10.1 Aims
10.1.1 The aims are to:-
• conserve, protect and enhance the character, appearance and historic integrity of the built environment in both the urban and rural areas; and
• improve the appearance and functioning of the built environment generally in order to create an attractive environment for residents and visitors and to encourage investment in the local economy.

10.2 Objectives
10.2.1 The objectives are to:-
• preserve buildings of architectural or historic interest and local interest buildings and their settings;
• preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and areas of special character and their settings (including buildings, related spaces, topography and vegetation);
• protect and enhance the character and appearance and setting and archaeological and historic integrity of ancient monuments (both scheduled and unscheduled), archaeological sites, historic parks and gardens and other historic landscapes; and
• ensure that development proposals enhance the character, quality and functioning of the built environment by encouraging high quality design in new buildings, extensions, external alterations, shopfronts and advertisement displays.

10.3 Introduction
10.3.1 In an area which is likely to see major developments taking place over the Local Plan Review period and beyond, the protection and enhancement of the quality of the built environment in Gravesham is a key planning issue. Buildings and their settings which make a contribution to the character and appearance of the environment form a vital part of establishing local identity and are important both to the quality of life of local residents and, to an increasing extent, tourism and economic investment in the Borough.

10.3.2 Although few buildings in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet date from before 1800 there is a fine stock of Victorian and Edwardian architecture which marks the modern expansion of the towns. More buildings from before 1800 survive in the rural area, both in the historic cores of villages and as isolated buildings in the countryside. In summary, Gravesham has a rich heritage which is in need of protection and enhancement.

10.3.3 The main elements of the Borough Council’s role in the preservation and enhancement of the built environment are:-
• being proactive, for example carrying out improvement schemes itself, and in partnership with others;
Built Environment and Conservation

- encouraging other organisations to implement schemes to improve the environment, for example sympathetic improvements to highway surfaces, street furniture;
- ensuring that new development does not detract from the character and appearance of an area but makes a positive contribution to it by achieving a high standard of design in both town and country;
- through effective planning policies, to safeguard and improve historic areas, buildings and archaeological sites and areas of high townscape quality;
- seeking sources of grant aid and offering grants and professional advice on matters such as historic building repairs;
- maintaining a ‘Buildings at Risk’ register and using enforcement powers to ensure that historic buildings neither fall into disrepair nor are subject to unauthorised unsympathetic alterations;
- monitoring, maintaining and improving the Heritage asset by cost-effective use of its resources, co-ordinated through a Heritage Management Plan; and
- promoting sustainability through, for instance, the encouragement of repair and re-use of historic buildings and the use of sustainable materials, design and methods of construction.

10.3.4 At present, grants offered by the Borough Council are mainly targeted towards urban regeneration, particularly within existing conservation areas. Otherwise, the money available for historic building grants, to assist in the upkeep of listed buildings, is very limited. Therefore, the approach is to offer historic building grants only in relation to the additional expenditure arising from the use of traditional design or materials necessary for a listed building. Encouraging appropriate new uses for vacant or underused historic buildings is a key part of the approach to conservation and regeneration.

10.3.5 The Borough Council is also concerned to ensure that the general environment is improved by achieving high standards of design in new developments and by seeking improvements in the appearance of run-down areas. This is an important part of the promotion of an improved image for the Borough, which links with the desire to assist economic regeneration. The Borough Council has been and will continue to be active in environmental improvements through programmes such as the Conservation Area Partnership Scheme, Impact, Groundwork and the North West Kent Countryside Project.

10.4 Townscape, Conservation and Design

10.4.1 Current government advice in respect of the Heritage asset is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment” which complements the guidance in PPG16 “Archaeology and Planning.” It places increased emphasis on the concept of sustainable development and the importance for the planning process to reconcile the need for economic growth with the need to protect the natural and historic environment.
Policy BE1 Townscape, Conservation and Design

The Borough Council will give priority to conserving and enhancing the built environment in both the urban and rural areas. Particular importance will be attached to:

i. the design of new development;

ii. the safeguarding and enhancing of conservation areas, including the protection of buildings, spaces and trees which contribute to the area’s special character and appearance;

iii. environmental improvement schemes; and

iv. safeguarding and enhancing the historic landscape.

