

Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton Conservation Area Appraisal



Canterbury City Council

11 January 2011



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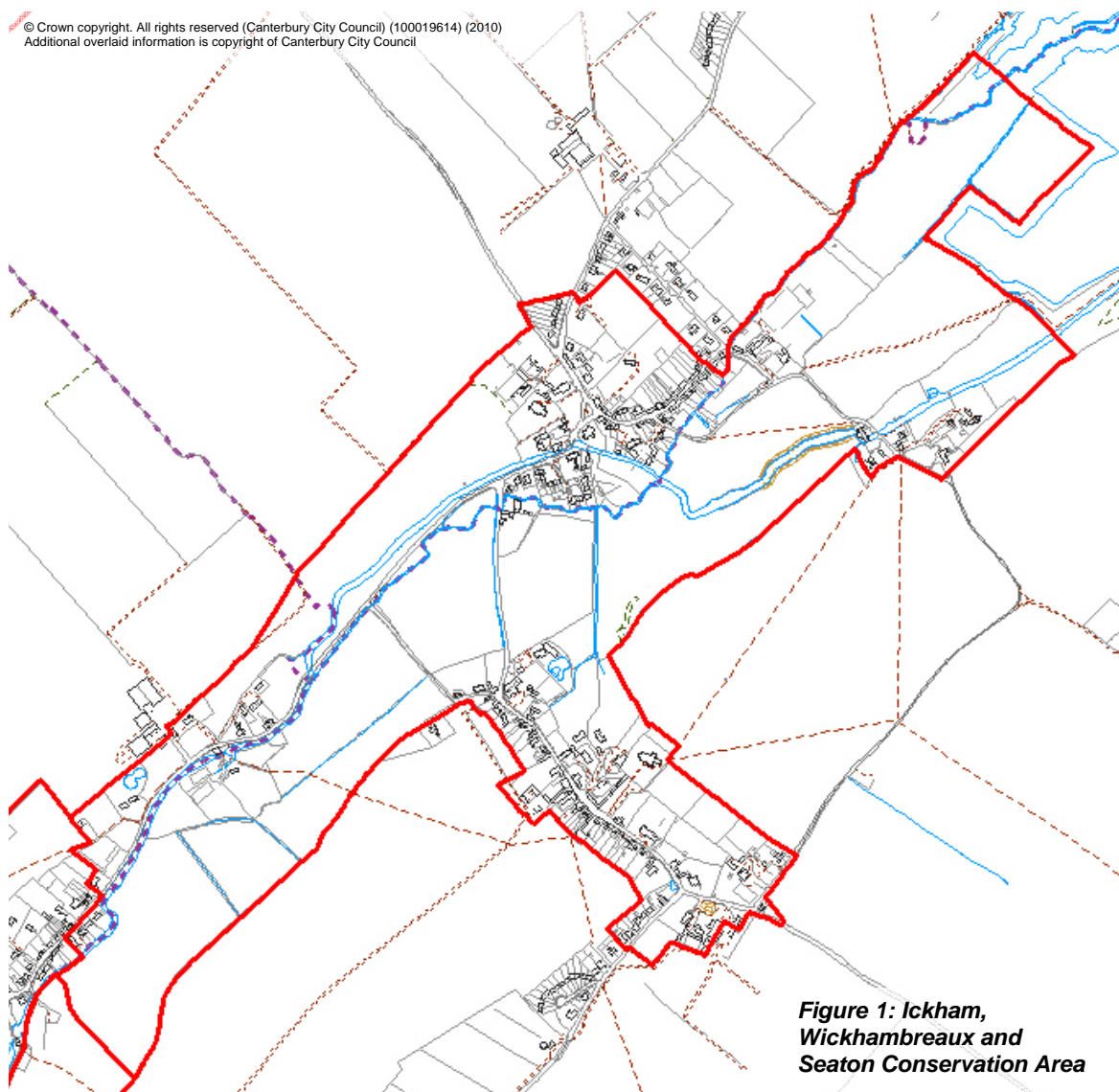
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1. Introduction

Conservation areas were first introduced in 1967 and are currently defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Section 69 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

This appraisal examines the key elements that contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton conservation area. The character of any town/area is determined by its topography, location, the layout of its streets and open spaces and the age, material and style of its buildings. In the case of Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton the combination of all these factors creates an idyllic rural water meadow landscape and a unique, special, ‘sense of place’.

The conservation area was originally two small conservation areas tightly drawn around the built environs of Ickham (designated 26.05.1972) and Wickhambreaux (designated 29.08.1969). In response to proposals for gravel extraction at Ickham and Seaton these conservation areas were amalgamated and extended to include land along the Little Stour and around Seaton. The designation was approved on 7 July 1989 to protect the villages and their historic landscape setting.



1.1 The purpose and status of this appraisal

The principal purpose of this appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton conservation area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Local Plan and the Local Development Framework. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, proposals in the conservation area. This document has the status of a background paper to the City Council's Local Development Framework.

The appraisal also includes a review of the conservation area 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.

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 the conservation area and are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, which together contribute to the character of the conservation area. 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 as a central part of our cultural heritage and that everyone shares the responsibility for environmental stewardship.

1.2 Key Characteristics

This appraisal concludes that the most significant features of the Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton Conservation Area are:

- Rural villages that are well integrated into the landscape.
- Little Stour meandering through flat topography.
- A mix of 17th to 19th century and older buildings with little modern infill.
- Open rural landscape setting with fields, vistas and low boundary hedges and pockets of woodland.
- Large established trees and high hedges within the settlements that provide visual enclosure.
- Linear form of built development including old farm and manor buildings.



- Use of a mixed palette of materials but a wide range of building styles and types.
- Narrow soft edged roads lined with hedgerows on most routes into the villages.
- Mill buildings and churches that punctuate the skyline due to the flat landscape.
- Traditional water meadows and fields adjacent to the river.
- Natural wildlife habitat and corridor value of the Little Stour and associated vegetation.

1.3 Planning Policy Framework

National Policy Guidance

Legislation concerning conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Government's national policies concerning the historic environment is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment published in 2010. The Government's overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

Guidance concerning the implementation of PPS5 is given in the accompanying 'Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide published in March 2010. The guide states that a key consideration in development plan documents will be conservation area appraisals. Appraisals should describe the character of an area or place, explain why it is important and how heritage assets create or contribute to this.

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.

The Local Development Framework

The primary means by which the City Council ensures the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas is by applying the policies of the Canterbury District Local Development Framework and the saved policies from the Local Plan through the development control process.

The Canterbury District Local Plan, adopted in July 2006, set out the spatial strategy for the Canterbury District. The Local Development Framework (LDF) will supersede the Local Plan in 2012. The Local Plan remains an important part of the planning framework for the district. Most of its policies were saved by the Secretary of State in 2009 and continue to be relevant in determining planning applications. Policy BE7 provides the primary guidance to developers about conservation areas.

The LDF consists of a collection of Local Development Documents, including the Core Strategy, Proposals Maps, Area Action Plans, and other development plan documents, which may deal with conservation issues as well as Supplementary Planning Documents. The LDF Core Strategy Options Report was published in January 2010 and was subject to public consultation in February/March 2010. The Core Strategy when adopted will provide the overall spatial strategy for the district until 2026. The relevant policies of the Core Strategy Options Report are CP5 Good Design and Sustainability and CP7 Strategic Assets.

Heritage, Archaeology and Conservation Supplementary Planning Document

The Heritage, Archaeology and Conservation Supplementary Planning Document was approved in October 2007. Chapter 4 explains the features that contribute to the character and appearance of conservation areas. Chapter 5 provides detailed guidance for developments in conservation areas.

2. Location and Setting

The parishes of Ickham and Well and Wickhambreaux are approximately five miles east of Canterbury. The conservation area follows the route of the Little Stour from Littlebourne to Seaton and includes the settlements of Wickhambreaux, Ickham and Seaton.

Ickham is a linear settlement along a single road, with many historic houses. Its form still conforms to its mediaeval pattern and the original boundaries are virtually intact. The southeastern end is marked by the hall house of New Place, with the 13th-century Parish Church of St John the Evangelist in the centre and the northwestern end by the mediaeval gothic of the Old Rectory. Although The Street has a linear form it meanders with wider and narrower points. The topography is flat and mature trees form an important part of the rural character of the village.



Ickham – Church of St John



Wickhambreaux – The Green and Wickham Court

Wickhambreaux is centred on the village green. The green contains mature trees and several buildings of great character including St Andrew's Church, the Rose Inn, Wickham Court and The Old Rectory. Much of the village housing consists small cottages along The Street.

The Little Stour runs the length of the conservation area, much of the current riverbed is based on previous diversions. Seaton is a small hamlet based around a watermill on the Little Stour. It is distinguished by its tight grouping with a surround of trees and its close relationship to the river.



The 2001 census showed the Ickham and Well parish as having a population of 417 persons living in 163 households and the Wickhambreaux parish as having a population of 471 persons living in 207 households. It should be noted that the conservation area covers only a small portion of the area of these parishes and includes other villages so the population within this conservation area will be substantially less. There has been little growth or new buildings in the parishes since the census.

2.1 Topography

The conservation area is set in a shallow valley with a rolling floor, the gentle upper slopes of which carry large-scale arable fields. The Little Stour Valley forms a compact and discreet tract of countryside. The principal topographic feature is the Little Stour, which rises from springs in the vicinity of Well Chapel, then flows north-east, catching the tributary of the Wingham River and eventually feeding into the Great Stour confluence at Plucks Gutter.

The topography of the Little Stour Valley is one of gentle rolling countryside, the ground rising to not much above 16 metres and the valley floor lying less than 10 metres above sea level. The majority of the conservation area is low lying land in the Little Stour Valley so is prone to flooding (see figure 2). Although being fertile soils on an alluvium base most of the land immediately surrounding Wickhambreaux and the Little Stour carries an agricultural land classification of Grade 3 due to water-logging, while the agricultural land around Ickham is generally high quality Grade 1.

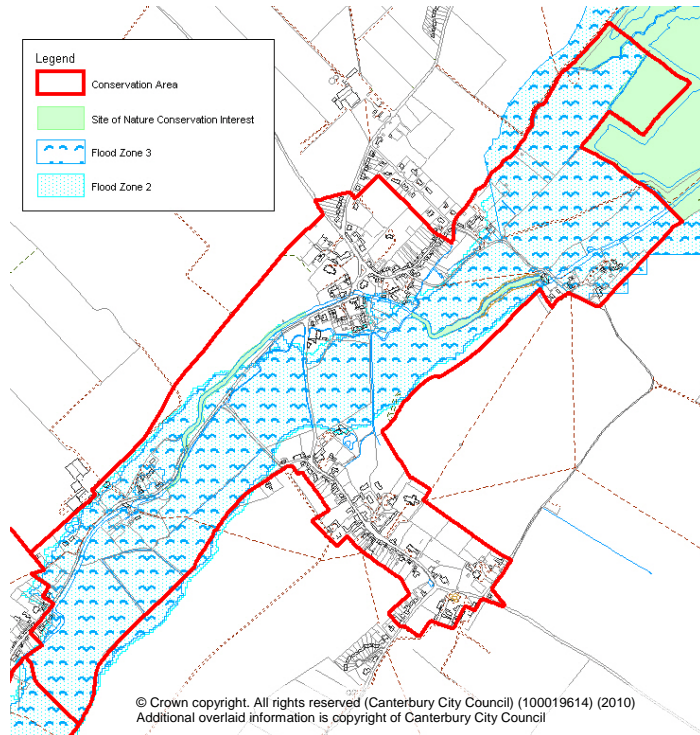


Figure 2 – The flood zone, as shown on the Local Plan Proposal Maps 2006

2.2 Landscape setting and connections

An historic water meadow landscape setting associated with the Little Stour links the settlements of Seaton, Ickham and Wickhambreaux. The conservation of the villages in their landscape setting is important in both environmental and historic terms. The Little Stour valley meanders its way through the landscape and acts to link the villages, outlying mills, farmsteads and fields. Views are generally limited to the immediate surroundings and adjacent villages.

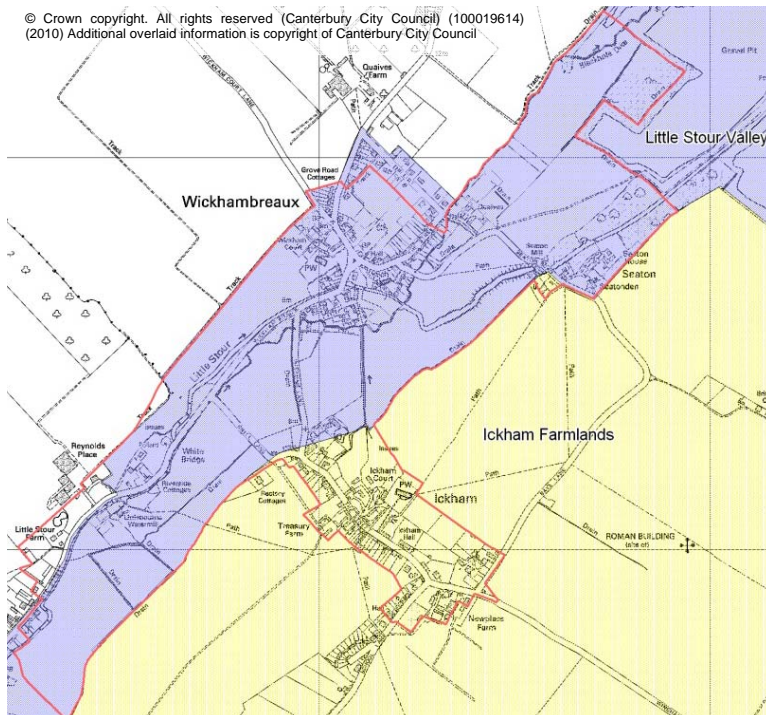


Figure 3 Landscape types

The main vertical features within the landscape are the tall white weatherboard clad mills, the church towers and the rooflines of oasthouses and roofs and chimneys of larger homes. These blend into the rolling landscape due to the predominance of large established trees and hedgerows.

The conservation area includes two landscape areas; 1) Little Stour valley and 2) Ickham Farmlands, as identified in the Blean Woods and the Great and Little Stour Valleys Landscape Appraisal 2001 and the Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2010.

Little Stour Valley

The predominant landscape feature of this conservation area is the river and flat alluvial flood plain of the Little Stour, which winds its way across a water meadow/marshland landscape, crossed by minor lanes that follow the valley floor.



The valley has largely retained its traditional character and field pattern as grazing marsh due to its low lying and waterlogged nature. The fields are divided by a network of dykes and hedgerows, which are a typical feature in water meadow landscapes. The distinctive wetland planting of marginal and aquatic species of the river corridor, the overgrown millponds and millraces associated with the tall weatherboarded mill houses, all add to the unique quality of the landscape. The built environment is well integrated into the landscape with older buildings sitting comfortably in the rural setting.

Ickham Farmlands

Located around Ickham this low-lying, undulating landscape, with fertile well drained soils has resulted in large-scale open arable fields. Agricultural intensification and the associated loss of trees and hedgerows, has resulted in long and open views except around Ickham where mature trees and hedgerows dominate. It is a coherent landscape of straight, narrow lanes and uniform open fields with few hedgerows, broken only by the historic quality of the built environment.



Ickham and farmlands from Baye Lane



Ickham from Bridleway – Photo by A. Mauduit

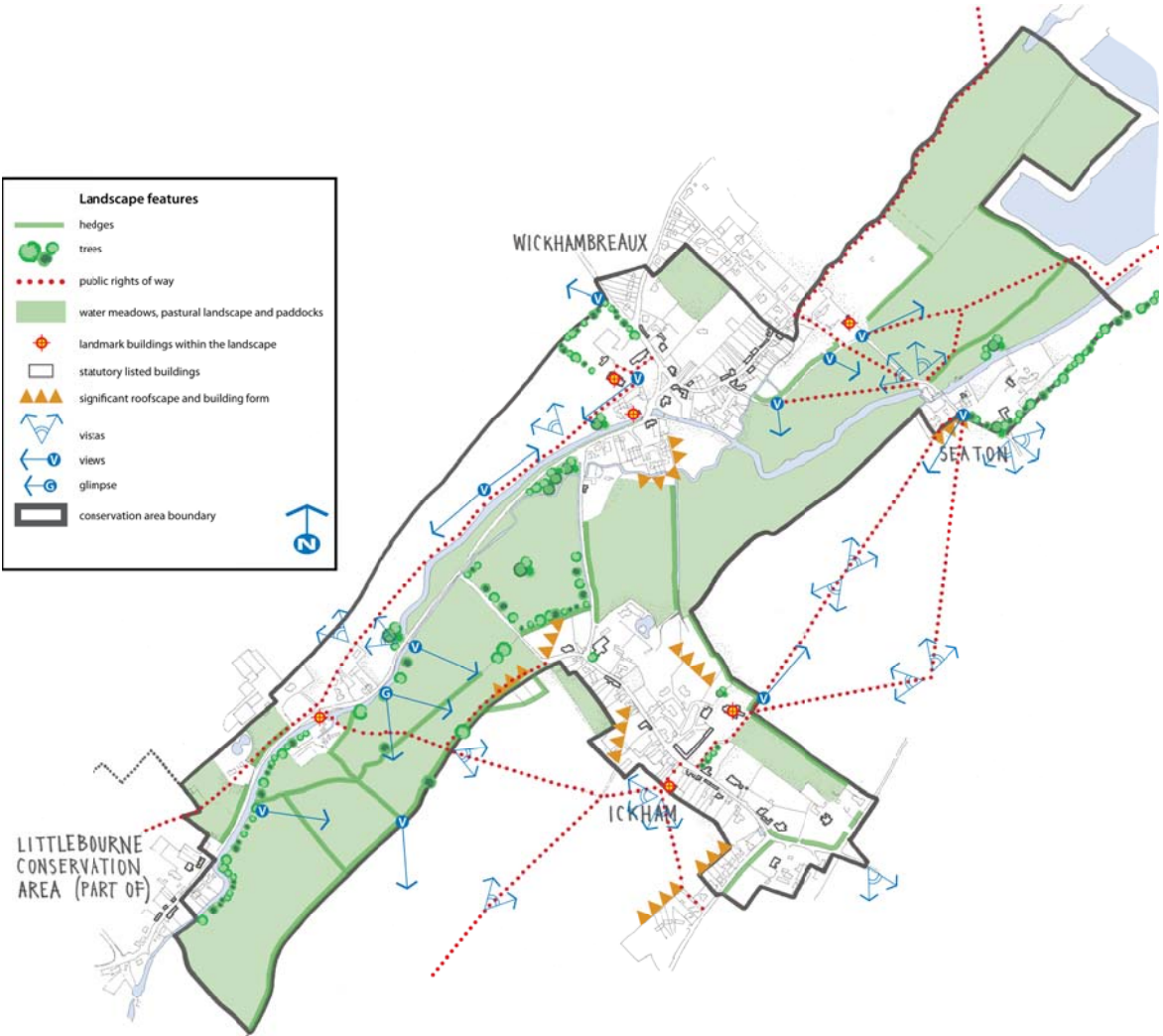


Figure 4: Shows the key landscape features, buildings and views.

2.3 Biodiversity Assessment

Chalk rivers are a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat. The Little Stour habitat is greatly influenced by a series of mill structures, however, the river and flood plain provide an important wildlife corridor and are species rich. The river margins, adjacent flood plain and associated traditional forms of land management provide for a large number of wildlife habitats.

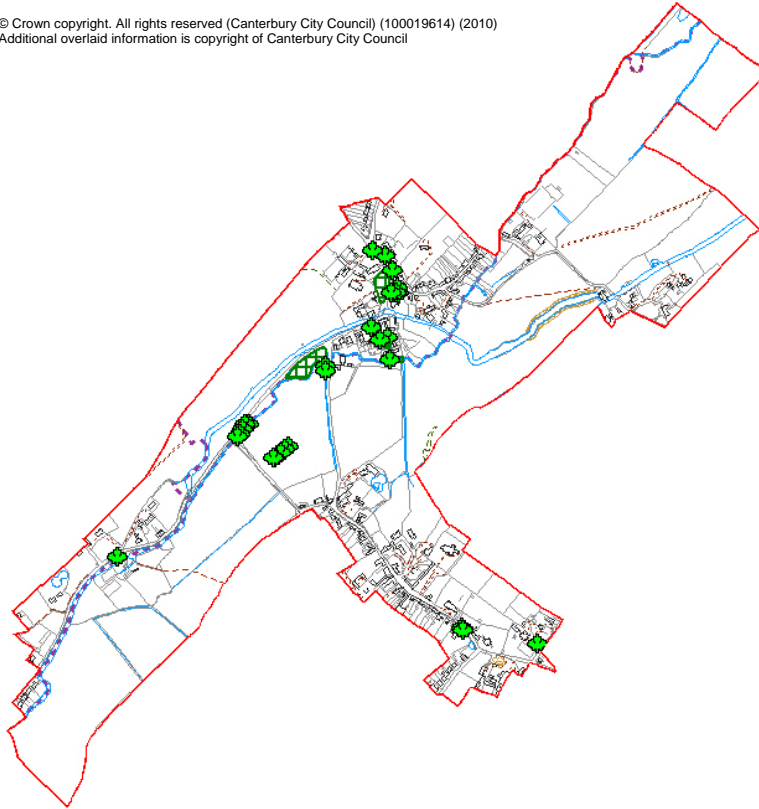
Features of ecological value found within the conservation area include:

- Significant numbers of mature and younger native trees. These trees provide valuable habitats for birds and invertebrates. When grown in a linear formation (such as those located on the boundaries of Seaton), they provide a suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats.
- The 'Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Pits' Local Wildlife Site (LWS), the majority of which is outside of the conservation area, but contained within it is a small area of wetland and sections of the Little Stour. These areas support colonies of rare aquatic plants, brook lamprey, water vole and numerous bird species including grey wagtail and kingfisher.
- The rough grassland, around the lake on the eastern boundary, supports a growing population of butterflies, including the marbled white and Essex skipper.
- The presence of a good network of mature hedgerows offers an important habitat to birds, small mammals and invertebrates. They also act as important wildlife corridors, permitting movement between areas of suitable habitat.
- The expansive area of open meadow grassland that separates the three settlements provides suitable foraging habitat for birds such as rooks, jackdaw and redwing.
- The large residential gardens present in all three villages provide varied habitat supporting a wide variety of invertebrates, birds and possibly amphibian and reptile populations.
- The large number of historic buildings can offer suitable breeding, hibernating and roosting habitat for bats and owls. Legal protection from the wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and at European level by the Habitat Regulations 2010 makes it illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill or injure a bat or to damage, disturb or obstruct access to a roost even if the species are not currently present.



Trees & Hedgerows

There are many agricultural hedgerows within the conservation area that provide valuable habitat for a number of species. Countryside hedgerows (those not associated with the curtilage of a dwelling) are protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. These hedgerows cannot be altered (beyond general maintenance) or removed without 6 weeks prior formal notice being given to the local planning authority.



Trees have protection in Conservation Areas (Town and Country Planning Act 1990), as trees often form part of the special landscape setting to historic buildings. Any tree located in the conservation area may not be removed without 6 weeks notice being given to Local Authorities. Protection in the form of a Tree Preservation Order has also been given to a number of trees throughout the conservation area, the designation of which makes it an offence to cut down, lop, top, prune, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree without the written consent of the Council.

Figure 5: Tree Preservation orders shown as green hatch and leaves

3. Archaeology and Historic Development.

Evidence for the form, settlement and use of the landscape during the prehistoric period is limited. Millennia of cultivation have remoulded earlier topographic features and reduced to subsoil level prehistoric monuments. Aerial photographs, however, have proved the positions of at least five ring-ditches to the west of Wickhambreaux. These features are all that survive of ditches that originally encircled earthen burial mounds. Sample excavation of one of these burial mounds in 2008 produced no dating evidence, but it is likely the mounds were constructed sometime during the early Bronze Age, (2300-700 B.C). Another group of burial mounds has been recorded to the north east along Grove Road, north of Supperton Farm; and a crouched inhumation in association with a curving ditch excavated prior to gravel extraction at Seaton in 1973 may indicate the presence of another smaller burial mound on the valley floor. More detailed field survey would undoubtedly reveal evidence of prehistoric settlement along the valley for the Iron Age period, between 650 B. C. and 50 A. D. A few shards of re-deposited late Iron Age/early Roman pottery were recovered during investigations within the churchyard of St Andrew, Wickhambreaux in 1992. A small quantity of similar material from Seaton represents the present body of late prehistoric cultural material from this area.

The layout and character of settlement along the Little Stour Valley during the Roman period is better understood. The most striking feature is the former alignment of the Roman road originally connecting Richborough (*Rutupaie*) and Canterbury (*Durovernum Cantiacorum*). Laid out following the Claudian invasion of Britain in 43 A. D. to facilitate the movement of the army, the road took an artificial route, cutting abruptly across the grain of the landscape. The importance of the route is attested by its inclusion in the *Antonine Itinerary*, a book compiled in the early third century. The road was maintained as a *via strata* by the imperial administration. A group of lead seals from letters or small

packets recovered from the site of a Roman masonry building near Ickham, about 1km south-east of the road, emphasize the importance of such roads for the carrying of imperial messages by the *Cursus Publicus*. (the state-run courier and transportation service of the Roman Empire) Both north-west and south-east of Wickhambreaux the alignment of the road can be traced on aerial photographs, and has also been identified and excavated across the Seaton gravel pits in 1972-74 where it had a width of 7 metres and flanking drainage ditches. The location of Wickhambreaux shows that this settlement was sited adjacent to the road as much as in proximity to the Little Stour and the same could be said for Ickham.

The site of the Roman building near Ickham has not been investigated, but must have been connected to the main road. Other lesser roads and tracks would have connected smaller farms and settlements. Air photographs show a complex pattern of tracks, enclosures and ditches across the valley floor between Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux. Most of these features can be dated to the early Roman period.

Part of a Roman settlement was excavated and recorded at Seaton between 1972-74 prior to gravel extraction. The settlement straddled both sides of the main Roman road, and it is clear that it was sited to exploit the river where the road cut diagonally across its course. The excavations revealed the course of an earlier watercourse and a number of channels cut to serve as headraces adjacent to which were sited a succession of mills dating from the early third century through to the early fifth century.

Of the two villages, Ickham is the earliest, being first recorded as *leccaham* in a grant of land dated 724 and again in later charters of 785 and 791. Wickhambreaux is first recorded much later, in 948, as *Wicham*. A group of three Anglo-Saxon pottery vessels found near Wickhambreaux church may be related to burials sited adjacent to the Bronze Age burial mounds. This area has also produced a mid sixth century brooch and a number of seventh-eighth century coins, perhaps derived from disturbed burials. A similar pattern of Anglo-Saxon inhumations adjacent to burial mounds also occurs to the north of Supperton Farm.

By the eleventh century the church and adjacent court farm formed the manorial focus of the medieval settlements. Something of the extent and wealth of the manorial holdings based on Wickhambeaux and Ickham can be gleaned from the entries in Domesday Book. At Wickhambreaux mention is made of a church, with priest, a park, mills, salt-houses and fisheries as well as meadow, pasture, woodland and arable, a considerable amount of which was farmed by 36 villagers and 32 cottagers. At Ickham there was more arable land, worked by 29 villagers and 60 cottagers, but the assessed value was about equivalent at £32. A church, 4 mills, meadow and woodland are also recorded at Ickham.

Excavations in 2002 across areas west of the church of St John and Ickham Court recorded ditches, refuse pits and buildings including one with a sunken floor containing the remains of an oven and associated hearth dated to the period 1115-1160. Some of the features, including a ditch and some postholes forming a structure, were dated to the late Saxon period. There were also some residual Roman finds, including pottery and tile. Other Roman finds from this area found previously include a bronze vessel, possibly from a burial. The evidence indicates continuity of settlement from the Roman through to the early medieval periods.

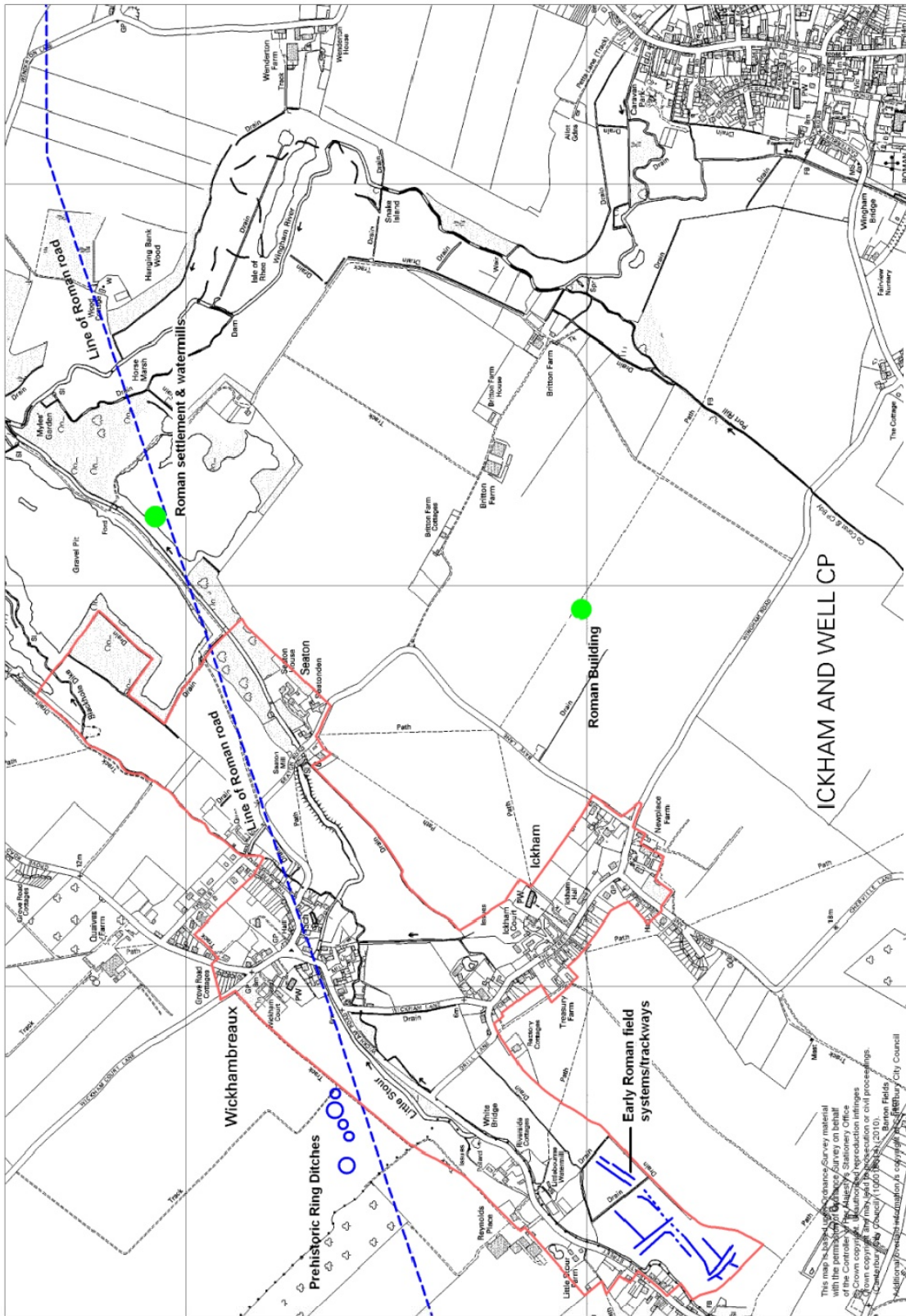
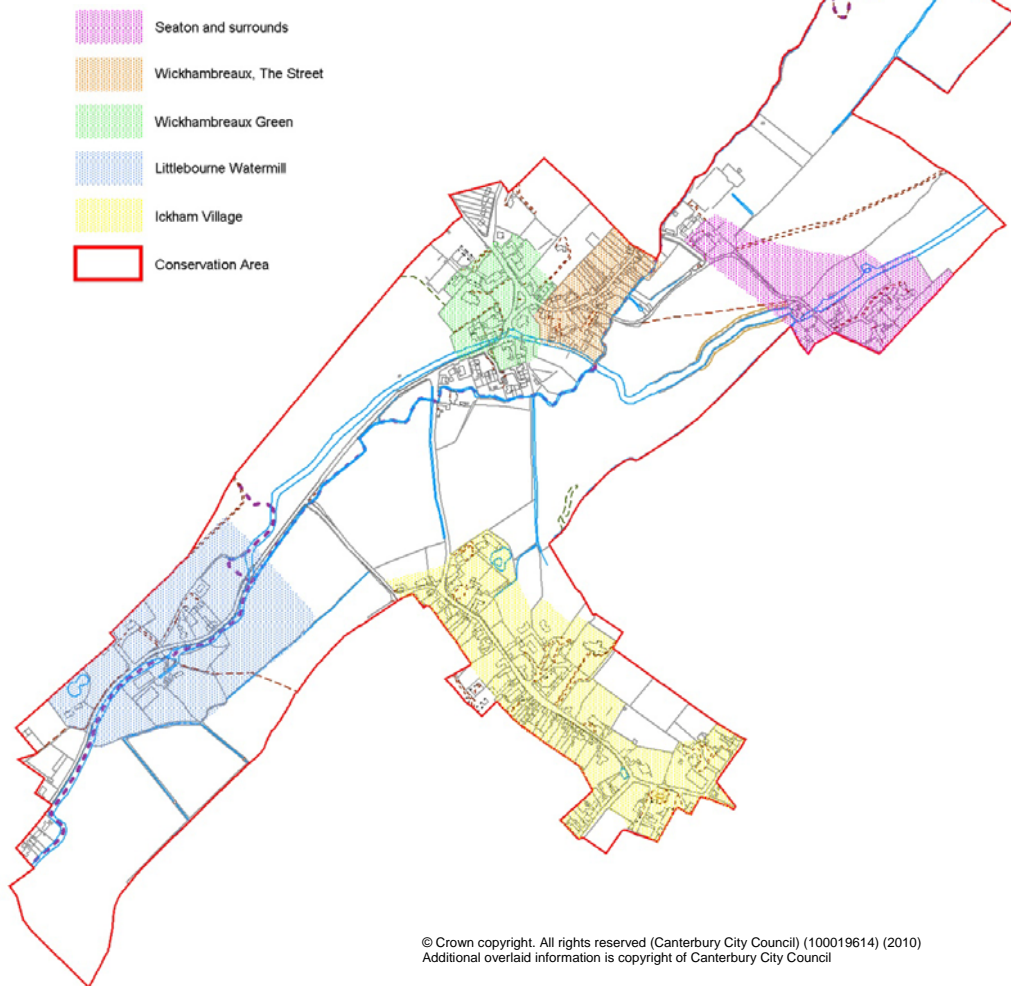


Figure 6: Layout of Roman Road and archaeological finds

4. Main Character Areas

Figure 7: Character Areas



To allow analysis of the character of Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton Conservation Area it has been divided into four character areas, 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; the type and age of buildings; the contribution of landscape, trees and hedges, views and vistas.

4.1 Character Area 1 – Ickham Village

Ickham is an isolated village with a great sense of place. The village is linear and has a cohesive character as it seamlessly merges from rural to farm houses to village centre and out again.

The linear nature of the village is not marked by vistas and views due to the gentle curves in the road and high walls, trees and hedgerows blocking distant views. In fact the arrival into Ickham from the southeast is somewhat of a surprise being a distinct change from the open field landscape to the large trees and hedgerows surrounding the grade II listed New Place and The Baye. Views into the village are limited to glimpses of the church steeple, oasthouses roofs and the roofs of some of the larger buildings between the trees. The primary landmark is the church steeple, which can be seen from the adjacent settlements of Seaton, Wickhambreaux, Wingham Well and from along the Little Stour.

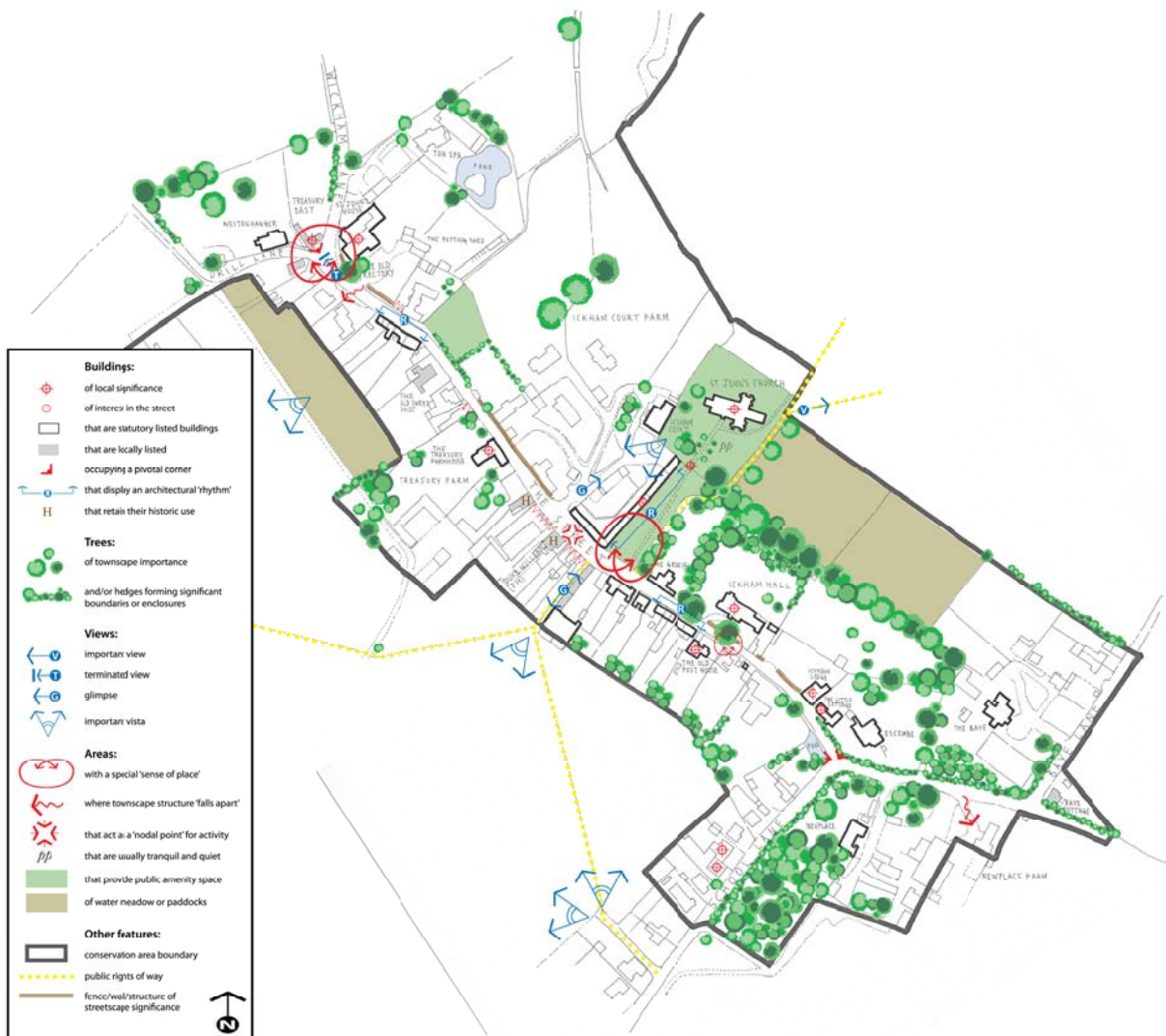


Figure 8: Analysis of Ickham Character Area

The built environment is in particularly good condition. The buildings are in a distinctive vernacular style. These include weatherboarded, red brick and timber framed buildings, oast houses and a beautiful flint church. Many of the properties are indicative of a previous traditional function and have been sensitively restored and converted into residences.



The village is located primarily along The Street, which runs southeast to northwest. The buildings on the southwestern side of The Street are generally small often terraced and built up to the road frontage following the curves of the road. On the northeastern side are larger grander buildings often detached and set back from the road. Large brick walls and hedges retain the sense of enclosure and tightness of the streetscene on the northeastern side of the road. Due to the subtle change of ground levels the roofscape plays an important part in creating the character of the village.

The village also contains three side roads Baye Lane, School Lane and Drill Lane as well as Ickham Court Farm. The redevelopment of Court Farm has resulted in an attractive conversion of the existing thatched barn and the creation of farmyard style development of houses in traditional materials. The development presents an attractive roofscape when viewed from The Street.

On the corner of School Lane and The Street is a small pond and pocket of garden which provides an open space that contrasts with the structures of Ickham Lodge and Little Cottage (grade II listed) opposite, which are built up to the road edge. This marks the beginning of the built-up area of the village. A series of smaller detached houses is located on the southwestern side of the road, including the former post office, which still retains the post-box. Opposite, the brick garden walls of Ickham Lodge and Ickham Hall (grade II listed) enclose the street with glimpses of the associated buildings seen over the walls and down driveways. The established trees in the gardens of these properties play an important role in retaining the rural character of the area.



Ickham Hall

Of particular note in the streetscene is the long terrace of white painted weather boarded and rendered cottages. Most of the cottages are grade II listed and date from early 16th to the late 19th centuries. Opposite these is the painted brick façade of The Green (grade II listed) which is particularly notable for its peg tiled roof which is hipped at one end and has a lean to (pentine) roof on both sides.



Opposite The Green house The Street widens and the open space in front of the church enhances views of the church. The sense of community in the village is based primarily around the public house and church, as there are no other facilities or shops. Opposite the village green are the successfully converted four kiln oast houses (grade II) and cottages, which still retain the quality and layout of their agricultural origins.



Saint John the Evangelist Church (grade I) is set well back from the road behind the open space. It has an attractive lychgate that marks the entrance to the churchyard. An avenue of well established yew trees leads up to the church. The church originally belonged to Christ Church Priory and is thought to be an early 12th century flint construction, with transepts added in the second quarter of the 14th century and the chancel with its large arch span.



Next to the church stands Ickham Court farmhouse (grade II) a late 17th to early 18th century brick building with two curved reconstructed Flemish gables. It is likely that this replaced an earlier building.

The built form breaks down to some extent to the northwest; however, the brick walls and hedges between buildings help to maintain the street's enclosure. The predominant building at this point is Treasury Farmhouse, a red brick L-shaped building fronting directly onto the road. Its most obvious feature are the shaped Dutch gable ends on the northwestern and southeastern elevations, typical of East Kent, the south-eastern one has a brick chimney breast in the centre of it with the date 1663.

Past The Old Sweet Shop opposite the small Parish Council open space the road bends to the west, beyond which is a lovely sequence of views that delineate the northwestern end of the village.



Treasury Farmhouse



Rectory, Oak and Spicers Cottages

On the southern side of the road is the length of a mixed terrace of white and black painted two storey cottages. Of particular note are Rectory and Oak Cottage (grade II) which were originally four cottages with a 16th century timber frame. The bottom storey of the cottages has been rebuilt in brick. The early cement tile roof detail is particularly nice as are the casement windows with leaded panes. 1-3 Spicers Cottages (grade II) are a mid 19th century range of painted brick that add to the streetscene value of Rectory and Oak cottages.

The Street forms a triangle and forks at the northwestern end of the village with views down the street terminating in the locally listed Treasury Oast house. To the southwest the side elevation of Folly Cottage and the Treasury Cottage frontage close the scene. Glimpses of the grade II listed Westenhanger, a former public house, are obtained down Drill Lane.



Treasury Oast house.



The Old Rectory

To the northeast is the Old Rectory (grade II*) an important building which is probably the remaining part of the manor house belonging to the Prior of Christ Church Monastery. The southeastern part is a 13th century house with a hall on the first floor and subsidiary storage space below built circa 1280 with a moulded ceiling. The building has been added to over the years. The centre portion is 19th century with an older core of two storeys red brick with tiled roof. To the west of the southeast part is a further portion dating from the 17-18th centuries of which is faced with red brick with steeped gables with reused ridge tiles.



The large Cedar tree outside the old rectory is also an important part of the streetscene.

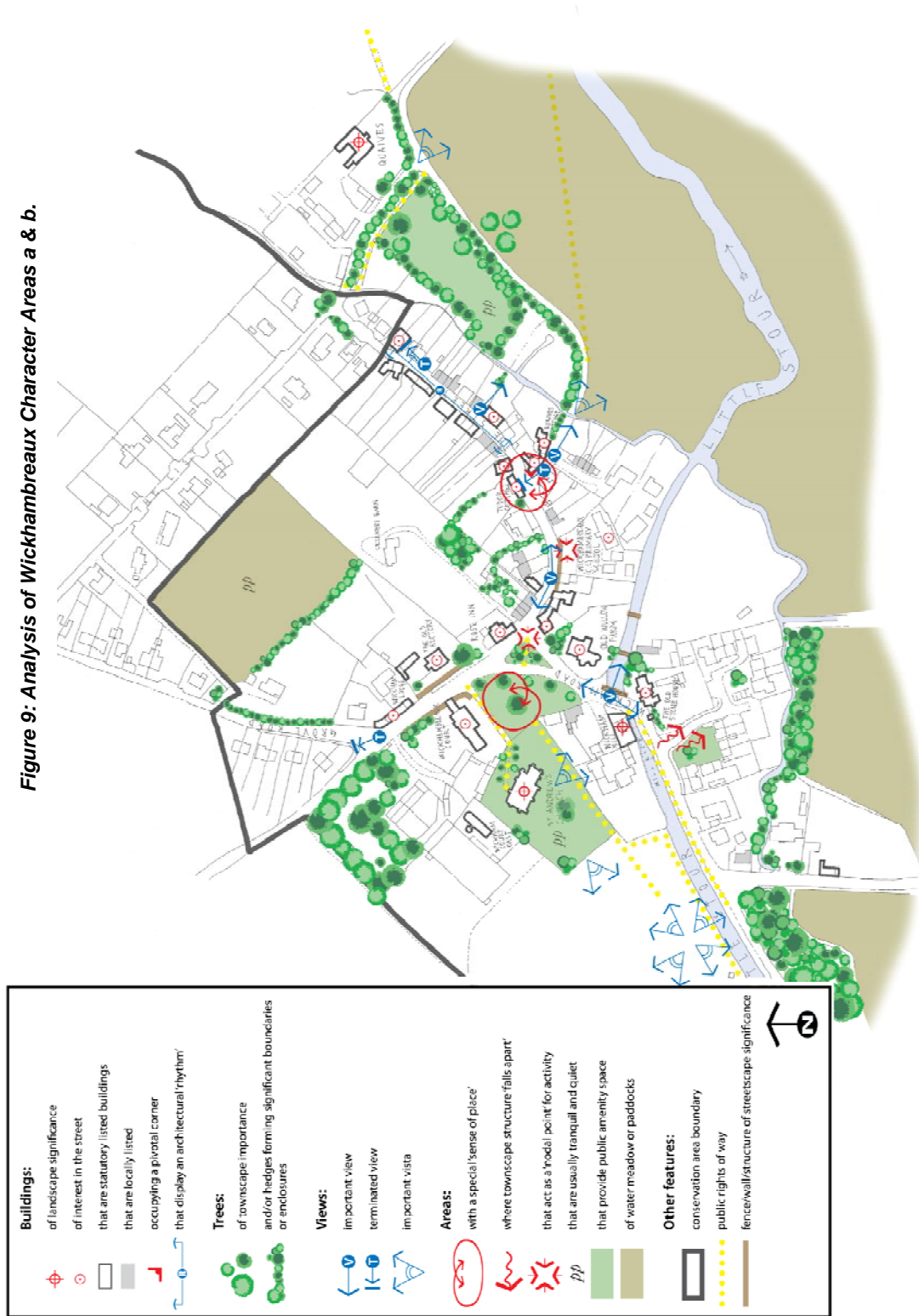
Key characteristics.

- Mature trees and hedgerows
- Tight fine grain ribbon development built up to southwest edge of road
- Larger homes and church set back from the northeast side of road
- Mix of local materials
- Tightly defined built up area
- Views of the village roofscape (esp the church steeple and oasts) from the adjacent open fields and land around.
- Sensitive redevelopment, renovation and re-use of historic buildings to retain their character.
- Use of brick walls and hedgerows to enclose spaces and define boundaries.

4.2 Wickhambreaux

Wickhambreaux has a rich history with connections to the Church and Crown dating back to Saxon times. Most notably it was home to Rosamund Clifford in the 12th century and Joan Plantagenet, wife of the Black Prince, in the 14th century. It is first mentioned in 948 when King Eadred granted land to a religious woman, however, Wickhambreaux settlement predates this to at least Roman times as it is on the northwest side of the Roman Road.

Figure 9: Analysis of Wickhambreaux Character Areas a & b.



Wickhambreaux village still retains its medieval pattern with the Church, manor house, rectory, inn and mill encircling the green. The name and layout of The List harks back to earlier times, although it contains predominately 20th century housing, the name the List is an old English word meaning border or edge. Some of the property boundaries still follow the older field pattern.

4.2a Character Area 2a – Wickhambreaux Green

The historic village of Wickhambreaux contains a harmonious collection of substantial distinctive properties clustered around the village green, including the former watermill on the banks of the Little Stour. The most picturesque corner is to the south-east with the Old Stone House and Wickham Mill adjoining the river.

Wickham Mill (grade II listed) previously a corn mill dominates the entrance into Wickhambreaux from Littlebourne and its four storey, with attics, white weather boarded structure is a local landmark. Of particular note is the retention of the overshot waterwheel.



Wickham Mill



Old Stone House

Opposite the Mill is the Old Stone House/former Post Office (grade II*) probably the oldest building in the village. The building is two storeys, faced with chequer work of stone and flints and together with the Mill announces the arrival in Wickhambreaux village.

Beyond the mill where the road crosses the Little Stour via a small bridge with white painted wooden railings, the village green is reached. The green is very much the centre of the village with the, church, large houses and the Rose Inn public house fronting it. The green contains a number of beautiful mature trees covered by TPOs.



The Village Green



Rose Inn public house

To the northwest of the Mill on a small rise sits the flint and stone church of St Andrew (grade I) and its graveyard. This simple perpendicular church dates from the 14th century but was restored and much altered in 1868. The Art Nouveau stained glass east window of the Annunciation dates from 1896. The donor was James Gallatin of New York and this was the first commission in Europe given to American glassworkers. Although highly visible from the farmland to the west of the village the church is less dominant within the village due to its location on a slight angle set back from the green lying behind the cottages that front the green and the avenue of pleached lime trees at its entrance.



St Andrews Church



Wickhambreaux Court

Wickhambreaux Court (grade II) sits on a small slope above the green and its Regency buff brick 1800s façade with green shutters is the dominant built feature from the green. This re-facing masks an older building which could well be medieval in origins. The house featured in the 1944 film *A Canterbury Tale*. Behind Wickhambreaux Court is the Wickham Court Oast, which is all that remains of a farm. Glimpses of the oast can be seen from the churchyard through the screen of trees. It is of scenic value when viewed from Nargate Street/Wickham Road.

Across the green from Wickhambreaux Court sits Old Willow Farmhouse (grade II) a two storey 18th century house of red brick which was restored and rendered in the first half of the 19th century. The building sits prettily in its grounds next to the Little Stour. The river at this point flows between the Oast Houses and Old Willow Farmhouse and has landscaped banks with willow trees, shrubs and flowers crossed by attractive foot bridges.



Old Willow Farmhouse

Wickham Court Lane runs along the northeastern side of the green. The old brick wall of Wickhambreaux Court and the one storey red brick structures of the former stable and outbuilding to The Old Rectory (grade II), opposite, provide enclosure to the road.

The Old Rectory (formerly Wickham House) is grade II* listed with unmistakable Baroque tendencies. It was built in 1713 by the Reverend Alexander Young and is two storeys high with attics and a basement. Its construction of red-brown brick with red brick dressings has one of the finest examples of tuck-pointing mortar in the district. Also of note are the pitched roofed dormers, the symmetrical layout of the original sash windows and the early 19th century doorcase. The replacement of the railing fence enhances the streetscene greatly.



Old Rectory



Old Bell House

To the south of the Old Rectory is the Rose Inn (grade II). Its two storey rendered frontage is late 17th early 18th century in appearance. In earlier times travellers used it as a stopping point on their way to Grove where The Stour could be crossed. It remains the busy hub of this community being one of the few businesses left in the village. Adjacent to the Rose Inn is a small terrace of locally listed cottages which along with the Old Bell House form the corner and entrance to The Street a narrow road of smaller terraced style houses.

The Old Bell House (grade II) is a 15th century timber-framed building, probably a hall-house of two bays. The first floor is close studded with brown roughcast infilling, the ground floor is rebuilt in painted brick. It turns the corner into The Street where it is abutted by Bell Cottage.

Key characteristics

- Large elite buildings in substantial grounds with period features finished in a range of materials.
- The green with its large established trees, enclosed by larger, grander buildings.
- Distinctive entrances to village.
- The historic layout and uses are still apparent.
- The curve of the Little Stour and its road and foot bridges.
- The former mill remaining on the banks of the Little Stour.
- Large established trees framing views and filling gaps.

4.2b Character Area 2b – Wickhambreaux, The Street

Wickhambreaux retains the medieval pattern of development of grander homes around the green and smaller workers' cottages and small businesses in their own separate area. The Street is narrow and lined with closely packed buildings predominantly built up to the road edge. This character area contains 17 listed buildings and 23 locally listed properties. The form, layout and character of this street hark back to a much earlier era. Until 1966 the road still had the central drainage gutter from the Middle Ages and is still locally known as Gutter Street.



The Street would have been the commercial core of the village and many of the building forms and names still reflect this, however, the village shops have closed over the years. Trees behind and around the houses in the street and occasional small front gardens add to the rural village character of the area, tying into the countryside behind.

The curving nature of The Street, in combination with the fine grain of development, means that as you move along the road varying sequences of view open up. There are few visually dominant buildings; rather it is the sequence of views and collective value of well restored buildings that make up the character of this area (figure 9). On entering The Street from the direction of the green, the curve in the road draws you in.



Series of views down The Street

The medieval Old Bell House (south) and a small terrace of Victorian cottages (north) mark the entrance to The Street and the houses follow the curve of the road. To the south the two storey stock brick Bell Cottage (grade II) is set back a little behind a small courtyard garden, making the early 19th century shop front of the Old Bakery which sits to the back of the pavement more prominent.

Opposite the Bakery is the side wall of the two storey red brick 18th century Garden Cottage (grade II) which then fronts the eastward curve in the road with a low picket fence and attractive garden. Set back on the same building line are Walnut and Hewson Cottages, a locally listed semi-detached pair with render detailing around the window frames and doorways.



Bakery and Bell Cottage



Garden Cottage



Wickhambreaux Primary School

On the south side of the road, is the primary school, which still occupies its original historic building dating back to 1869. Although not listed the quaintness of the buildings brick and tile detailing, white picket fence and the activity and life the children bring, makes this an important feature of the village and a contrast to the quietness of the grand homes surrounding the green.

Next to the school are School Cottages an attractive 19th century pair set back behind a tiny garden with brick detailing in the string course and decorative shutters. Following is the former public house the Hooden Horse whose design adds value to the character of the area as does the vernacular style of the 1911 village hall opposite.



At this point the intersection with Seaton Road occurs and the built environment quietly gives way beyond Seaton Cottages to views of the countryside. This is a pivot point in The Street as it bends around 3 of the key buildings in the road, Tudor Cottage, White House and Forge House.

The Tudor Cottage is a grade II listed 17th century one storey timber-framed building with a hipped thatched roof with 4 'eyebrow' dormers and casement windows. It is a key building in the street due to its location on the corner terminating views down Seaton Road and the difference of its material from the other buildings in the street.

Tudor Cottage

Forge House opposite (circa 1736) is a grade II listed two storeys in red brick with a tiled roof that has gable ends with kneelers. The building has many decorative features including a moulded brick eaves cornice and a stringcourse. To the south-west is a one storey extension partly brick and partly weatherboarded with tiled roof and casement windows which was formerly the village forge. Backing on to this is Quaives Cottage 17th century painted brick house with a hipped thatched roof fronting Seaton Road (grade II).



Forge House

The grade II listed 19th century two storey roughcast White House stands on the bend in the road beyond which the road straightens out and rows of terraces built up to the road edge come into view. A key building on the eastern side of the street is the 17/18th century Dyke House, a two storey timber-framed building with brick infill and a tiled roof.



Dyke House



1 to 3 Oast Cottages

To the west side of The Street 1 to 3 Oast Cottages are a pleasant 18/19th century red brick terrace with brick cambered arches to doors and windows. To the north of this is a much larger building that was formerly an oasthouse and granary known as the Old Oast House (grade II listed dated 1795). At the end of the building are two square brick oasts with pyramidal tiled roofs. Beyond this is another small terrace of brick and weatherboard cottages (grade II) opposite which is a locally listed terrace of weatherboard cottages.

The Street then bends again and opens out. The stock brick Ivy and Orchard Cottages (grade II) are tucked into the western curve of the road. Opposite is the red brick Old Workhouse (grade II) formerly the poorhouse. Although the building is on a larger scale than any other in the street, with three two storey parallel ranges, the finish is still simple with the only apparent decorative feature being the diaper pattern in black brick to the gable of the front range.



Ivy and Orchard Cottages



Old Workhouse

Although The Street always contains a large number of parked cars, due to the narrowness of the road and the quality of the buildings they do not dominate the streetscene, which, with the lack of through traffic, means that the built form dominates the immediate senses rather than traffic and tarmac.

Key characteristics

- Narrow winding road enclosed by buildings and fences.
- Limited views of adjacent countryside.
- The fine grain of closely packed houses and buildings often built up to the road edge.
- A large number of high quality historic buildings that have been sensitively restored and converted.
- The activity and life that the school and hall bring to the area.
- The predominance of red brick and Kent peg tiles as building materials.
- Modern buildings and extensions designed to be in keeping
- A real sense of cohesion and a very strong historic street scene.

4.3 Character Area 3 – Seaton and surrounds

Seaton was a very small farming hamlet that grew substantially with the construction of Seaton Mill, which dates from 1802 and was used to grind corn and later adapted for rubber. The mill building, now in residential use, straddles the Little Stour. This portion of the Little Stour was known as the Seaton Navigation and was an important trade route.

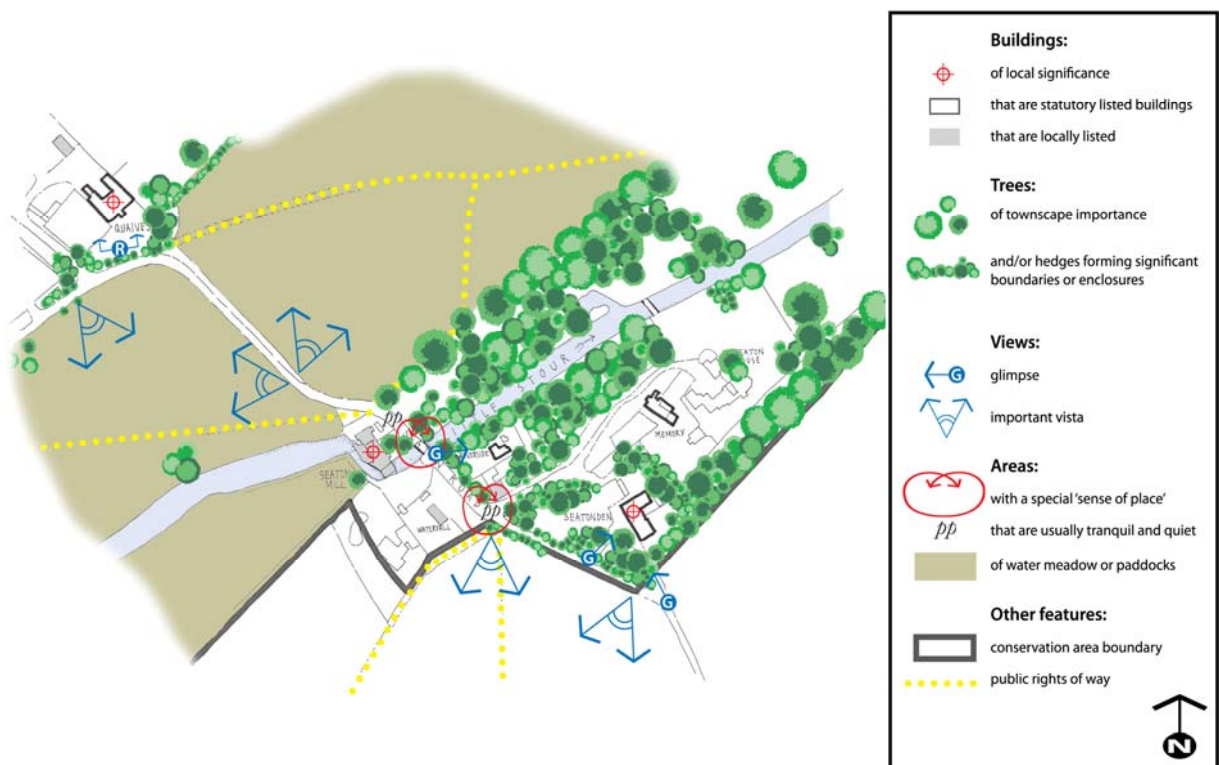


Figure 10: Seaton Character Area Analysis

The views into the hamlet are dominated by trees with large runs of established trees along the boundaries of the conservation area, the banks of the Little Stour and property boundaries. The large number of trees means that the larger properties set back from the road are all but concealed. The trees also lend enclosure to the street scene and contrast with the open agricultural fields to the east and south of the hamlet and frame the rural views out of the hamlet. To the west the trees give way to grazing marsh and views of the back rooflines of Wickhambreaux.

The hamlet contains a number of listed and locally listed buildings. The one that is primarily visible from the road is Riverside Cottage (grade II) a late 18th early 19th century two storey painted brick cottage with a hipped slate roof and sash windows. Of additional note are Memory Cottage and Seatonden both grade II listed and the white painted attractive single storey Waterfall Cottage (locally listed) and Mill End are also locally listed.



Seaton Mill



The road bridge over the stream has attractive white paling guardrails along with the soft verges which adds to the rural informal character of the area. From here The Quaives (grade II) is seen in the distance. This Late 17th century residence with two storeys in red brick with a tiled roof with shaped Dutch gable ends marks the present start of Wickhambreaux village.

Key characteristics

- The Little Stour and water sounds
- Water meadows and associated trees along the banks of the Little Stour
- Large established trees and hedgerows
- Rural views and vistas, crossed by public footpaths
- A tightly formed built environment amongst the trees.



4.4 Character Area 4 – Littlebourne Watermill and surrounds

The white painted weatherboard structure of Littlebourne Water Mill (grade II) has been a key feature in this area and the surrounding landscape for up to 300 years. It was built in the 18th century over the Little Stour to grind flour, was automated in 1945 to produce animal feed, then converted into a dwelling in the 1960s. Apart from the four-storey, plus attics height, of particular note are the tiled roof, gable ends and sashes with intact glazing bars.

Although the key built feature is the mill, the character of the area is defined by the Little Stour river that winds through the area and the

associated water meadows and fields to the southeast. The flood plain has meant that the traditional rural landscape has been maintained with small fields delineated by hedgerows, copses of trees and less intensive farming practices. This means that the views northeast, east and southeast from this area are of a very high quality and should be protected and maintained.



The area contains a number of well-used and well-maintained public footpaths that add to the character and quality of the area. Unfortunately traffic movement and noise from the road, which follows the course of the stream, detract from the peace and quality.

Although this road is not a main route, it links all the rural hamlets and farms along the banks of the Little Stour and follows what would have been in pre-industrial times an important trade route with boats moving along the Little Stour.

Other buildings that add to the hamlet feel of the area are the Riverside Cottages with their dormers and slate detailing, the Mill House and its brick frontage with double bay windows and glimpses of Reynolds Place through the trees.

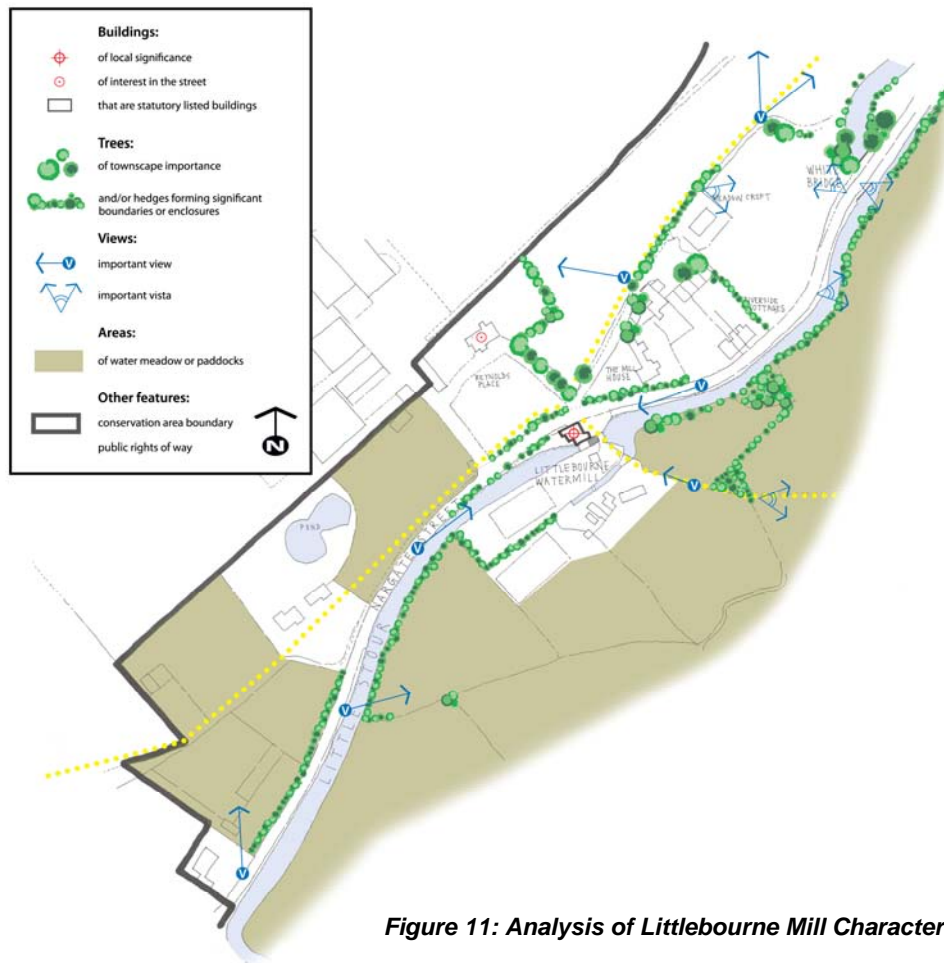


Figure 11: Analysis of Littlebourne Mill Character Area

Key characteristics

- The Little Stour
- Water meadows and associated trees along the banks of the Little Stour
- The water mill
- Small fields and property boundaries defined by hedgerows
- Traditional grazing pasture with less intensive farming practices
- Rural views and vistas
- Public footpaths
- Rural cottages and farmsteads
- Drainage dykes

5. Management and Recommendations

5.1 Materials

The conservation area has a wide range of building forms and types mostly in a vernacular style, including weatherboarded water mills, large Georgian red brick houses, small Victorian red brick terrace cottages, medieval timber framed hall houses. Local building materials include Kent peg tile, slate and thatched roofs with red and buff brick, weatherboarding and flint walling and some render. The mix of building materials and styles reflects the wide range of building uses and ages. Despite the variation in building styles the villages and outlying farmsteads, the area has a strong, unified historic identity.



5.2 Primary Issues

Damage to the Little Stour environs

The Little Stour and its flood plains is a key feature of this area and has led to many of the significant historic structures that remain. The primary issues facing the Little Stour are: adjacent farming practices, road works and building works even outside the conservation area, impacting upon the health of the stream through vegetation loss, nutrification and topsoil run off, and loss of water flows due to extractions from water bores. The retention of a healthy river is important to the overall character of the conservation area.

Change in agricultural practices

A particular threat to this landscape would be the loss of the water meadows with their historic field boundaries. Large scale amalgamation of fields, removal of hedgerows and construction of large agricultural buildings could also harm the character of the area.

Loss of historic fabric

While the majority of new buildings and alterations within this conservation area have been sympathetically done, it is important to ensure that any future layouts, buildings and extensions follow local building styles and forms and use local materials and techniques characteristic of the area.

Pressure for expansion and modernisation

The scope for new buildings or large scale extensions is limited. While there is some potential for new buildings that comply with local plan policies it will be critical to ensure that the character of the area is preserved. This applies equally to development within the

conservation area and those that would affect its setting. Large-scale or intensive development in the conservation area would compromise the character and appearance of this area. The use of inappropriate materials and building methods would also impact substantially.

Around the churches and village greens the smaller houses are closely grouped together and the gaps, which do exist are filled with glimpses of gardens, trees and countryside. Gardens around larger residences, and the adjacent fields and paddocks are of considerable significance, most containing important trees and views. Even if there are instances where the effect of a single development might be held to be minimal the cumulative effect would be much greater.

Loss of trees and hedgerows and rural views

One of the most visible natural features of the conservation area is the mature trees, hedgerows and views across the adjacent countryside. Retention of the trees, especially boundary hedgerows, is important, especially as the hedgerows are fragmented and are being replaced by post and wire fencing. The extensive views of the villages and adjacent farmland are also important to the character of the Conservation Area. These views can be adversely affected by unsympathetic developments inside and outside the conservation area.

5.3 Boundary assessment

The following areas shown on figure 12 could be included in the conservation area.

A. Houses and fields to the south of Ickham

The houses on Treasury View, although modern, have a nice character as a close and provide an attractive roofline in views from the Little Stour/Littlebourne Mill section of the conservation area so should be considered for inclusion in the conservation area. The open fields across which these buildings and the buildings on the south side of Ickham and east side of Littlebourne Mill are viewed are very important to the setting of the conservation area and should be included to ensure the openness of the views.



B. Fields between Ickham and Seaton

The fields to the north of Ickham, south of Seaton and west of Wickhambreaux frame and allow the views into and out of the villages. The historic footpath (Len Coombs Walk) crosses these fields linking Seaton and Ickham. The fields act as an important setting and link the three villages and for this reason should be protected.

C. The List, Wickhambreaux

The List forms the northeastern residential edge to Wickhambreaux. Land subdivision and building commenced here during the 1920s and carried on into the fifties. The plots of land are large with established gardens, mature trees and hedgerows. The combination of this and the very narrow nature of the road give The List a very distinctive character, which seamlessly carries on from some of the older buildings of The Street.



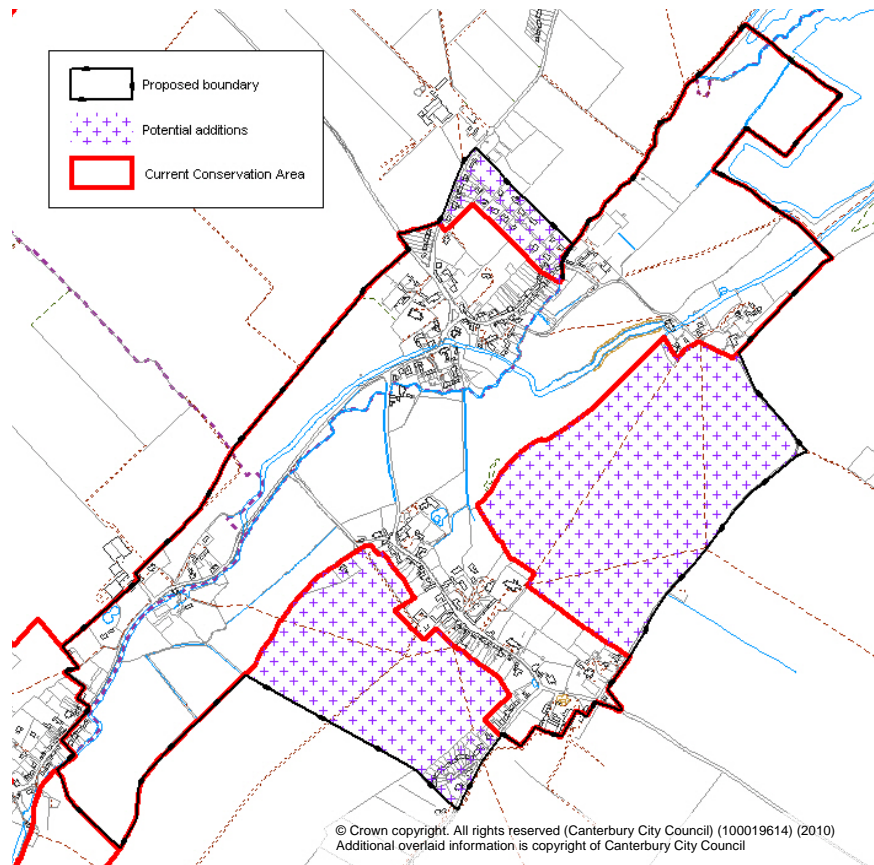


Figure 12: Potential areas for boundary review.

6. Management and Improvement

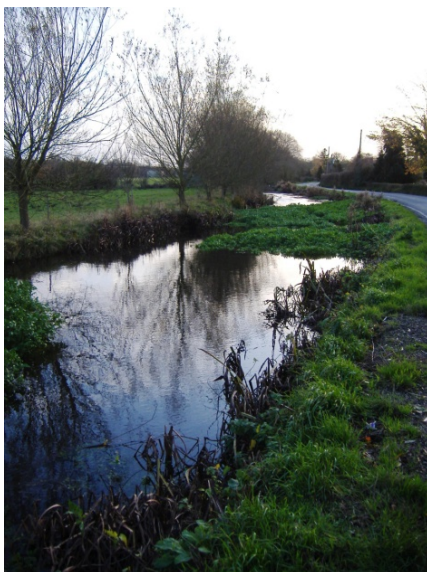
Within Conservation Areas, controls are available to ensure that new buildings and alterations to existing buildings are designed to be sympathetic in character with their surroundings. The main aims of defining Conservation Areas are to preserve or enhance the character and setting of historic buildings and other harmonious groups of buildings, open spaces and trees, by the various controls available and also by initiating schemes of enhancement for each area.

There is a need to ensure that all future developments in the conservation area respect the local distinctiveness of Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton, hence some guidance has been provided below. The key issue is maintenance and improvement of those aspects that contribute to the character and quality of the street scene and landscape.



- Any new development should have a visual understanding of the history of the conservation area as a water meadow farming landscape with villages and hamlets dotted along the river.
- Protection of the views into, across and out of all parts of the conservation area, especially of and from the villages.
- The listed churches, oast houses and mills and their settings are very important to the character of the conservation area.

- Pressure to over develop the villages should be resisted especially Wickhambreaux and Ickham as there is limited scope for additional housing development in this conservation area.
- Any new development should have close regard to the traditional building styles, forms, materials and techniques characteristic of this area, including the low intensity of development. The height, size, design, roofscape and visual appearance of new development, plot width and size should respect the character of the conservation area.
- Ensuring that the scale of extensions and new buildings are appropriate. It is important that any change or enlargement does not swamp the existing buildings and does not make presently unsympathetic buildings more visible. Where an extension to an existing building is proposed, the details on the extension shall match closely the details on the main building where these are of a traditional nature.
- New development in the conservation area will normally be required to retain or reinstate the historic street pattern, traditional building lines, boundary treatments, open spaces (including private gardens and yards), kerb lines and vehicle entrances which contribute its character.
- Restore traditional details to buildings in the conservation area where these have been lost to previous development.
- There is a need to retain and maintain soft verges and access ways/driveways that are 'soft' and not overly engineered to retain the rural feel.
- Where buildings are set back from the road the retention or creation of front gardens is important and hardsurfacing should be minimised and screened.
- Boundary treatments should be traditional such as brick walls or hedgerows where these are appropriate.
- The woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees within the Conservation Area should be managed, retained and protected as they make up an important part of the setting.



- Conserve and enhance the traditional hedgerows and pastoral setting to Ickham, Wickhambreaux, Littlebourne Mill and Seaton.
- Current field boundaries should be retained and maintained where possible and fields and meadows should not be amalgamated or subdivided.
- Protection and enhancement of the Little Stour and its adjacent vegetation and environs, including conserving and enhancing riparian vegetation and the water meadows and maintaining water flows.
- Ecological surveys and appropriate mitigation measures will be required for any development that would impact upon sites of ecological value. The impact of a development on biodiversity should always be considered and a sites value for biodiversity enhanced wherever possible.

When considering new development this need not necessarily mean exact copying of earlier styles in new work though on occasion this may be the only way. But it does require developer and designer to come to an understanding of, and a respect for, the character of the area when drawing up their proposals. Every new proposal within the conservation area should be backed up by a thorough analysis of the site and its historic context. This exercise should 'inform' the design process and be part of a design statement submitted with a planning application.

7. Statement of Consultation

A letter about the draft Conservation Area Appraisal was sent to all residents, interest groups and local councillors. The appraisal was available on the Council web site and at the Council Offices. The formal period for consultation was 1 October 2010 to 1 November 2010 this was extended at the request of Ickham Parish Council until 10 November 2010. 33 responses were received as well as a petition in support of extending the conservation area signed by 50 people.

The draft Conservation Area Appraisal was reported to the Canterbury City Council's Rural Area Members Panel on 8 November 2010. Three members of the public spoke. The Conservation Area Appraisal was amended in light of the consultation and presented to the Development Control Committee on 11 January 2011 along with a summary of the responses received. Five members of the public spoke. The Development Control Committee formally adopted the document as a 'material consideration' on 11 January 2011.

All persons who respond to the consultation were contacted and informed of their right to attend and speak at the committee meetings.

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Appendices

1. Listed Buildings

ICKHAM

Westenhanger/Westonhanger	grade II	14.3.1980
The Old Rectory (formerly the Rectory)	grade II*	29.9.1952
Nos 1, 2 and 3 (Spioers Cottages)	grade II	14.3.1980
Rectory Cottage and Oak Cottage	grade II	30.1.1967
Treasury Farmhouse	grade II	29.9.1952
Ickham Court	grade II	14.3.1980
Church of St John	grade I	30.1.1967
Range of barns at Ickham Court	grade II	14.3.1980
Court Farm Oast	grade II	14.3.1980
Willow Cottage and Church View Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
Ickham Post Office, Village Stores and attached home	grade II	14.3.1980
The Cottage and Glendale	grade II	14.3.1980
Victoria Cottage No 2, No 3 and Woodcot	grade II	14.3.1980
Ronella and Snow Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
The Green	grade II	14.3.1980
Ickham Hall	grade II	30.1.1967
Outbuilding to Ickham Hall	grade II	14.3.1980
Ickham Lodge	grade II	30.1.1967
The Little Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
Escombe	grade II	14.3.1980
New Place	grade II*	29.9.1952
No 7 (The Baye House)	grade II	30.1.1967
K6 Telephone Kiosk, The Street	grade II	17.2.1989
Quaives Cottage (Wickham Lane)	grade II	14.3.1980

WICKHAMBREAUX

Former outbuilding to The Old Rectory	grade II	14.3.1980
Former stables to The Old Rectory	grade II	14.3.1980
The Old Rectory (formerly Wickham House)	grade II*	30.1.1967
Wickham Court (Wickhambreaux Court Farmhouse)	grade II	29.09.1952
Oasthouse at Wickham Court	grade II	9.12.1977
Church of St Andrew	grade I	30.1.1967
Wickham Mill	grade II	30.1.1967
The Old Stone House (formerly The Post Office)	grade II*	29.9.1952
Old Willow Farmhouse (formerly listed as The Willows)	grade II	30.1.1967
The Rose Inn	grade II	30.1.1967
Old Bell House	grade II	30.1.1967
Bell Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
The Old Bakery	grade II	14.3.1980
Garden Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
The Tudor Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
Nos 1 and 2 (The White House)	grade II	14.3.1980
Forge House	grade II	14.3.1980
Quaives Cottage (Seaton Road)	grade II	29.9.1952
Dyke House	grade II	14.3.1980
Nos 1, 2 and 3 (Oast Cottages)	grade II	14.3.1980
Old Oast House	grade II	14.3.1980
Fern Cottage and The Cottage	grade II	8.10.1976

Ivy Cottage and Orchard Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
The Old Workhouse	grade II	19.12.1977
K6 Telephone Kiosk	grade II	
SEATON		
Memory Cottage	grade II	14.3.1980
Seatonden	grade II	14.3.1980
Riverside	grade II	11.5.1976
The Quaives	grade II	14.3.1980
WHITEBRIDGE		
Littlebourne Mill, Nargate Street	grade II	30.1.1967

2. Locally Listed Buildings details

ICKHAM

Treasury Oast
 Folly Cottage
 The Old Sweet Shop
 The Forge
 Duke William
 1-3 Oast Cottages
 Baye Cottage

WICKHAMBREAUX

St Anne
 Wytlen
 View Cottage
 Star Cottage
 White Cottage, The Street
 1-6 The Street
 1-4 Seaton Road Cottages
 1 & 2 School Cottages
 Hewson Cottage
 Walnut Cottage
 Oast House
 The Mill House, The Green
 White's Cottages (formerly 1-2 White Cottages and Lavender Cottage)
 Chimney Pot Cottage
 Rosemary Cottage

SEATON

West Cottage
 Corner Cottage
 Waterfall Cottage
 Seaton Mill
 Mill End
 Quaives outbuilding