



Christ Church Conservation Area

Area Appraisal and Management Plan

June 2008

This document was produced by the

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and approved by the Cabinet Member on 26th June 2008.

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

Location of Conservation Area



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- Christ Church Conservation Area
- Other conservation areas

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Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Christ Church 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 Christ Church 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 statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are also set out in the UDP and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should 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 Christ Church Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- The earliest developments in this area dating from the 1890s - it has an emphatic Victorian character, which has survived mostly intact.
- Dramatic views along tree lined wide roads.
- Houses skilfully set back in spacious surroundings.
- Attractive grass verges with mature pollarded trees.
- Many characteristic original architectural features, including splendid chimney stacks.
- Curved roads in differing scales and dramatic topography.





4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

- 4.1 The Christ Church Conservation Area is in Sidcup, which is situated around 15 miles southeast of central London. The conservation area lies to the west of Station Road, Sidcup. The conservation area is predominantly residential although the part on Main Road is retail with flats above and is within Sidcup district shopping centre.
- 4.2 The boundary includes a planned layout of Victorian and Edwardian development.

Street pattern and layout

- 4.3 The Christ Church area is a mainly planned development with roads and residential plots laid out in a uniform grid-iron pattern. This is a key characteristic. The historic street pattern remains and defines the layout of today's conservation area.

Landscape and setting

- 4.4 Street and garden trees are and have always been integral to the character of this area and this can be seen clearly on the old historical maps. Important trees and blocks of trees have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It is not appropriate or practical to identify every important 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.
- 4.5 Grass verges with landscaping in many roads play an important visual role in defining the open spacious character and create a soft edge between the road carriageway and the pedestrian footway.
- 4.6 The landscape qualities of the Christ Church Conservation Area are of immense significance and should not be underestimated. The open and generous green space, including verges and front gardens with mature trees and shrubs add greatly to the special architectural quality of the area by enhancing the Victorian and Edwardian

architectural details and clean building lines, this creates an overall distinct sense of place.

- 4.7 Around Christ Church there are significant views and vistas north to open sky and landscape. These views have a positive influence.
- 4.8 The gradual slope of the topography of the conservation area rising from north to south is also of crucial importance to the special character.

Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.9 The conservation area boundary has been selected to cover the best and relatively unaltered parts of the Victorian/Edwardian residential area and their gardens. The core Victorian area of Main Road, Hamilton Road, Stanhope Road, Victoria Road and Station Road is reasonably cohesive and is easily defined. Where this merges into the 20th century development around Christchurch Road, Crescent Road and Priestlands Park Road, the boundary is more difficult to rationalise. The Council has decided to incorporate those areas of architectural and historic character, whilst excluding sequences of discordant recent building where redevelopment seems improbable. Beyond the boundaries, the character of the area changes significantly, thereby creating a defined edge to the conservation area. This boundary is still appropriate in defining the most historic area.
- 4.10 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.

5 Historical development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 The earliest development at Sidcup spread along the High Street, which was the main route from London to Foots Cray and Swanley. Development around the junction of Station Road/Main Road/Elm Road/High Street began in the late 19th century. Within a few years, during the 1890s, new shops and houses were built along Main Road and on Hamilton Road and Stanhope Road to its north. This enclave of late 19th century houses has remained remarkably intact when compared to other areas of Victorian Sidcup, it forms the core of the Conservation Area. The earliest properties in Priestlands Park Road were completed by 1897, but it took half a century for the completion of its other houses. By reason of its curving layout, it broke free from the grid-iron pattern of earlier housing developments.



