



Brook Street Conservation Area

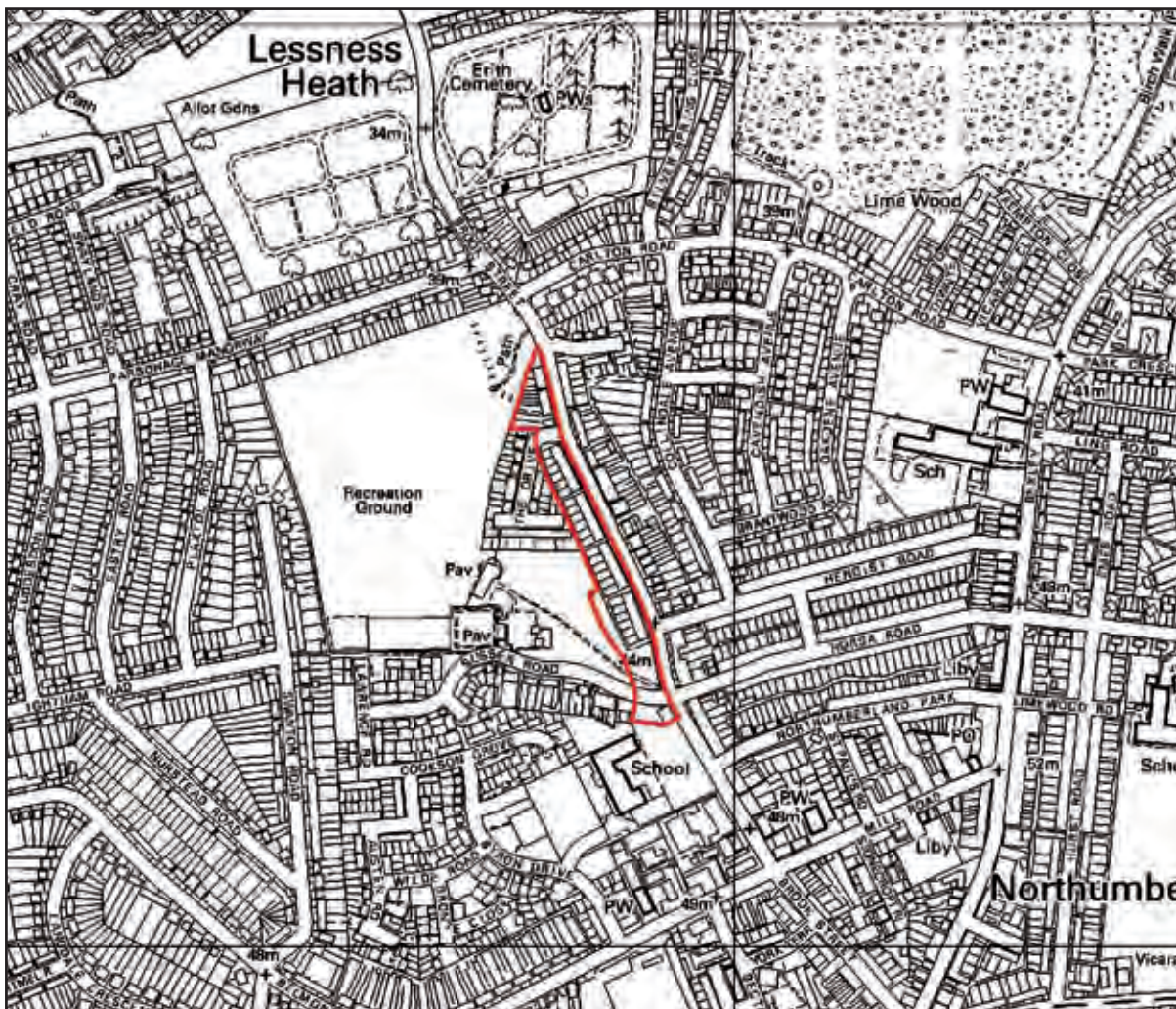
Area Appraisal and Management Plan
February 2008

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Location of Conservation Area



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 **Brook Street Conservation Area**

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Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Brook Street Conservation Area was designated on the 19th February 1993.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of Brook Street Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

2 Planning and policy context

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted on 28 April 2004, contains the Council’s policies and proposals for development, regeneration and land use in the borough. Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of staurorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are also set out in the UDP and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should also be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). it follows advice contained in “Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals” and “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, published by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (August 2005).