10.5 Conservation Areas

10.5.1 Conservation areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance the aspects of character or appearance which define an area’s special interest.

10.5.2 There are currently 22 conservation areas in Gravesham, 13 in the urban area and 9 in the rural area. They range in both size and character, for example Thong is a small conservation area based on a rural hamlet, Windmill Hill conservation area covers an urban neighbourhood, and Cobham is a conservation area based on a large village and its surroundings.

10.5.3 Although not a statutory requirement, English Heritage (the Government’s statutory advisor on the protection of England’s historic environment) places great emphasis on the need for local authorities to prepare Conservation Area assessments or appraisals which describe the special architectural and historic features which merit the designation of each one. Character appraisals and studies, identifying the components of the area’s character and putting forward proposals for its preservation and enhancement have been carried out for all of the 13 urban conservation areas. The process is continuing for the 9 rural conservation areas. The exercise has been subject to public participation and Borough Council resolution and the resulting conservation area statements should be taken into account in the formulation of development proposals within the conservation areas. They form supplementary planning guidance and therefore carry significant weight in determining applications both for planning permission and for conservation area consent.

10.5.4 Local planning authorities have a duty to review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designation of conservation areas is justified. An important part of the designation process is the establishment of a consistent local standard and a set of criteria for the designation of new conservation areas and the review of existing conservation area boundaries.
Policy BE2    Conservation Area Designation, Review and Protection

The following criteria will be applied when assessing new conservation areas or reviewing existing ones. Conservation areas will be expected to:

i. be of special architectural or historic interest;
ii. contain a sufficient number of buildings of architectural or historic quality, retaining most of their original features, which give a strong character to the area;
iii. have a sufficient amount of good quality hard and soft landscaping which contribute to the character and appearance of the area; and
iv. have strong relationships between buildings and between buildings and open spaces.

The Borough Council will preserve and seek to enhance the character and appearance of Gravesham’s conservation areas shown on the Proposals Map, or as subsequently extended or designated. Planning applications for development in conservation areas will be considered in the light of the conclusions of the Council’s Conservation Area Statements and Government guidance. All buildings or other structures; trees, hedgerows or other natural features; walls, fences and other boundary treatments; open spaces; historic surfaces; and important views or vistas; which contribute to the character and/or appearance of the conservation area will be protected and enhanced.

10.5.5 A comprehensive review and appraisal of all existing conservation areas, which will be subject to public consultation, is currently in progress and will continue to be carried out at regular intervals over the Plan period. A scheme of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of each area will be prepared. The resulting Conservation Area Statements will form supplementary planning guidance to the Local Plan Review.

10.5.6 The primary objectives of policies for conservation areas will be to seek to preserve or enhance their character and appearance, balanced against the need to ensure that such areas must function successfully as places for social and economic activity.

10.5.7 Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 allows Directions restricting permitted development to be issued if it is expedient to do so. The Borough Council will use its statutory powers to introduce such Directions where conservation areas are being adversely affected by changes taking place as a result of permitted development rights. In the case of inappropriate ‘deemed consent’ advertisement displays, the use of discontinuance notices will also be considered.

10.5.8 Conservation area designation introduces control over the demolition of most buildings within conservation areas. In accordance with government guidance

Gravesham Local Plan 2nd Review    166    Deposit Version
(PPG15), there will be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Proposals to demolish these buildings will be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (see section 10.6 below). In less clear-cut cases, for example where a building makes little or no such contribution, full information will be required about what is proposed for the site following demolition. Consent for demolition will not be granted unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment.

**Policy BE3 Demolition in Conservation Areas**

Development involving demolition in a conservation area will only be permitted if:

i. the structure to be demolished detracts from or makes no material contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area; and

ii. detailed proposals for the re-use of the site, including any replacement building or other structure, have been approved.