- 5.2 As the 1920s progressed, so the newly laid out roads to the north of Main Road became lined with houses. These were mostly designed individually or in groups, creating a diverse area, the character of which benefits from the mature landscape made possible by generous building lines and large plots. Bomb damage explains some of the little plots whose scale and architectural finesse generally failed to meet the standards of earlier house builders. This provides an interesting picture of evolving suburban development in the form of mostly detached houses, creating an area of quality townscape.
- 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 Development within the residential part of the conservation area consists of mainly detached and semi detached houses placed along wide often tree-lined streets. The visual impact of the vehicle is kept to a minimum, although the importance of verges and crossovers should be mentioned. Grass verges make a positive contribution to the special character of the area and any additional car crossovers will erode this characteristic and their construction should therefore be resisted.
- 6.2 Part of the conservation area abutting Main Road is within Sidcup town centre and take the built form of a two-storey Victorian shopping parade with residential flats above. The forecourts of the retail properties are included within the footway and form a large and open pavement area.



Key views and vistas

- 6.3 Significant views within the conservation area include looking:
- south and west over open space at Priestlands Park Road;
 - north and south along Christchurch Road;
 - east and west along Victoria Road/Sandhurst Road/Crescent Road and west along Stanhope Road;
 - north along Hamilton Road;
 - north and south along Station Road and east and west along Main Road; and
 - south from Christchurch Road over to open space on Main Road.

Because a view is not mentioned does not signify that it is not unimportant.

- 6.4 Within the Conservation Area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses, streets and glimpses between buildings to green space and trees beyond. Because a view is not mentioned do not assume it is unimportant.
- 6.5 Significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

7 Character analysis

Definition of character areas

7.1 The built form of the shopping parade on Main Road uniformly share white inset bands of bricks, moulded window surrounds and jutting gables above each shop, these when taken as a whole form a homogenous and attractive building facade.

7.2 The Police Station is a local list and a landmark building within the conservation area and shows similar detailing, but with the banding and other details in Portland stone. The yellow brick St. Lawrence Church, a local list and landmark building, and large adjacent manse (No.109 Main Road) are well-detailed prominent buildings, the Church having an unusual chequerboard patterned gable.



7.3 Behind these lie Stanhope Road and Hamilton Road, which also date from the 1890s. The houses here are close but semi detached with red brick walls banded in white bricks, moulded stone details and gables topping projecting bay windows. Each pair is detailed slightly differently from its neighbours, but this is done within a clear geometric discipline, creating a unified development of substantial character.

The unity is echoed by the roofscapes, the erosion of which should be firmly resisted.

7.4 Station Road and Victoria Road were developed with larger detached and semi detached houses of more individual character but with equal attention to detail. Station Road also incorporates two important local landmark buildings: Sidcup Community Church, which presents a prominent gable end to Station Road. It has been skilfully extended to the side along/adjacent to the public footpath, using good traditional materials. Sitting almost opposite the Community Church is the other landmark building, the Bexley Music Centre, a relatively large two-storey, red brick and part render building, which creates a significant presence turning the corner of Victoria Road/Station Road, with its prominent corner turret and cupola.



Hamilton Road



Bexley Music Centre, Station Road

7.5 Similarly, another proud community building is Christ Church on Main Road and the corner of Christchurch Road, a local list and landmark building, which was completed at the turn of the century.

7.6 With all local landmark buildings it is important that any alterations or extensions should be of matching design or materials.

7.7 To the north and west, the character of the area changes as it merges into 20th century development. Two storey, detached houses prevail, many of the pre-war examples being planned by builders living locally. City architects had occasional influence for example in No 16 Christchurch



Road and No 31 Crescent Road, a bungalow with an attic. Corner plots were particularly expensive, although some have been subdivided and houses often perform a landmark role, uplifting a long-distance vista.

7.8 It is worth remarking that these various properties were being designed for the car owning classes; the coherence of their garages and the survival of attractive front gardens testify to the arrival of this fact.

7.9 Many gardens in Edwardian and Victorian neighbourhoods have made way for paved forecourts and this is unfortunate. This incrementally erodes the character of the conservation area.

7.10 The area as a whole benefits from well-defined building lines and clearly defined unusually large, plot sizes and their retention is important to the character of the conservation area. The roofscape although varied in detail and materials, is traditional in form, with heights relating mainly to the two-storey scale of the area.

Activity, prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

7.11 The Christ Church Conservation Area is predominately residential with small-scale retail and religious buildings associated with suburban living. The area was pasture and arable farming before development.