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

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of Brook Street Conservation Area derives from the following features.
 - Good example of high density municipal development in the borough.
 - An early example of Council housing.
 - A coherent and unified group of late Victorian buildings set within an area of diverse styles with an unusual sequence of long terraces of houses dating from 1882 to 1901, including an interesting range of earlier cottages at the north end.
 - Sets of terrace buildings with a distinctive style and identity, sharing common building materials such as the decorative brickwork, stone detailing and sash windows.
 - A public house landmark building that has authentic “Arts and Crafts” features, circa. 1905.
 - Topographic interest as the land moves from level to a hill at the northern end.
 - Open park area/ village feel and characteristics.
 - The strong visual quality of the roofline and simple homogenous architectural pattern adds appeal to an attractive space.
 - The attractive relationship of Brook Street, Sussex Road and Northumberland Heath Recreation Ground.



4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

- 4.1 The Brook Street Conservation Area is located in the north of the London Borough of Bexley, close to Northumberland Heath shopping centre.
- 4.2 The central core of the conservation area is occupied by a development of four terraces, each comprise of 12 uniformly spaced houses. To the north of this area are two shorter terraces of cottages and to the south and west is an area of open space with a public house on the border. Wide footways on both sides allow for a fuller appreciation of the location.

Street pattern and layout

- 4.3 The street pattern is of a linear form, typical of early suburban housing. Indeed, the layout of Brook Street Conservation Area is defined by its regularity and geometricity. The extent of the Conservation Area runs from the corner of 283 Brook Street encapsulating the western edge of the street down to the Duchess of Kent Public House. At the north end the conservation area cuts across the cul de sac, The Drive, and at the south end the streetscape is dissected by Sussex Road, which creates an open junction area contributing to the corner setting of the landmark pub building.

Landscape and setting

- 4.4 The setting of the houses benefits from their regularity, which creates a strong visual streetscape of uniform height and continuous roof levels. All the houses in the terrace are set close to the roadside. With the exception to the two northern terraces that have reduced gardens, the garden plots are all the same modest size (1.5 m), providing quite a tight sense of enclosure and close relationship to the street.
- 4.5 The smaller older terraced houses step down the hill at the northern entrance to the area, offering a strong relationship to the topography of the street. Although less distinguished than the main terraces, this interaction with the landscape displays a character and appearance worthy of protection.

- 4.6 Between the terraces and the Duchess of Kent Public House views lead through to the Northumberland Heath Recreation Ground, whose ornate boundary railings enclose this attractive space and provide an interesting link between the built development elements. The recreation ground contains a number of trees, which contribute greatly to the character of the suburban area.



Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.7 The four terraces dating from 1901 form a strong core to the Conservation Area. Those further north, dating from 1882, are less distinguished but display a character and appearance worthy of protection. To the south, the Duchess of Kent public house provides a good terminating point to the Conservation Area and marks a change in the character of development. To the west, the boundary has been defined by the rear access to the terraces and includes the prominent part of the recreation ground with trees, which enhance views from Brook Street. See the Townscape Analysis Map at the end of Part 1.

5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 In the 19th Century the area known as Northumberland Heath, was a rural farming area with extensive orchards and a mill. In the second half of the century there was change as Erith began to grow partly because of its river and rail connections. Large suburban estates were being erected in Belvedere and Erith for the new breed of commuters into London, whilst a variety of engineering works at Erith became a major employer of local people. Houses for the middle classes started to be built up the hill out of Erith and onto Northumberland Heath. By the 1880's houses had been built in Mill Road, Bexley Road and Brook Street.
- 5.2 The two smaller terraces to the north date from 1882. The other four terraces were laid out in 1901 by Erith Urban District Council and the recreation ground dates from a similar period. The Duchess of Kent public house (1903) represents an evolution from an earlier public house (1860's) and a cottage that stood on this site.

- 5.3 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. Whilst this location is not a known important archaeological area, it is possible that finds may occur.

6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

- 6.1 The conservation area is defined to include the four long terraces and the two shorter terraces at Brook Street. The southern end of the terraces are characterised by the open area of the recreation ground, the Duchess of Kent Public House and included in the conservation area is an area of parkland that backs up to Nos.153-179. This parkland opens to view the backs of the southern terrace housing and offers an open aspect to the built suburban form, which is an important visual characteristic of the conservation area.

Key views and vistas

- 6.2 The relatively narrowness and setting of the road and the strict symmetry between the buildings limits the degree of views available. It is only when looking through the spaces between the terraces that open views are available through to the park and beyond.
- 6.3 Within the area, strongly profiled front elevations are readily appreciated from the roadside, with the detail of brickwork and fenestration very apparent. The western boundary has been defined to include some trees at the rear of houses, which enhance views from Brook Street. Additionally, interesting views are available to the backs of the houses from the southern end of the park.
- 6.4 The junction of Sussex Road, the pub house and the park form a critical open area at the southern edge of the conservation area.
- 6.5 Views to the south from the terrace are terminated by the interesting architectural detail on the roof and elevation of the Duchess of Kent public house. The public house has a distinctive turret that forms a focal point at the area's southern limit and signifies a change in the character of development.
- 6.6 Interesting views are to be found of the two smaller sets of terraces to the north. Due to their hill setting their relationship to the land is unusual and contrasts with the more structured and regular terraces to the south. The cottages are distinguished by being raised up on their plots, above the level of the road. There is also a pair of cottages on the brow of the hill that offer an interesting counter-position between the two sets of terraces.
- 6.7 Significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map at the end of Part 1.



7 Character analysis

Definition of character areas

- 7.1 The northern terraces are located on a hillside slope with the main terrace buildings close to the street giving sense of enclosure. The open space at the recreation ground and Sussex Road form an open setting for the landmark building which terminates the view at the south end of the conservation area. The areas character provides a strong example of late Victorian terraced housing in the London Borough of Bexley. The contrast between the smaller cottages, the terrace buildings and the public house illustrates how architectural style changed within a short period of 20 years. This is a distinguishing characteristic of the area. The openness of the park up to the roadside helps to define a change in character, which is then terminated by the Duchess of Kent Public House.
- 7.2 Principal features of Brook Street Conservation Area includes the open/enclosed space, it's linear character, sloping topography, stunning roofscapes and views between the terraces.

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.3 Brook Street Conservation Area was built for residential use, the majority of it by Erith Urban District Council, as the area became a popular place for people to work and live. Properties are now largely in housing association or private ownership.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.4 The buildings in the conservation area have defining historic character and their appearance derives from suburban architectural styles and local building materials. The plot widths are narrow and regular and the roofline is uniform. There are a number of unifying architectural features in the building, such as yellow walls with red brick detailing and sash windows with prominent white lintels and cills, which present a horizontal emphasis.



- 7.5 To the rear, two of the long terraces include two storey wings, whilst the other two long terraces have rear wings at ground floor only. All would have been considered spacious in their day. The houses have well-weathered yellow stock-brick walls with red brick banding. The windows and doors have white moulded lintels carrying simple decoration and this extends as a moulded mullion between the paired windows on the ground floor
- 7.6 Most of the houses retain their original pattern of openings and most retain sliding sash single-pane windows. Whilst all the houses have replacement doors, the fanlights still remain above the doorways. Most, including all the Housing Association properties, have inappropriate doors with semi-circular glazing within the doors. The roofs are not original but have all been uniformly reroofed in grey tiles which has helped to retain the



unity of the terraces. Most of the houses still retain their original front boundary walls of roughcast brickwork capped by distinctive half-round, blue brick copings, but all have lost their railings.