If consent for demolition is granted, the local planning authority will impose a condition requiring that a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment be made and planning permission for those works granted before the demolition takes place.

**Policy BE4 New Development within or adjacent to Conservation Areas**

Development, including change of use, within or adjacent to a conservation area will normally only be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:

i. the scale, form, materials and detailing of the proposal respect the characteristics of buildings in the conservation area;

ii. where on existing buildings, local or regional architectural features are maintained;

iii. the proposal incorporates a high standard of quality and design;

iv. historically significant boundaries and other elements contributing to the established pattern and ‘grain’ of development in the area are retained and respected in new development proposals;

v. the position of the building on its site relates well to that of surrounding buildings;

vi. the development does not adversely affect important open spaces, the streetscape, roofscape, skyline, and setting of the conservation area, or significant views within, into or out of it;
vii. the development either makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area or leaves its character or appearance unharmed; and
viii. trees and other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the conservation area are retained and protected.

The Borough Council will expect applications for development in or adjacent to a conservation area to contain sufficient details to enable the impact of the proposal upon the conservation area to be assessed and will not normally grant outline planning permission for such proposals.

Within conservation areas the Borough Council will, wherever possible, encourage the highway authority to undertake highway improvements and maintenance in a manner sensitive to the character and appearance of the area and will seek the implementation of environmental enhancement schemes in appropriate locations.

The Borough Council will encourage proposals to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, including the removal of buildings, structures and features which detract from those areas.

Policy BE5 Alterations and Extensions to Buildings in Conservation Areas

Proposals to alter or extend a building in a conservation area which require planning permission will be permitted only if all of the following criteria are met:

i. the design, scale, proportions, colour, materials and landscaping are sympathetic to the rest of the building;
ii. the alteration will help to keep the building in use and will not prevent the use of the upper floors;
iii. traditional features are retained and, where necessary, restored; and
iv. the alteration or extension will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The removal of traditional shopfronts in conservation areas will be resisted and the design of new shopfronts and advertisements will be expected to comply with and will be judged against the criteria set out in the Borough Council’s Shopfront Design Guide which forms supplementary planning guidance. The installation of solid metal external security roller shutters will be resisted. The Borough Council has published supplementary planning guidance on Security Measures for Shopfronts and Commercial Premises.
Alterations and extensions will be expected to reflect the advice contained in design guidance issued by the Borough Council which will form supplementary guidance to this Plan.

The Borough Council will introduce Article 4(1) and 4(2) Directions, subject to the necessary confirmation, where it is evident that conservation areas are being adversely affected by changes taking place as a result of permitted development rights.

The Borough Council will resist minor alterations to buildings in conservation areas which do not have permitted development rights (for example the replacement of original traditional joinery with modern equivalents such as plastic or aluminium) where these would have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. All proposals for alterations to buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be expected to preserve or enhance them.

Policy BE6 Vacant or Underused Sites in Conservation Areas
The Borough Council will prepare development briefs as resources allow and encourage the sympathetic redevelopment of sites which currently detract from the character or appearance of a conservation area.

10.6 Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest

Statutorily Listed Buildings

10.6.1 There are currently 474 listed buildings in Gravesham. 10 of these are Grade I, 16 are Grade II* and the rest are Grade II or B. Initial surveys have indicated that there may be many more which are worthy of listing. Further survey work will be required to reveal the full extent of potential listed buildings and applications will be made to the Department of Culture Media and Sport for spot-listing where necessary. These surveys will be carried out as resources permit.

10.6.2 Listed buildings represent the best of our historical and architectural built heritage and the Borough Council has a duty to protect them from unsympathetic alterations and from demolition which cannot be justified.

10.6.3 When consent is given to alter a listed building the Borough Council will, where appropriate, impose conditions to achieve appropriate standards of workmanship and materials and to ensure that historic features are retained or reinstated. Planning applications for the change of use of a listed building must be accompanied by full details of any associated alterations so that the effect on the character of the listed building may be assessed. Listed building consent will only be granted for alterations which are ‘reversible’.

10.6.4 In the case of derelict or poorly maintained buildings, the Borough Council has powers to serve Urgent Works and Listed Building Repair Notices. A register of Historic Buildings at Risk will continue to be maintained and a co
ordinated approach to their repair and re-use pursued, using statutory enforcement powers, including those referred to above. The Borough Council will continue to make grants available for the repair and restoration of listed and other historic buildings and areas as resources allow. It will also continue to make applications to English Heritage and other grant giving bodies for support for its grant scheme.

Policy BE7 Statutorily Listed Buildings

Proposals will not be permitted for the following:

i. the demolition or partial demolition of a listed building, except the removal of later modern additions which are of no historic or architectural interest, where there is no overall damage to the listed building or its setting and where no harm is caused to the setting of any other listed building, the character of a street-scene or the character of a conservation area. In those few cases where the Borough Council is satisfied that there is no alternative but to grant consent for demolition, all available means will be used to secure early and appropriate redevelopment of the site;

ii. the internal or external alteration or extension or change of use of a listed building, if this would in any way adversely affect its architectural and historic interest, character, or setting. The primary consideration will be the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals will be expected to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials. Applications for the change of use of listed buildings will be considered on their merits, in relation to the land use policies set out in this Local Plan Review. A major consideration will be whether the character or appearance of the listed building will suffer as a result;

iii. the erection of a new building or other structure, or the use of land, where this would adversely affect the character or setting of a listed building;

iv. the installation of UPVC, aluminium, or any other unsympathetic doors or windows, satellite or other antennae, advertisements, security shutters or other fitments, on a listed building, where they would adversely affect its architectural or historic interest, or its character;

v. the removal of natural roofing materials from the roof of a listed building, and their replacement with alternative modern materials; or

vi. the introduction of architectural features or materials removed and imported from another building, unless information is produced on the source of the feature or material.

The Borough Council will act to halt the further decay of listed buildings at risk and to encourage their sympathetic repair and re-use.
In cases where the demolition or partial demolition of a listed building is permitted, the proper recording of the building will be required before any changes take place.

Proposals for alterations or changes of use to listed buildings will not be permitted unless they are accompanied by sufficient information to enable a full and proper consideration of their effect. This will always include full survey drawings and, in some cases, photographs of the affected areas. In most cases, applications must be supported by a full justification for the works and further information on the economics of the proposals may be required.

Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

10.6.5 In addition to the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, the Borough Council maintains and will continue to maintain a list of buildings which, although not of “listable” quality, are of local architectural or historic interest. The list is based mainly on the old Grade III buildings and on the re-survey lists prepared by Government Inspectors. Although these buildings are not statutorily listed, they have been identified to enable local planning authorities to take account of their local interest when carrying out their duties under the planning acts. From an initial survey and from recommendations submitted by local organisations with an interest in historic building conservation, it is clear that there are many more buildings which should be added to the list.

Policy BE8 Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

Proposals to demolish, alter, or extend a building of local architectural or historic interest (in as much as they apply to the exterior of the building) will be assessed in the light of Policy BE7. The Borough Council will, in appropriate cases, protect buildings of local architectural or historic interest by the use of Article 4 Directions.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Sites of Archaeological Interest and other Historic Sites

10.7.1 Gravesham, extending from the alluvium of the Thames estuary southwards to the North Downs, has an interesting and varied archaeological past, with sites ranging in date from earliest times to the modern period. Of particular interest are the Palaeolithic discoveries from the gravel terraces above the Thames.

10.7.2 Other archaeological remains of interest include Neolithic occupation sites in the Ebbsfleet valley, Roman occupation and industrial sites, sixteenth century blockhouses at Gravesend and Milton, and coastal defence works at New Tavern and Shornmead Forts.

10.7.3 As major developments such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link continue to take place, more and more of our historic past is being uncovered.
10.7.4 There are currently 8 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in Gravesham. However, scheduling is not comprehensive and a great deal more remains to be discovered. Therefore, this Local Plan Review makes provision for the protection of future SAMs and archaeological sites as well as those which have already been identified.

10.7.5 Much of the Borough’s landscape can be considered as “historic.” Some areas and features such as historic parks and gardens, commons and village greens are already identified and a full register is to be prepared by English Heritage. It is fitting that these too should receive protection.

10.7.6 However, not all archaeological sites are of equal importance. Therefore, it will be necessary in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer, to define their relative importance and to identify nationally and locally important sites. It is intended to produce supplementary planning guidance in relation to this matter.

10.7.7 Government advice, contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 “Archaeology and Planning,” states the following:-
“Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Cases involving archaeological remains of lesser importance will not always be so clear cut and planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors, including the need for the proposed development.”
PPG16 also states that:-
“If physical preservation in situ is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of ‘preservation by record’ may be an acceptable alternative. From an archaeological point of view, this should be regarded as a second best option.”

10.7.8 The strategic policy for archaeological sites, ancient monuments and historic landscapes is set out in Structure Plan Policy ENV18.

**Policy BE9 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Sites of Archaeological Interest and other Historic Sites**
- Development which would adversely affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important monument, historic landscape or archaeological site or its setting will not be permitted.

10.7.9 On the basis of the information contained in the Sites and Monuments Record prepared by Kent County Council, a number of Areas of Archaeological Potential will continue to be marked on the Borough Council’s constraints maps. Within these areas, further consideration will be given to the possible implications if development were to take place. Prospective developers are advised to consult the Borough Council at an early stage in order to establish the possible archaeological implications of any proposals. In certain cases, the developer may be expected to furnish information prior to the determination of
an application, on the nature and quality of any archaeological remains on the site of the proposed development.

10.7.10 In order to obtain the requisite information, archaeological evaluation may be necessary to a specification and standard approved by the Borough Council. An archaeological statement or evaluation may also be required in respect of any large-scale development proposals affecting land outside areas of archaeological potential. Not all important sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and there will be a presumption against development of such sites. The Borough Council will generally seek to avoid development on other archaeological sites, but, where this is not possible or justified, it will endeavour to mitigate damage to the archaeological remains by sympathetic foundation design and location of open space. Where development is permitted, an appropriate level of archaeological investigation will be required in advance of or during development to ensure “preservation by record.”

Policy BE10 Locally Important Archaeological Sites

Development on locally important archaeological sites will not normally be permitted. On archaeological sites where permanent preservation is not warranted, applications will normally be refused unless arrangements have been made by the developer to ensure that time and resources are available to allow satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording of the site by an approved archaeological body, to take place in advance of or during development. The specification and programme of work for the archaeological investigation, including its relationship to the programme of development, are to be submitted to and approved by the Borough Council. In order to determine a planning application, the Borough Council may require the developer to provide additional information, in the form of an assessment of the archaeological or historic importance of the site in question and the likely impact of development. In certain cases, such an assessment may involve an evaluation excavation. Preservation in situ will be favoured by the Borough Council in most cases.

10.8 Historic Parks and Gardens

10.8.1 The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England is maintained by English Heritage. Sites of exceptional historic interest are assessed as grade I, those of great historic interest as grade II* and those of special historic interest as grade II. There is currently one entry for Gravesham, Cobham Park, which is Grade II*.

10.8.2 Although there is no statutory protection, PPG15 states that local planning authorities should protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. Planning and highway authorities should also safeguard registered parks or gardens when themselves planning new developments or road schemes.
10.8.3 The Borough Council will investigate ways in which historic parks or gardens may be protected and enhanced by, for instance, the use of statutory controls such as Tree Preservation Orders or Article 4 Directions.

10.8.4 In addition to the national Register of Parks and Gardens referred to above, the Kent Gardens Compendium includes 7 entries for Gravesham (including Cobham Park). Again, these have no statutory protection but are recognised as being of historic interest and therefore warrant protection under the policies in this Local Plan Review.

**Policy BE11 Historic Parks and Gardens**

Proposals which would harm the character or setting of a historic park or garden will not be permitted.