7.12 The motor car is apparent in the conservation area and road signs do form a detrimental visual barrier to certain views and attractive buildings.

Architectural and historic character

7.13 The conservation area has a memorable historic character and appearance deriving from a varied collection of large Victorian and Edwardian buildings built with good quality traditional materials.

Buildings of townscape merit

7.14 Buildings of townscape merit will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.

7.15 The conservation area has local landmark, statutory listed and locally listed buildings, these help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

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

7.17 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Roadside grassed verges add to the spacious character of the conservation area.

7.18 Vegetation including especially trees, shrubs and grass, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.



Assets of Christ Church Conservation Area (positives)

7.19 The positive physical assets of Christ Church Conservation Area are listed below:

- Architectural and historic interest of area's suburban development and Victorian/Edwardian buildings.
- The open and generous green space, including verges and front gardens with mature trees and shrubs add greatly to the special architectural quality of the area by enhancing the Victorian and Edwardian architectural details and clean building lines, this creates an overall sense of place.
- Large, mature trees in private gardens.
- Around Christ Church there are beautiful views and vistas north to open sky and landscape.
- The gradual slope of the topography of the conservation area rising from north to south is also of crucial importance to its special character.

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

7.20 The main intrusion or negative features are as follows.

- The design and construction of some more recent houses of very limited architectural interest or merit.
- Some uncharacteristic and quite ugly buildings outside the conservation area for example the office buildings which line Station Road.
- Property owners have installed UPVC windows/doors in good traditional Victorian and Edwardian houses where wooden windows and doors should remain. Similarly, concrete roof tiles and other unsympathetic materials have in some instances been

used.

- The existing grass verges are of high landscape quality and have a positive visual influence. Car crossovers and other breaks to these verges are eroding this key characteristic and should generally not be encouraged.
- The presence of ordinary single and double yellow lines is inappropriate in the conservation area. Narrow primrose yellow lines can be used in conservation areas. Unattractive concrete road surfacing in Studland Close and elsewhere.
- Many unnecessary road signs and posts.

General condition

7.21 Generally Christ Church Conservation Area appears to be in a fairly good condition with the obvious caveats mentioned previously.

Opportunities for enhancement

7.22 The Management Plan identifies some areas appropriate for enhancement. This includes, tree planting and landscaping, more appropriate street furniture, lessening the visual impact of traffic, etc. Historic building grants should be targeted at householders to restore or reinstate historic features.