- 7.7 Of the northern terraces (Nos. 273-283) retain the use of uniform materials with walls of mellow brick with bands of red brick; whilst some of the cottages in the other terraces (Nos. 259-271) have rendered walls. All retain their original openings in the front elevations and some retain the original sash windows. The northern terrace (Nos. 273-283) has various roofing materials, which are separated by the party walls which rise above roof level. The rendered terrace has been uniformly re-roofed in red tiles. Some terraces to the front on the roadside have brick retaining walls over 1 metre which are very much a feature of the original design and style of these cottages.
- 7.8 The Duchess of Kent public house dates originally from the 1860s, yet was substantially rebuilt in about 1903 at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement. By that time it had incorporated an adjoining cottage resulting in a building with red brick walls and a rendered upper floor. It has a projecting corner turret with a conical roof, which is a local landmark. The entrance to the rear yard is enhanced by the use of blue vitrified bricks in the paving.
- 7.9 The roofscape and profiles of the public house offer a contrasting visual sensation to the streetscape. Its irregularity is an important and appreciable contrast with the more homogenous terraces it sits beside and it provides a distinctive landmark in the sequence of the area's less decorated buildings.

Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.10 The buildings in the four main 1901 terraces are all of the same age and provide good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and homogeneity. The houses on Brook Street have undergone little in the way of changes to their facades, which is rare in this part of Bexley where many of the houses have had many major unsympathetic alterations.

- 7.11 It is desirable to protect this unity and homogeneity and it is recommended that the buildings as a group be included on the Townscape Analysis Map as Buildings of Townscape Merit as a good illustration of the age, style and materials of an important period in 20th Century domestic architecture.
- 7.12 There are also two particularly distinct buildings that deserve special mention, No. 255 (The Chestnut) and the Duchess of Kent. These relate very well to the recognisable open space at road junctions and which provides a frame for the buildings at the northern and southern ends respectively. The Duchess of Kent is a local list building as well as a local landmark.
- 7.13 Statutorily listed, locally listed buildings, and landmark buildings help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, which all of the buildings do.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

- 7.14 The urban streetscene of houses close to the road results in insufficient space for street tree planting in front of the terraces. The front gardens are too small to use for car parking and, as a result, most of the original boundary walls have survived.
- 7.15 The recreation ground contains a number of mature trees, which provide a break from the hard urban form and contribute greatly to the character of the suburban area.



- 7.16 Important trees have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It is not appropriate or practical to identify every tree that contributes to the character of the area and lack of a specific reference does not imply that a particular tree is not of value.

Assets of Brook Street Conservation Area (positives)

- 7.17 The positive physical assets of Brook Street Conservation Area are:

- Architectural interest of the buildings, comprising a distinctive common vernacular style using building materials such as decorative brickwork and stone detailing.
- A virtually unaltered late Victorian turn of the century estate alongside a collection of earlier terraced cottages.
- Three different phases of building history: 1882, 1903 and 1905, which exhibit a strong unity of form and design.
- The streetscene, landscaping and views between buildings are especially important.
- The junction with Brook Street and The Drive offers an interesting juxtaposition between the start of the hill and the level area to the south.



- The survival in most cases of the original front boundary walls which creates a sense of enclosure along the terraces, some with attractive hedges behind the boundary walls.
- Topographical interest of the hill to the north of the area.
- A strong village feel due to the trees and the park.
- Original park railings on the roadside.

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



7.18 The main intrusion or negative features is illustrated by:

- The introduction of some new front walls has had a minor impact on the open character.
- Obtrusive, alien porches and the scatter of unsympathetic modern windows and inappropriate doors illustrate the continuing threat to the unity and harmony of the important street elevations.
- Little remains of the original railings that stood on the front boundary walls.
- The condition of one cottage is very poor and it looks unoccupied.
- Car parking on the pavement infringes the relationship between the front elevation and the viewing line.
- A sign restricting pedestrian access outside No 237 Brook Street is an intrusive element in the streetscene.

Problems and pressures

7.19 The main problem and pressures are as follows:

- The conservation area is in part blighted by heavy volumes of traffic
- The main pressure for development is likely to take the form of porches, new front doors, rear extensions, dormer roof extensions and detached garages. Such proposals will inevitably have an adverse affect on the unity and harmony of the existing properties, their character and their combined presence. Even relatively minor individual changes to the front of the terraces could weaken the unity and erode the historic character of the area.
- Changes to existing front doors (originals being four panelled timber doors and glazing in two upper panels) and replacement of timber sash windows (with similar design double glazed units) combine to have a cumulative impact on certain groups of housing. In this respect a whole row of houses have undergone this treatment and have also been subject to additional repainting of the replacement doors and windows.
- Further alterations within the terraces poses a threat to the traditional form and character of spaces in the area.



- Rooflights or rear dormers could disfigure the roofs which are visible from public viewpoints.
- To control these damaging cumulative minor alterations an Article 4 Direction was made in 1995/96. See Appendix 1.

General condition

7.20 The area is generally well maintained and there are no problems with litter, paving or road surfaces. The building brickwork is in good condition and a high standard of joinery is noted. Only a few properties require maintenance works, but these portray a negative image in the streetscene.

Opportunities for enhancement

7.21 Opportunities for enhancement are as follows.

- The potential for enhancement of the area lies mainly with the maintenance of many of the unifying features (i.e. front walls, roofs) that create the uniformity that is distinctive of this part of Brook Street.
- There will need to be consistency in the treatment of front boundary detailing and re-instatement of walls where they have been lost, and potentially railings.
- The recreation ground has some potential for enhancement and boundary railings would benefit from regular painting in a traditional period colour.
- Improvements to rear alleyways and boundaries might be encouraged to the south of the Drive.
- Encourage occupiers to stop car parking on the pavement.
- Review signage and street clutter.

Potential for new development

7.22 It is possible that single storey extensions could be incorporated to the rear of many properties without detriment to the area's character. However, any additional developments to the side of rear wings or at first floor level would need to be designed in a way that would not detract from the special qualities of the area i.e. not obstructing the views between terraces or affecting the character of the ends of terraces.

7.23 Only developments which respect the special interrelationship of spaces within the area, the form, detailing and materials of the existing buildings are likely to be appropriate. The cumulative effect of relatively minor individual changes to the fronts of these houses could weaken the unity of the terrace group and undermine the historic character of the area. In this respect, roof extensions or roof lights would be particularly disruptive where visible from the street. Consideration will also need to be given to the views from the park to the rear of Nos.153-175 and 225-247 Brook Street.

7.24 It would be desirable to re-instate the boundary walls that have been lost and/or replaced by recently constructed modern alternatives. This may be a project, which could be supported by the Bexley Heritage Fund.

7.25 The public house could quite possibly accommodate change as it is individually designed. However, any changes will need to respect the character, scale and detailing of the existing building which is included on the Council's Local List..

7.26 New front windows and replacement doors are most effectively safeguarded in traditional style through an existing Article 4 Direction. The Council controls the

enlargement, improvement or alteration to a dwelling house, gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

- 7.27 Any future developments to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and policies in the Bexley Unitary Development Plan. Any plans for extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.

Townscape Analysis Map



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Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Legislative background

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

2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan

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

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

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

- 3.1 Within the Brook Street Conservation Area are both individual and groups of buildings of considerable merit and local interest. The terraces, Nos.153-175, 177-199, 201-223 and 225-247 (all odd) Brook Street, are highlighted as Buildings of Townscape Merit. Similarly the detached properties at Nos. 255 and 257 Brook Street are also included. The Duchess of Kent Public House is included on the Local List of Buildings of Architectural or Historical Interest and is a landmark building within the conservation area. The two northern terraces also contribute to the character of the area. The Council will seek to retain these buildings and ensure that new development does not

harm their character, appearance or setting. Refer to the Townscape Analysis Map appended to this document.

- 3.2 The Council will ensure that all Locally Listed and Buildings of Townscape Merit are protected from inappropriate forms of development or unjustified demolition. Furthermore, there must be satisfactory proposals for the redevelopment of any site before consent will be granted for demolition in accordance with adopted Unitary Development Plan and other guidance.

4 Erosion of character

- 4.1 It has been identified that increasing pressure from owners to make minor changes to the frontage of their buildings is having a cumulative impact on the appearance of the conservation area. Any such changes could potentially weaken the unity of the building form and threaten the historic character of the area. The replacement of windows and doors was leading to the erosion of some of the original unity and balance of the houses. It is imperative that small but important period architectural features, which add to the historic interest of the building group, are protected.
- 4.2 In a similar manner, the context of the original roofscape is an important feature, which adds rhythm and continuity to the streetscene and the conservation area. Roof extensions, dormers or rooflights to the front would be particularly disruptive where visible from the street. Similarly careful consideration is required to maintain views from the open space to the rear of the properties.
- 4.3 In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations pose a threat to the special character of the area:
- Loss of timber windows and doors.
 - Installation of porches to the front elevation.
 - Removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
 - Removal and/or alterations to front boundary walls and hedges.
 - Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers or rooflights.
- 4.4 These minor works and alterations to unlisted buildings, in use as single-family dwellings, can normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called “Permitted Development” and falls into various classes, which are listed in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.
- 4.5 Where minor alterations are eroding the character of an area the Council can make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This withdraws permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development, which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in the conservation area. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space. An Article 4 Direction has been made to cover Brook Street Conservation Area. See Appendix 1 for more details.

- 4.6 As an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of Locally Listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit and the wider area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.
- 4.7 Furthermore, the Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings

- 5.1 Within the conservation areas, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 meters above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.2 The space between the buildings on Brook Street offers significant views to trees and greenery beyond. It is important to retain this continuity and maintain these open green views as breaks in the urban built environment. The green open space and trees provide a welcome break from the urban environment and a make significant contribution to the conservation area. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance these natural features.
- 5.3 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal. The Council will also seek to maintain the open spaces and views between buildings and breaks in the built environment.

6 Setting and views

- 6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views, into and from the conservation area, will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map and in the character appraisal. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.
- 6.2 Views from Brook Street looking south towards the Duchess of Kent Public House and views into the open space are particularly significant. Also, parking to the front of the properties on the footways disrupts the long views, unity and open setting. At peak times there is a high volume of traffic on Brook Street, which detracts from an appreciation of the view.
- 6.3 To the rear of the properties on the west side of Brook Street is the Recreation Ground open space, part of the open space is included in the conservation area. Public views from the open space need to be taken into account when considering any planning application.
- 6.4 The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the conservation area, as identified in the appraisal. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and that due

regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with Adopted UDP and other guidance.

7 The public realm and enhancement

- 7.1 Pavements in the conservation area have been resurfaced using modern paving materials. Lighting is provided by late twentieth century, utilitarian columns, which being slender and a dark colour tend not to be intrusive. In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area, and redundant modern features should be removed. The reinstatement of traditional flagged pavements and replica, Victorian style, lighting could help to reinforce the identity of the area and the public realm. A critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement, subject to resources. The Council is committed to review signage and street clutter.
- 7.2 As an adjunct to the public realm the Council will encourage property owners to keep up the ongoing maintenance of front enclosures and to re-instate, in some instances, using traditional designs and materials their front boundary walls. The Council will investigate the design of the original railings that once topped the front boundary walls. Bexley Heritage Fund may grant aid restoration projects in appropriate circumstances.
- 7.3 The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.

8 New buildings and building extensions

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to the highest a quality of design and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.
- 8.2 It is possible that single storey extensions could be incorporated to the rear of many properties without detriment to the area's character. However, any additional developments to the side of rear wings or at first floor level would need to be designed in a way that would not detract from the special qualities of the area i.e. not obstructing the views between terraces or affecting the character of the ends of terraces .
- 8.3 Only developments which respect the special interrelationship of spaces within the area, the form, detailing and materials of the existing buildings are likely to be appropriate. The cumulative effect of relatively minor individual changes to the fronts of these houses could weaken the unity of the terrace group and undermine the historic character of the area. In this respect, roof extensions or roof lights would be particularly disruptive where visible from the street. Consideration will also need to be given to the views from the park to the rear of Nos.153-175 and Nos. 225-247 Brook Street.
- 8.4 The public house could quite possibly accommodate change as it is individually designed. However, any changes will need to respect the character, scale and detailing of the existing building which is included in the Council's Local List.
- 8.5 New front windows and replacement doors are most effectively safeguarded in traditional style through an existing Article 4 Direction. The Council controls the enlargement, improvement or alteration to a dwelling house, gate, fence, wall or other

means of enclosure.

- 8.6 Any future alterations to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and policies in the Bexley Unitary Development Plan. Therefore, any plans for extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.
- 8.7 Rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope would detract from the character of the area and conflict with the fundamental aim to “preserve or enhance” the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.

9 Solar panels and wind turbines

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

10 Monitoring change

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

11 Boundary definition

- 11.1 The appraisal identified that the existing boundary is generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historic significance and special character and consequently no revisions are suggested to the existing designation.
- 11.2 The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and will periodically review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.

12 Community engagement

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, “people make places”. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In predominately residential areas such as Brook Street Conservation Area, the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local residents and the

Council is one way of helping owners and the Council to carry out appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.

- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local residents and any associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets subject to resources.
- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community:
- 12.4 Public consultation - The Brook Street Conservation Area appraisal and management plan were subject to public consultation in 2007. As part of the consultation exercise comments were sought from the Council's Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships (as appropriate), organisations such as English Heritage, etc., and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The document was also placed on the Council's website, in local libraries and contact centre. A letter advising of these arrangements was delivered to all properties in the area. The results of the consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text was revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available both as printed documents and on the Council's website.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local residents and where it can help and encourage local residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives.

Appendices

1 Article 4 Direction

Properties within Brook Street Conservation Area covered by this Direction are shown on the Townscape Analysis map and include:

Nos.153-247(odd) and 259-283(odd) Brook Street, Northumberland Heath, Erith

which brings within Council control, works of enlargement, improvement or alteration to a dwelling-house or gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure fronting Brook Street or (in the case of No.247) The Drive, works to alter or remove a chimney on a dwelling house and painting of any part of the exterior apart from door, doorframe, window, downpipe or eaves boarding which fronts a highway. The total or partial demolition of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure fronting a highway is also controlled.

and Nos.255 and 257 Brook Street, Northumberland Heath, Erith

which brings within Council control works of enlargement, improvement or alteration to a dwelling-house or gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure fronting Brook Street or (in the case of No.255) The Drive, works to alter or remove a chimney on a dwelling house, and the provision or alteration of an ancillary building or a hard surface in a location fronting Brook Street or (in the case of No.255) The Drive.

More detailed guidance is available from Bexley Council.

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

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

Roofs

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

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

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

Chimneys

Chimneystacks are both decorative and functional features of the roofscape and can be

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

Dormers

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

Fascias

Features such as timber bargeboards and fascias should be preserved and, if replacement becomes necessary, it should wherever possible replicate the design and material of those original to the building. The addition of bargeboards and fascias to buildings that did not previously have such a feature will normally be resisted, where they would detract from the character of the building or the area.

Walls

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

Painting and stone cleaning

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

Windows and doors

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

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

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

Doors - Doorways form an important element of historic buildings and can add to the character of conservation areas. Together with the door surround, fanlight, steps and original door furniture, doors can provide a significant and prominent feature. In recent years there has been a trend towards the replacement of historic timber front doors with modern doors of inappropriate materials and design. To preserve the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas, it is important to retain the original front door, door surround, fanlight and other features wherever possible. When necessary, replacement or repaired doors should accurately replicate the original design in all respects.

Window and door materials

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

Rainwater goods

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

Boundary walls and railings

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

Minor additions

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

3 Contacts

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas in Bexley Borough:

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser
London Borough of Bexley,
Strategic Planning and Development
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,
Bexleyheath, Kent
DA6 7AT

Tel: 020 8303 7777

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

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

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

Tel: 020 7973 3000

Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

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

Tel: 020 7377 1644

Email: info@spab.org.uk

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

