Harbledown was not included in the Domesday Book and probably grew up after archbishop Lanfranc founded the hospital of St Nicholas in 1084. As a leper colony this would most probably have been founded in open country, as leprosy was much feared. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Harbledown was noted for the 'salubrity of its air' (Hasted 1800) and the name may derive from the cultivation of medicinal herbs on the protected south facing slopes.
- 3.2** The Hospital now consists of almshouses, rebuilt in 1840, and the church of St Nicholas, which though of Norman origins has been substantially rebuilt. Harbledown was the last stop for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury and the hospital gateway (rebuilt in 1685) was built in an imposing position on the village street, no doubt to take advantage of the 'passing trade' from pilgrims. The parish church of St Michael stands further up the hill and on the other side of the road. It too is of medieval origins but was substantially rebuilt in 1881.

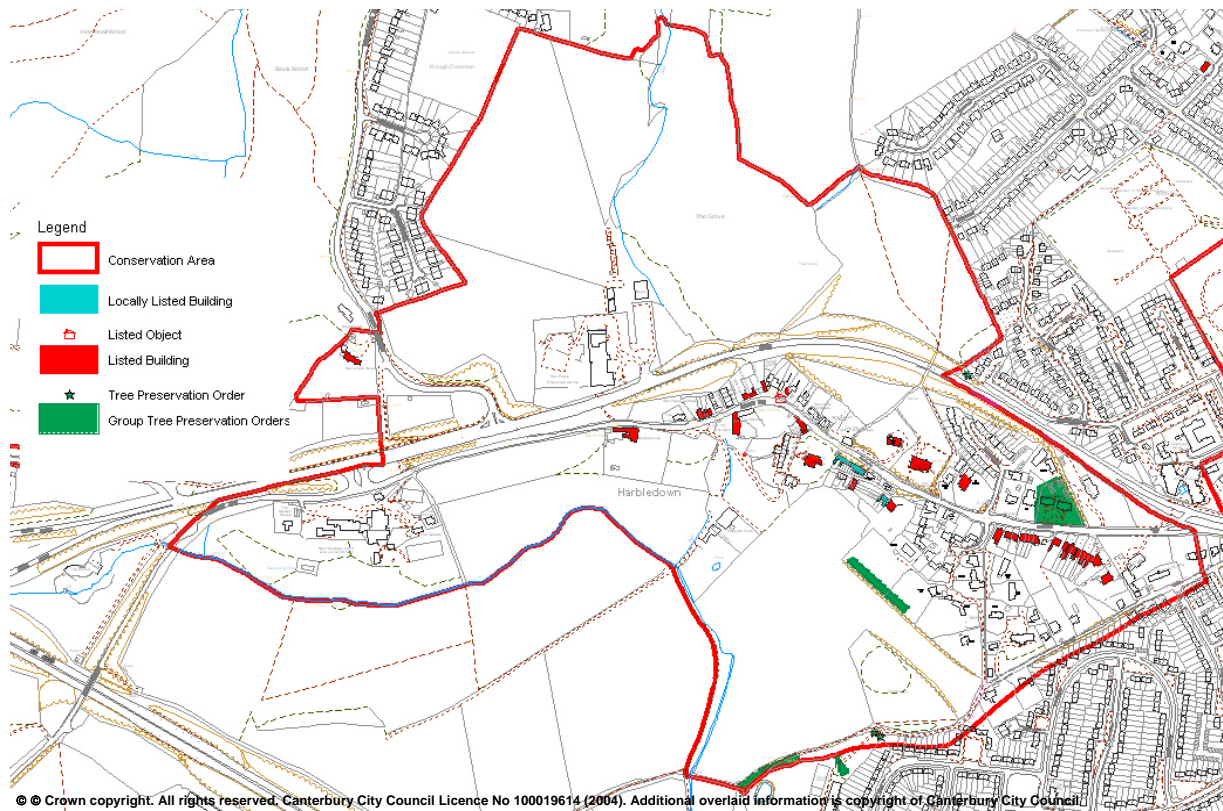
**3.3** The village must always have been scattered along the short main street from Hopebourne House and Hall Place at the western end to St Michael's church at the eastern end, with development also along The Mint, originally a piece of ground given in 1371 to the chantry priest of St Nicholas' church. In 1800 Hasted described The Mint as consisting of "eight houses or cottages divided into nearly as many more tenements".

### Archaeology

**3.4** Archaeology, is not just about evidence below ground, it also includes buildings. Evidence of the history of a building can be buried beneath layers of later changes. It is only in the last 50 years or so that the relative expense of materials versus labour has inverted. Generally over the centuries buildings have been continuously altered rather than fabric being replaced. Archaeological investigation can add another layer of understanding to the evolution and present-day significance of the settlement. Every historic building within 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. However, before granting permission for further changes, and as recommended in PPG15, the City Council may ask an applicant to provide an 'Archaeological Evaluation' of the building to help the City Council reach an informed decision about the proposals.

## 4.0 Character and Townscape

**4.1** For an analysis of the townscape character of Harbledown, the Conservation Area may be divided into six character zones, each with its own distinct characteristics. This is defined by the historic form of development (plot layout, roads and boundaries); the relationship of buildings to spaces, type of buildings and the materials; uses and activities; the contribution of landscape, trees and hedges.





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## Character Zone one The Eastern Approach – Summer Hill

- 4.2 Summer Hill has more in common with late Georgian and Victorian Canterbury than the traditional village of Harbledown, not surprising given that Canterbury is but one mile distant. Approached from the city there is no clue to the fact that the historic village lies just over the crest of the hill. The road is wide and ascends gently towards the church. Pavements are wide. Surfaces are tarmac and concrete kerbs.



### Built Form

- 4.3 There is an openness to the south side of Summer Hill, with first the late Victorian Highfield House set back in generous grounds enclosed to the street by a hedge and overlooked by a late Georgian gault brick double-fronted house and an urbane three-storey red brick Georgian terrace.(c 1824). These are unusual in not being aligned with Summer Hill. Set further back is New Tower Lodge, a small Gothick house of c1840. Further along Summer Hill more late Georgian terraces and houses, a prominent group stuccoed and with decorative ironwork and covered first floor balconies.
- 4.4 All of the buildings on the south side between Harbledown Park and New Tower Lodge are statutory listed buildings (grade II). Highfield Hotel is a substantial 1890s house that has altered little externally.
- 4.5 The north side has a much stronger sense of enclosure with mature tree and shrub screening, it is the vegetation which dominates rather than buildings as this side of the road was not developed until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with just two large detached houses set back in their own grounds. The Gable (now Odsal House) alone survives, The Hermitage having been replaced in the 1970s by Summer Court flats. New development is generally set away from the road and is screened by trees and shrubs.
- 4.6 Odsal House is a good example of domestic suburban design of c1860s, with castellated bays and prominent gables with decorative bargeboards. The Old Rectory is a listed building (grade II).



### The Eastern Approach- Summer Hill – key characteristics

- Broad village street of 19<sup>th</sup> century suburban character;
- Listed late Georgian terraces set back on the south side, otherwise large detached Victorian houses and three groups of 20<sup>th</sup> century development partly on the site of demolished Victorian houses;
- Informal tree and shrub screening on the north side and more formal hedge and hard boundaries to visible gardens on the south side;
- Hard edge to the carriageway with generous pavements with concrete kerbs.

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## Character Zone two - Mill Lane

- 4.7** Mill Lane is a discrete part of the Harbledown Conservation Area that does not relate to the rest of the village. Its character is essentially that of a country lane though development is never far away. To the south rear gardens of houses of the outer suburbs of Canterbury back on to the lane, whilst between the lane and Summer Hill a small number of houses in large garden plots have been developed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst these are visible they do not overwhelm the rural lane character. Development continues along a lane and footpath that links back to Summer Hill. A windmill stood close to the junction but was demolished in 1913. The enlarged miller's house and outbuildings remain as the only older buildings on Mill Lane, fronting directly on to it.



- 4.8** Mill Lane gives access onto Golden Hill (owned by the National Trust), a high point with views north-west to the village and more broadly west over orchards. This viewpoint highlights the significance of the undulating topography and the importance of careful management of the context of the settlement of Harbledown to ensure that it remains unharmed. This is one of a number of viewpoints from which a modern bungalow (due north) stands out assertively.



- 4.9** On higher ground further south Harbledown Heights is a recent house and garden which stands on the edge of suburban development. It stands forward of the suburban development which is partly screened by trees and above a line of trees that follows Mill Lane. It is visible from many points of higher ground around the village and conservation area and is a visually damaging intrusion which highlights the need to give careful consideration to potential impact on views.



**4.10** Mill Lane becomes a footpath, the North Downs way, which follows the historic Pilgrim's Way, at first as a sunken lane with trees along each side. The path descends into the valley with an important tree screen protecting the rural setting of Harbledown village.

Mill Lane – key characteristics

- Country lane with a strong sense of enclosure on both sides. Despite proximity of 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development backing on to the south side and loose knit 20<sup>th</sup> century development to the north the character remains that of a country lane;
- Buildings on the site of the windmill (which gives the lane its name) the only ones fronting directly onto the lane. Other, 20<sup>th</sup> century, development generally set back and at least partially screened.
- Soft verges and no street lighting;
- Peters out to a sunken path, part of the ancient Pilgrims Way.

**Character Zone three Church Hill – The Lodge to St Michael & All Angels Church**

**4.11** Church Hill is the historic nucleus of Harbledown, a small village with buildings loosely and informally laid out along the single main street. The gradient is gentle at first and then rises quite steeply through a cutting. This, together with the curve of the street, first to the left and then, more boldly, to the right give interest and character to the village and provide a constant element of surprise as views open up. The effect is aided by the north to south fall of the land, rising steeply behind the houses on the north side of Church Hill and falling away steeply, with open views to orchards, to the south.

**4.12** The dramatic changes in level also result in the use of a high pavement from beside the churchyard, dropping down at a different gradient to the road and necessitating the provision of a post and rail fence. This in itself becomes a feature in the townscape and is continued down the hill. Steep banks and retaining walls are also prominent features.



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- 4.13** Trees are important to the character of the village street, both as the backdrop for buildings, especially noticeable on the north side, and also between buildings. They are a reminder that Harbledown is a rural settlement despite being so close to Canterbury. Especially important are those at St Nicholas Hospital and on the curve of the Church Hill between the Hospital and The Stables.



#### Built form

- 4.14** Although the houses are quite closely grouped together what is important is the variety of plot sizes and shapes, the variety, size and placement of buildings on individual plots and the variety of styles, periods and building materials. Nothing is uniform but all comes together in a happy jumble. What is important, however, is that nothing stands out assertively against its neighbours. Most of the buildings are on the north side of the road with the complex of St Nicholas Hospital dominating the south side even though the rising ground keeps it well hidden. The two churches are not dominant in the street scene as might be expected owing to the intricate topography.
- 4.15** A number of buildings are statutory listed, with the older buildings scattered in amongst later, mostly 19<sup>th</sup> century, development. Earlier buildings are generally of red brick with clay tile roofs, though there is also painted weatherboard. The 19<sup>th</sup> century introduced gault brick and Welsh slate and the higher status buildings always used stone.

#### Church Hill, The Lodge to St Michael's Church– key characteristics

- Houses and groups of buildings informally set along both sides of the street, some aligned, others at right angles, some set back others close to the street edge;
- Bold curve in the street followed by a steep ascent through cutting to crest of the hill;
- Strong sense of enclosure towards the eastern end of Church Hill given by the cutting. On the bend, breadth and open aspect to buildings on the north side but also enclosed by the land rising behind. The inner side of the bend enclosed by mature tree growth;
- Raised pavement and pavement protected by post and rail fence;
- Variety of building styles and materials.

#### **Character Zone four - The Mint**

- 4.16** Although close to the village centre The Mint has its own character and is visually quite separate. Topography again plays a part as The Mint is elevated above Church Hill which cuts through this part of the hillside. Nos. 1-12 The Mint front onto Church Hill, although at higher level and their rear gardens drop down to the narrow lane called The Mint. Two 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalows to the east are unsympathetic infill, not least owing to the materials used.

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**4.17** The lane itself is narrow and unmetalled, enclosed by hedges and banks with vegetation spilling over, contributing to a character of rustic charm. The buildings on the south side are arranged in picturesque variety, the gardens of Nos. 13-16 running parallel with the lane. Claverings and Nos. 13-16 are statutory listed buildings Grade II. The views between the buildings on the south side over the valley to orchards are important as is the axial view down the Mint to the east end of St Nicholas' church.



#### The Mint – key characteristics

- Narrow unmade lane descending from east to west, with informal soft verges, the land rising to the north and dropping away steeply to the south with views out;
- Spaced terraces of cottages on the south side, the gardens of Nos. 13-16 running parallel to the lane;
- Irregular rear gardens and backs of terrace fronting Church Hill

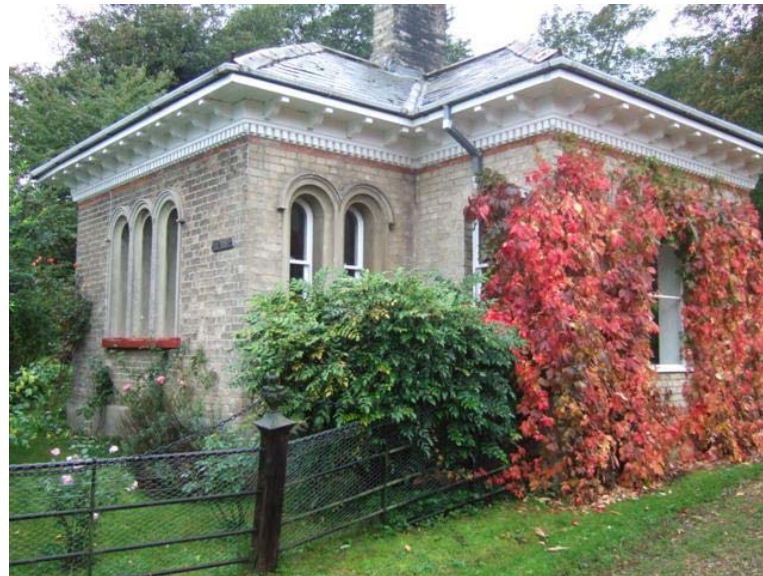
#### **Character Zone five Western approach – Faulkners Lane**

**4.18** Approached from the west the land is relatively level. The conservation area boundary extends westwards to beyond the junction with the main road. Vernon Holme, now Kent College Junior School, was built as a private house for Sidney Cooper in 1849. In a plain gabled 'Tudorbethan' style it has lost much of its charm through alteration and extension. The landscape park to the house survives with many fine specimen trees.

**4.19** On the left-hand side of the road is a milestone dated 1744 but there is no sense of the village until the rear of Hopebourne (farmhouse) comes into view. This is a historic medieval hall house. A rear wing and outbuildings group nicely along the side of the road with the main range hidden from view. The house now has a grand pedimented Georgian front which faces east towards the village. On the north side of the road the continuous red brick wall to the former park of Hall Place is a prominent feature and together these features announce arrival at Harbledown although the village street remains largely hidden from view. Dominating the view at this point is the tower of St Nicholas' church and the wooded hillside with a few buildings protruding.



**4.20** The Victorian Lodge on the left clearly marks the former entrance to Hall Place though today the drive mysteriously disappears into trees and undergrowth and comes to an abrupt end at the embankment formed with the construction of the bypass. Some attractive period ironwork remains either side of the entrance.



**4.21** East of Hopebourne there are open views to orchards on the valley slopes below. A lane drops steeply to descend to Hospital Farm and in the angle between the two roads a grade II listed barn (converted to a dwelling in 1987) has a prominent thatched roof. From Church Hill it is screened from view by trees and being set well below the level of the road. Only at this point is the village effectively revealed.



Western approach, Faulkners Lane – key characteristics

- Level approach with shallow descent into village. Wide road with land dropping away to the south and enclosed by embankment with tree screen to the north;
- Hopebourne prominently sited, announces arrival at the village and faces towards it;
- Continuous red brick wall on the north side reflects its historic function as boundary to the park of Hall Place.
- Lane curving away and descending to Hospital Farm

**Character Zone six - The rural hinterland and Hall Place**

**4.22** The conservation area boundary has been drawn widely around the village, essentially to bring the landscape setting within the boundaries. Hall Place, the ‘big house’ of the village, 18<sup>th</sup> century but largely Victorian in its present appearance, has been severed from the village by the construction of the bypass in 1976. It no longer has any real visual relationship to the village. Its setting has also been seriously compromised, with the bypass running close to the south front of the house where formal



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gardens and a conservatory once stood. The estate was sold in 1919. The main house remains, in institutional use, the walled kitchen gardens now a car park.

- 4.23** To the south of the village the conservation area includes orchards and farmland and the conservation area boundary generally follows tree belts; along the Pilgrim's Way, along a stream or drain which runs up to Hospital farm and the west to beyond Vernon Holme. As the topography north of the village is made up of chalk downland the boundary follows the crest of the immediately encircling hills, in an arc dropping down to the main road and including an outlying listed building, Havisham House of 1910 by Baillie Scott.



The rural hinterland and Hall Place– key characteristics

- Undulating topography to the south, generally descending towards the Stour valley, characterised by orchards and tree belts;
- Rising hills to the north characterised by sheep grazing and a belt of woodland formerly known as The Grove and part of the Hall Place estate.

**General Character - Spaces and Views**

- 4.24** The key open spaces of Harbledown are the churchyard, the grounds of St Nicholas' Hospital, Golden Hill, Jubilee Field and the open common land and recreation ground north of the bypass.

- 4.25** Because of the undulating nature of the terrain there are numerous points where views are important, views looking out from the village to the surrounding countryside, views from the high points within the conservation area overlooking the village and beyond to the countryside setting. The key view points are:



- Views from Golden Hill from the north anti-clockwise round to the south-west.
  - Views from Duke's Meadow, the recreation ground and the higher ground in the north west corner of the conservation area towards the village and to Golden Hill beyond.
  - Views from Jubilee Fields south-westwards.
  - Views from The Mint and St Nicholas' Hospital grounds south westwards out to open country.
- Views from the foot of Church Hill looking south over the valley.
  - Local views from St Michael & All Angels' churchyard over the village.



**4.26** What these broader views show is that the historic settlement is remarkably well contained within a rural farming landscape, despite the proximity of 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development very close by, especially to the east of the village but also to the north west. This has been achieved by a combination of the natural landscape contours and valuable tree screens. Nevertheless some unsympathetic development does intrude and underscores the importance of considering the impact of development outside the conservation area that may impact upon it.

#### **General Character - Activities and Uses**

**4.27** As with so many villages Harbledown is almost wholly residential. There are no shops and the Coach & Horses is the last remaining pub. The parish church is still in active use. Whilst there are other employment uses within the village, the character of the village street, with the exception of the church and pub, is essentially residential. Outside the village centre Hospital Farm remains a working farm, Vernon Holme is a school and Hall Place is part of Canterbury Christ Church University.

#### **General Character - Plan Form, Building Types and Boundaries**

**4.28** There is no regularity to the layout of buildings and plots, which tend to reflect the period in which they were developed. Thus 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century development tends to be built in terraced form on long narrow plots, except where substantial houses are set within large gardens.

#### **General Character - Listed Buildings**

**4.29** There are 24 entries on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest (listed buildings), totalling 41 buildings, all at Grade II. These are:

- Church Hill - Retaining wall to Black Prince's Well
- Church Hill - Former Barn to Hospital Farm
- Church Hill - The Old Leper church of St Nicholas
- Church Hill - Piece of wall of the original St Nicholas' Hospital
- Church Hill – Gateway of St Nicholas' Hospital & St Nicholas' Farmhouse
- Church Hill – Nos. 1-4
- Church Hill – Cumberland & Pear Tree Cottages
- Church Hill – Duke House
- Church Hill – Duke Cottage
- Church Hill – Church Hill House
- Church Hill – Church of St Michael
- Lanfranc Gardens – Old Rectory
- Church Hill – Hopebourne
- The Mint – Nos. 13-16
- Church Hill – K6 Telephone kiosk outside Duke Cottage



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- Palmers Cross Hill – Havisham House
  - Summer Hill – No 1 (Tower Lodge)
  - Summer Hill – No 2
  - Summer Hill – Nos. 3-9
  - Summer Hill – No 10 (Grove Cottage)
  - Summer Hill – Nos. 11-14 (Harbledown Place)
  - Summer Hill – Nos. 15-16
  - Summer Hill – No 17 (Harbledown Court)
  - Summer Hill - Claverings

**4.30** In addition to statutory listed buildings the Council has a Local List protected by policies in the Local Plan. These buildings do not have the same protection as statutory listed buildings but nevertheless considered significant for their external appearance. Locally Listed buildings are:

- The Mint – Nos. 1-12
- The Mint – Nos. 1-2 Clavering Cottages

#### **General Character - Key Unlisted Buildings**

**4.31** Apart from the Locally Listed buildings mentioned above there are other buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and which the Council would not wish to see demolished as their removal would harm the character of the conservation area. These are marked on the accompanying map.

#### **General Character - Building Materials, Colours and Textures**

**4.32** There is a wide range of traditional building materials used at Harbledown. Amongst the older high status buildings stone was used, including flint, local Kentish ragstone and Caen stone imported from France. There is even one instance of the use of exposed chalk blocks in the outbuildings associated with The Stables. For walling materials brick is the most prevalent material used, older properties are usually red brick, in varying hues, but from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow gault brick was used, with the Victorians often using a combination for decorative effect. Brick is also sometimes painted. In the Georgian and Victorian period painted stucco was also popular. There are a few instances of painted and stained weatherboard, the latter for agricultural buildings. Decorative tile hanging is occasionally used in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**4.33** The predominant roofing material is the red clay tile, handmade Kent peg tiles on older buildings and later machine made clay tiles. There is a particularly interesting Victorian profiled machine made interlocking tile used at Odsal House. Welsh slate becomes the most popular roofing material as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progresses, owing to lower prices as transportation becomes easier. Thatch, which would once have been commonplace, appears only on The Barn, the converted barn formerly belonging to Hospital Farm. Cast iron is used for decorative elements, railings and balconies in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and for rainwater goods.

**4.34** The result of all these materials is a rich variety of colours and textures, enhanced by the patina of age given by years of weathering giving an overall softness and subtle gradation between the buildings and their setting in nature.

#### **General Character – The Public Realm**

**4.35** The main aspect of the public realm that contributes positively to the character of the conservation area is provided by the natural contours which give interest to the principle road through the village by curves and undulations which together make for

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interest views and the surprise of views opening up only at the last minute. Variations in the road width also add interest. Despite being the main road into Canterbury until 1976 the road through the village still retains narrower sections that give intimacy and variety to the village. There are no historic surfaces of significance apart from the unmade up character of The Mint.

- 4.36** The crash barrier on Church Hill is a legacy of the main road status and ideally should be removed. The raised pavement and the simple painted post and rail fence is an unusual feature that adds interest and character both for its visual contribution and for the different perspective of the village it provides for pedestrians. Street lighting is of a standard 20<sup>th</sup> century type of a simple bracket mounted on a post. There are relatively few posts and they do not intrude excessively. Equally, the timber telegraph poles are not intrusive.

#### **General Character - Trees**

- 4.37** Harbledown is not an urban village, despite having some terraced houses of urban character. Nature is never far away and domestic gardens and especially trees are of immense importance to the character of the conservation area. In the village centre trees are always visible and, appearing behind and between buildings, they soften the urban character. More significant belts of trees provide a backdrop to many buildings and run along many frontages where buildings are set back. Towards the boundaries of the conservation area belts of trees provide important visual enclosure and sometimes screen unsympathetic development close to its boundaries. Significant tree groups are shown on the accompanying map.

### **5.0 Conservation Area Boundary Review**

- 5.1** As part of the character appraisal assessment consideration has been given to the existing conservation area boundaries and whether these should be enlarged or reduced. Generally the existing boundaries have been drawn widely to encompass much of the setting of the village by following the high ground horizon or belts of trees.
- 5.2** Thus the conservation area boundary could be brought in more closely to the confines of the settlement, but the existing boundaries, which include much of the setting of Harbledown, have been established for many years and it is not inappropriate to draw the boundary widely. However, it is important to ensure that it is not then assumed that any development outside the existing boundaries will not have an impact on the conservation area. The judgement needs to be made with any development proposal that might be visible from the conservation area. Recent development has been permitted on the crest of the hill south of the village, which has resulted in a damaging visual intrusion.
- 5.3** It is concluded that the conservation area boundary does not require adjustment.

### **6.0 Issues**

#### **Pressure for Expansion and Modernisation**

- 6.1** Many of the properties in the village are small and whilst there is normally some scope for change and enlargement it is important that change or enlargement does not swamp the existing building, or in the case of a building that in itself is not sympathetic, does not make it more visible. An overlarge modern rear extension to one of the properties on The Mint has a very negative impact on the character of that part of the conservation area.

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- 6.2** The scope for new buildings will inevitably be limited and will be governed by strict local plan policies. Where there is the potential for new buildings that comply with other local plan policies it will be critical to ensure that the character of the area is left unharmed. This applies equally to development within the conservation area boundary as to that outside of it.

### **Character Zone one The Eastern Approach – Summer Hill**

- 6.3** New development has been accommodated without detriment to the established character of this part of the conservation area. The key issue will be the maintenance of those aspects which contribute to the character and quality of the street scene. An area where improvement might be made is the front boundaries of the listed terraces at Nos. 3-9 and 11-14 Summer Hill. One element of original decorative iron railing survives. If sufficient evidence can be found and if all owners could be persuaded to act together there would be merit in re-introducing period boundary treatment. However it would be important to execute any such work to the highest standard. The poorly detailed reinstated wall and railings in front of Harbledown Court do not enhance the setting of the building or the conservation area.



### **Character Zone two - Mill Lane**

- 6.4** The important character of Mill Lane is that it retains the appearance of a country lane despite housing development close by on both sides. It is important to manage the trees and greenery to ensure that this illusion is preserved. Golden Hill provides important views but foreground trees and shrubs threaten to block views. A management regime should ensure that the important views are maintained and conversely that trees are allowed to grow to soften or screen unwelcome intrusions. It would be desirable to soften the impact of the prominent modern bungalow by allowing trees to grow up in front of it and perhaps by painting the building a colour that stands out less.



### **Character Zone three Church Hill – The Lodge to St Michael & All Angels Church**

- 6.5** The informality of layout and the spaces between buildings on Church Hill are of crucial importance to the character of the area. A threat in such circumstances can come from pressure to enlarge dwellings or infill between plots. The topography of Harbledown will mitigate against this but it will be important to ensure that the harmonious balance that keeps Harbledown a rural village is not lost. It is also important to maintain the level of trees and green that act as a foil to the buildings and contribute to this same rural character.

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- 6.6** The length of crash barrier on the outside of the curve of Church Hill is presumably a relic of the days when this was the main road into Canterbury. Unless there is a compelling case on safety grounds for its retention it should be removed



#### **Character Zone four - The Mint**

- 6.7** A likely pressure may come from a desire to enlarge what are generally modest properties. Substantial flat-roofed extensions to the rear of a house towards the west end of Nos. 1-12 shows how damaging this can be. The upper part of the extension breaks through the eaves and is grossly over dominant. Boundary treatment should remain rustic and low key, especially to the rear gardens of the houses on the north side.



#### **Character Zone five Western approach – Faulkners Lane**

- 6.8** What is important to the western approach to Harbledown is that the village remains hidden from view until the last moment. The park wall and trees provide a strong sense of enclosure to the north whilst Hopebourne encloses the south side and creates a gateway. The openness of the south side beyond, with views over the valley is an important contrast before the road finally curves and the village comes into view. These aspects need to be safeguarded, with the character remaining essentially rural.

#### **Character Zone six - The rural hinterland and Hall Place**

- 6.9** The logic of inclusion of the rural hinterland, apart from the inclusion of Hall Place and Havisham House, is to protect the setting of the village and views to and from the historic settlement. Countryside policies should protect the rural areas from new development but where development proposals are considered it will be important to ensure that new development does not intrude on views. This can be particularly important when development is sited on high ground where its impact from further away may not be immediately apparent.

#### **Views**

- 6.10** The complex and intimate topography is such that there are many views to and from the village that contribute to the special character of the conservation area. It is essential to give full consideration to the possible impact of any development from both near and far. Situated so close to the city of Canterbury underlines the importance of protecting the conservation area visually from encroaching development. Successful management will depend upon a combination of preventing inappropriate development and ensuring screening of development, which is otherwise acceptable.

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## **7.0 Contact Details**

- 7.1** For queries on planning matters or general conservation advice you are encouraged to consult the City Council's planning officers who will be pleased to assist.

**Telephone**      **01227 862190**  
**Fax**                **01227 379059**  
**e-mail**            **conservation@canterbury.gov.uk**  
Or write to:      Conservation and Countryside  
                          Regeneration & Economic Development  
                          Canterbury City Council  
                          Military Road  
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