Potential for new development

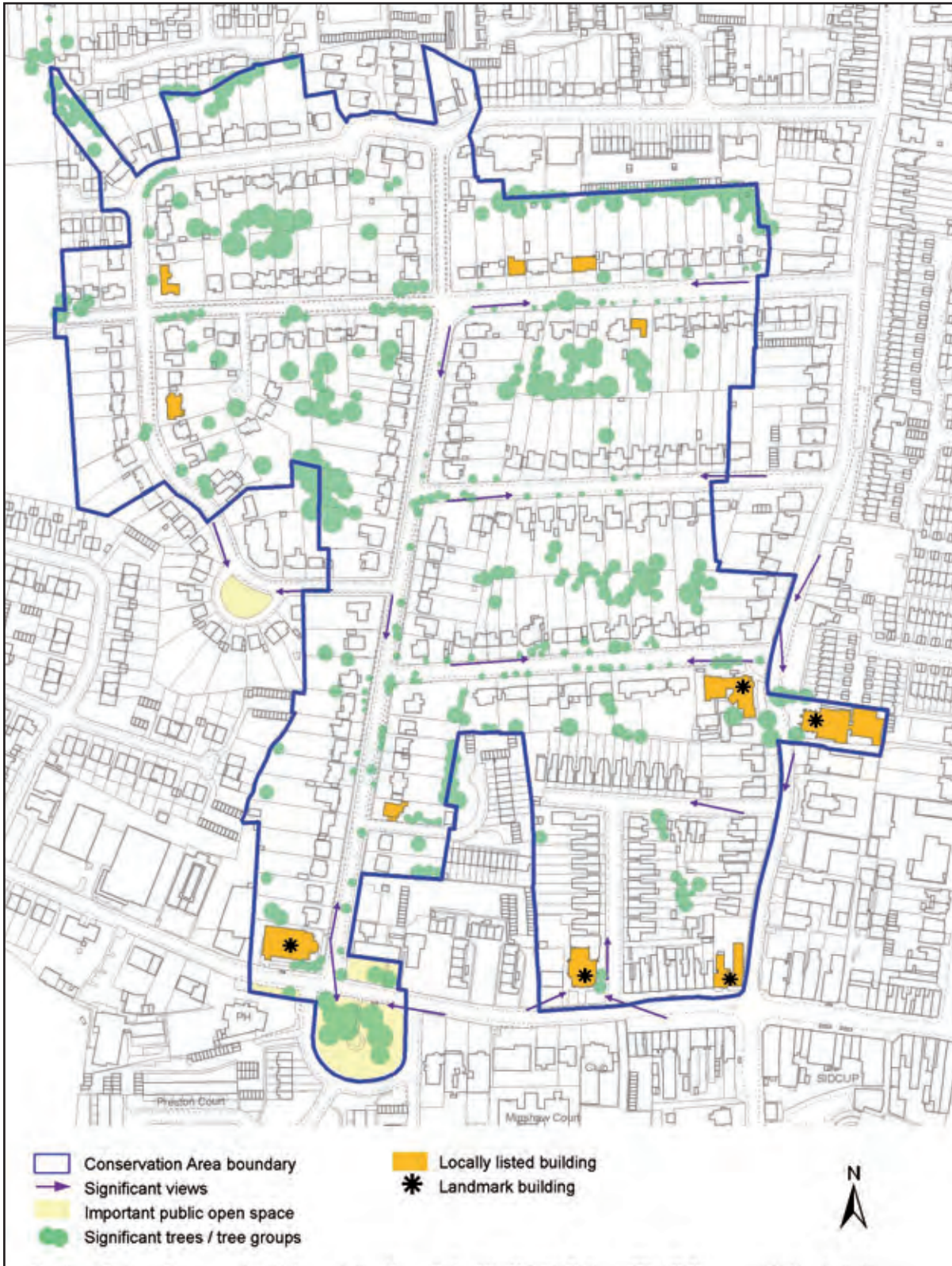
7.23 There are no vacant sites in this area and except for possible minor extensions, there is no potential for large-scale development.

7.24 Any development will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and policies.

7.25 All future proposals for development will be judged for their effect on the character, appearance and special interest of the conservation area as defined in this appraisal.



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 dwelling house 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 Bexley UDP (April 2004) in particular policies ENV46 - ENV55, Design and Development Control Guidelines, the emerging Local Development Framework, and other published design guidance.
- 2.6 Furthermore, the Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the characteristic and appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

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

- 3.1 Within the Christ Church Conservation Area there are many fine individual buildings of townscape merit. In addition, all properties collectively form a unique townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status. The landmark buildings on the Local List are as follows: Main Road; St Lawrence Church, Christ Church, Sidcup Police Station. On Station Road there is Sidcup Community Church and the former Bexley Music Centre. The Townscape Analysis Map illustrates the location of all locally listed buildings.

4 Erosion of character

4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.

Predominately Residential Area

4.2 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.
- Alterations to window/door openings including infilling open porches.
- Use of concrete roof tiles, removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
- Additions to front boundaries including walls and fences are eroding openness characteristic.
- Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers.
- Unsympathetic side extensions.
- Loss of gardens, particularly to the front of a property for the provision of car parking spaces.

4.3 In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.

4.4 In addition, as an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.

4.5 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

Retail/residential area

4.6 The retail/residential area which runs along Main Road, from Station Road west to Hamilton Road comprises a mix of town centre uses at ground floor level with residential accommodation above.