10.9 Design of New Development

10.9.1 New development has an important role to play in contributing to the economic well-being of the Borough but it is important that it blends in well with its surroundings, whether in town or countryside. It is important also in the interests of sustainability that new development minimises the consumption of resources. The recently published revised Kent Design Guide sets out the key objectives and principles against which all developments will be judged and the Borough Council will consider whether to adopt it as supplementary planning guidance.

10.9.2 Proposals for development will also be assessed in the context of the Councils Residential Layout Guidelines which has already been adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

10.9.3 The Borough Council recognises that, in the interests of sustainability, there are likely to be sites which need to be developed at a higher density than would normally be permitted. The design policy does not rule out these higher density developments.

10.9.4 The Borough Council will seek the highest standards of design, materials and landscaping for proposed developments. Where developments are outside planning control, as with certain types of agricultural buildings, the Borough Council will nevertheless seek co-operation to ensure that their design is appropriate.

**Policy BE12 Design of New Development, Extensions and Alterations**

A high standard of layout, design and materials will be expected for all new development. The Borough Council will not normally permit proposals for new developments which cause harm to interests of acknowledged importance. Applications will be considered in accordance with the following design principles:
i. the scale, massing, height, and proportions of the building should normally be in keeping with their surroundings;

ii. the design of new developments should accord with the principles of the Kent Design Guide and, in the case of residential development, with Policies H3, H4 and H5 of this Plan and with the Borough Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines, unless this can be shown to contradict (1) above (for high, medium and low density developments);

iii. the design of any alteration or extension shall respect the character and appearance of the existing building and should normally be subservient to it in terms of scale, massing and height. The proposal should not adversely affect the privacy and amenity of adjoining residents or have a detrimental effect on the street-scene. In pursuance of this policy the following criteria will apply:-

   a. extensions should not cause undue overshadowing of neighbouring property and should allow adequate light and ventilation to existing habitable rooms within the building; single storey extensions should be designed so as to fall within a 45 degree angle from the centre of the nearest ground floor window of a habitable room or the kitchen of a neighbouring property. In the case of two storey extensions, the 45 degree angle will be taken from the closest quarter point of the nearest ground floor window of a habitable room or kitchen;

   b. side extensions may be added to detached or semi-detached dwellings where space is available unless this will cause a “terracing” effect. A minimum distance of 1 metre should normally be maintained from the boundary and any part of the extension above single storey level;

   c. planning permission will not be granted for flat-roofed single storey extensions, unless the proposed extension would not be generally visible from a public place. Planning permission will not normally be granted for flat-roofed extensions at first floor level or above, unless the main roof of the building is also flat or the extension is to an historic building and is consistent with the style, age and character of the main building; and

   d. planning permission will not normally be granted for loft conversions requiring dormer extensions which are large in proportion to the existing roof. Planning applications for extensions in roof spaces which front the highway will normally be refused where the proposed structure would damage the character of the existing building or the street scene.

iv. materials used should be of good quality, sympathetic to the area and, wherever possible, should be from sustainable sources;
v. planning applications for new buildings or extensions should demonstrate the use of sustainable design principles, consistent with an acceptable standard of external appearance, and shall indicate how the privacy and amenity of future occupiers and neighbouring residents is to be respected in terms of both overlooking and loss of daylight/sunlight;

vi. details of landscaping shall be submitted with the planning application, and should be of a high quality, incorporating native tree species wherever possible. Existing trees of amenity value should be retained;

vii. adequate access should be provided to and into the building and areas accessible to the general public for wheelchair users, other people with disabilities, elderly people and those with young children; and

viii. the proposal should have regard to Circular 5/94 (Planning Out Crime) or other subsequent Government advice on this subject.

10.10 Shopfronts

10.10.1 Shopfronts are the major element of most shopping areas. The design of new and replacement shopfronts can significantly affect the attractiveness of shopping areas, many of which are located within conservation areas. Modern shopfronts almost always sit uneasily in traditional buildings. Attractive shopfronts, however, are a feature of the economic prosperity of the Town.

Policy BE13 Shopfronts

Shopfronts of architectural or historic merit should be retained in their present form. Replacement or new shopfronts should reflect the proportions, age, detailing and materials of the building of which they are a part. Proposals will be expected to comply with the Borough Council’s Shopfront Design Guide which forms supplementary planning guidance. Applications for the installation of roller shutters will be considered in relation to the Borough Council’s supplementary planning guidance on Security Measures for Shopfronts and Commercial Premises.

10.11 Advertisements

10.11.1 Advertisements, by their very nature, draw attention to themselves and the buildings on which they are displayed and are important elements in the street-scene. A proliferation of poorly designed and incongruous signs can seriously detract from the appearance of individual shops and shopping areas generally.

Policy BE14 Advertisements

All applications for advertisement consent will be examined in the light of the Borough Council’s adopted policy guidelines for advertisement control. Displays which are detrimental to public safety or to amenity will be resisted. Particular regard will be paid to their location, method
of illumination, materials, design and relationship to the building or structure on which they are to be displayed.

In conservation areas and on listed buildings, internally illuminated box signs and fascias, where the background is also illuminated, will not be permitted. The use of traditional hanging signs and timber hand-painted fascia signs will be encouraged in such locations.

The Borough Council will use its statutory powers to remove advertisements displayed illegally within Gravesham, and to seek discontinuance of any “deemed consent” advertisements which detract from visual amenity or highway safety.

10.11.2 An Area of Special Control of Advertisements already exists over a wide area of the rural part of the Borough and, although the designation and review of such areas is not part of the development plan process, it is appropriate to refer to it here as part of the wider issues relating to advertisements considered in this Local Plan Review. It is proposed to extend the area to include all of the rural parts of the Borough (i.e. those outside the built confines of the urban area) and also to include all of the urban conservation areas. The designation and review procedure will be subject to a separate public consultation process.

10.12 Forecourt Parking

10.12.1 The parking of vehicles on forecourts tends to be untidy and to damage the surface of both the forecourt and adjacent footways and to cause dangerous conditions for pedestrians. The policy seeks to resolve this problem. The Borough Council will use the measures available to it to restrict the parking of vehicles on forecourts and to prevent the parking of vehicles on or obstructing footways.

Policy BE15 Forecourt Parking

The Borough Council will survey the extent of forecourt parking in its area and seek to reduce it, in consultation with landowners and occupiers and through programmes of environmental improvements. Proposals which involve the use of forecourt parking will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:

i. there are no environmental disadvantages;
ii. there is a properly constructed crossover;
iii. vehicles can be physically separated from pedestrians using public footways; and
iv. their use does not create danger for pedestrians or traffic or obstruct the free flow of vehicles.
**10.13 Vacant Sites and Buildings at Risk**

10.13.1 There are a number of sites within Gravesham which have remained undeveloped or in a poor state of repair for a long period of time. Such vacant sites tend to look unattractive and can deter investment and regeneration in the wider area, particularly if they are, for instance, in prominent locations, are listed buildings or lie within or adjacent to a conservation area. Yet, given adequate and sympathetic treatment, they can make a positive contribution to the environment.

**Policy BE16 Vacant Sites and Buildings at Risk**

The Borough Council will encourage the environmental improvement and re-use of vacant and underused buildings and sites. It will also seek to have vacant buildings and sites maintained in a condition where they make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area. In cases of severe or deliberate dereliction, the Borough Council will also consider the use of statutory enforcement powers to improve the condition and appearance of such sites and buildings.

The Borough Council will maintain a register of historic “buildings at risk” in respect of listed buildings, local interest buildings and conservation areas, in order to co-ordinate action.

**10.14 Enabling Development**

10.14.1 Enabling development may be defined as “new development which supposedly subsidises a ‘benefit’ but which is contrary to national, regional and/or local planning policy.” The profits from it, however, fund a separate and desirable but unprofitable operation, such as the conservation of an historic building, park or garden which is usually, but not necessarily, listed, registered or in a conservation area.

10.14.2 Concern has been expressed by English Heritage and other bodies about the harm which is being caused to the heritage asset as a result of such development. As a result, English Heritage has produced a Policy Statement on this issue.

10.14.3 Although PPG15 contains no explicit reference to enabling development, the Government’s commitment to “not sacrificing what future generations will value for the sake of short term or illusory gains” suggests caution in this respect. English Heritage’s view is that enabling development should only be used as a last resort after all other options have been explored and that there should be a clearly stated presumption against enabling development except where a convincing case can be made that the benefits to be gained clearly outweigh any disbenefits either to the historic asset or its setting or to any other relevant planning issues.
Policy BE17   Enabling Development

There will be a general presumption against enabling development which affects the heritage asset’ and which does not meet all of the following criteria:

i. the enabling development will not materially detract from the archaeological, architectural, historic or landscape interest of the asset, or materially harm its setting;

ii. the proposal avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the heritage asset;

iii. the enabling development will secure the long term future of the heritage asset, and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose;

iv. the problem arises from the inherent needs of the heritage asset, rather than the circumstances of the present owner or the purchase price paid;

v. financial assistance is not available from any other source;

vi. it is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the heritage asset, and that its form minimises disbenefits; and

vii. the value or benefit of the survival or enhancement of the heritage asset outweighs the long-term cost to the community (that is the disbenefits) of providing the enabling development.

If the above criteria are satisfied the Borough Council will only grant planning permission if:

viii. the planning application is in full rather than outline form and the impact of the development is precisely defined at the outset;

ix. the achievement of the heritage objective is securely and enforceably linked to it, for example by a Planning Obligation; and

x. the heritage asset is repaired to an agreed standard, or the funds to do so made available as early as possible and at least before completion.

The Borough Council will closely monitor implementation and, if necessary, act promptly to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

Footnote:
The heritage asset for the purpose of this policy is defined as any component of the historic environment, including scheduled monuments and other remains, historic buildings both statutorily listed or of more local significance, conservation areas and registered historic parks and gardens.
10.15 Satellite Dishes

10.15.1 Paragraphs 17-23 of PPG8 set out the circumstances under which minor telecommunications equipment may be installed without the need to apply for planning permission. It also stresses the need for such equipment to be appropriately located in order to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building on which it is installed. It points out that “if, in the view of the local planning authority, an antenna has not been so sited, taking into account technical and safety requirements, they may serve a breach of condition notice requiring the resiting of the antenna.”

Policy BE18 Satellite Dishes

Proposals for satellite dishes which require planning permission will only be permitted where the size, colour, materials, design and location respect the character and appearance of the building and area. Those installed under permitted development rights which are inappropriate in terms of their design, appearance and location will be resisted.

10.16 Public Art

10.16.1 Public Art is any art sited within the public realm and can include not just statues, sculptures and murals but hard and soft landscaping, street furniture, lighting, etc. It should be used to influence the design of the development as a whole, rather than merely being additive or decorative. Its primary purpose is to focus attention on the historical and social context of an area and to encourage developers to create public environments of high quality. Importantly, incorporating public art into a development scheme at an early stage of the design process may assist in raising the quality of the design and in determining the final form and layout and its context within the wider area.

Policy BE19 Public Art

Development proposals on the development sites shown on the Proposals Map will be expected to make provision for public art. On sites of 2 hectares or more development will not be permitted unless it incorporates public art.

10.17 Sustainability Appraisal

10.17.1 This chapter contains policies which seek to preserve and enhance the built environment, conservation areas, listed buildings and historic sites and gardens. It also gives guidance on the design of new development.

10.17.2 The sustainability appraisal indicates that most policies receive a positive score in terms of their impact on urban environment liveability and cultural heritage and the policy on the design of new development has positive impacts on most of the criteria.
10.173 The policy on vacant or underused sites in conservation areas has negative impacts on built environment energy efficiency and mineral conservation, since it encourages redevelopment rather than the re-use of buildings but this is justifiable given the benefits that would accrue to the character or appearance of the conservation area. The policy on forecourt parking is likely to have a negative impact on the community, since it could adversely affect people with special needs.