4.7 The built form of the shopping parade on Main Road uniformly share white inset bands of bricks, moulded window surrounds and jutting gables above each shop. These when taken as a whole form a homogenous and attractive building facade.

4.8 The area is under considerable pressure from commercial development, which

normally includes the need to instal a new shopfront together with some form of advertisement sign. While the Council recognises that advertisements are a necessary adjunct to retail activity, these works, if carried out in an unsympathetic manner, can incrementally have a serious detrimental affect on the homogeneity and character of the conservation area. For this reason, the Council will impose strict controls over the type and design of shopfronts, the display and illumination of advertisements and signs within sensitive areas, particularly Conservation Areas. All applications will be assessed against current planning policy and guidance.



- 4.9 Similar to support given in residential areas, the Council through operation of the Bexley Heritage Fund may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects in the retail area, which restore or reinstate the original features of the building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings

- 5.1 On private land within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 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 buildings offers valuable views to trees and greenery beyond. It is important to retain this continuity and maintain these open views as breaks in and around the urban built environment. The green verges, trees and open spaces make a 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.
- 5.4 Of particular concern is that many gardens in Edwardian and Victorian suburbs have made way for paved forecourts and this is unfortunate. This incrementally erodes the character of the conservation area. The Council will resist the loss of trees to facilitate the provision of car parking areas in front gardens.

6 Setting and views

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

7 The public realm and enhancement

- 7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using a mixture of modern paving materials and this mix detracts from the visual quality area. The adoption of a common surfacing material, in keeping with the historical characteristics of the area, would be beneficial and considerably improve the visual continuity of the conservation area. Similarly, the adoption of a common design and palette of materials in the construction of vehicle crossovers would assist in this aim. Although as highlighted previously the number of crossovers in the area are now beginning to erode the visual relationship of the grass verges, a key characteristic of the area.
- 7.2 Lighting is provided by late twentieth century, utilitarian columns. 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.
- 7.3 The reinstatement of traditional pavements and replica period lighting could significantly reinforce the identity of the area and the public realm. Resources permitting a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement, subject to resources.
- 7.4 Traffic management can have an impact on the visual quality of an area. The existing scheme in Christ Church Conservation Area on the whole is minimal, however in some instances certain aspects could be improved. For example, the presence of ordinary single and double yellow lines could be replaced with narrow primrose yellow lines; bland utilitarian highway signs at the entrance to Sidcup could be redesigned.
- 7.5 To enhance the street's appearance, the Council will encourage property owners to retain their front gardens rather than paving them over to provide additional vehicle parking.
- 7.6 Roadside grassed verges add to the spacious character of the conservation area. Vegetation especially trees contribute significantly to the green and spacious ambiance of the area. There is considerable potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping along the roadside verges and in private gardens. In addition, it is recommended that, resources permitting, as street trees die they should be replaced with an appropriate species of tree.
- 7.7 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 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 In Christ Church Conservation Area the main pressure for future development might generally take the form of residential extensions, which could have an adverse affect on the harmony of the existing development. Further development might be permissible in some instances, as long as the proposals utilise current enclosed areas at ground floor level to the rear and are designed in a way that is sensitive to scale, detail and materials.
- 8.3 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Vegetation including especially trees, shrubs and grass, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.
- 8.4 The roofscape although varied in detail and materials, is traditional in form, with heights relating mainly to the two-storey scale of the area. Any variations such as dormers or other extensions are likely to adversely affect this established character. In particular, rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope will detract from the character and appearance of the area and therefore fail 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 of the conservation area any installations may be problematic. The Council has published guidance, which provides information on the subject. Please refer “Solar Panels and Wind Turbines: A Householder Guide on the Need for Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval” (Jan. 2007).

10 Monitoring change

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

11 Boundary definition

- 11.1 The appraisal identified that the existing boundary was generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historical 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 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 Christ Church 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 - Christ Church Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation during February to April 2008. As part of the consultation exercise comments were sought from the 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 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 '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.

2 Contacts

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

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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
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Tel: 020 7377 1644

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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:

