

# Tonbridge Character Areas

## Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted February 2011



**Tony Fullwood Associates**  
Chartered Town Planners





## Contents

1	What is the Supplementary Planning Document	1
2	Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document	3
3	Policy Context	3
3.1	National Planning Policies	3
3.2	Core Strategy 2007	5
3.3	Managing Development and the Environment DPD	5
4	Methodology	6
5	Community Involvement	7
6	How to use this Document	8
7	Origins and Development of Tonbridge	9
8	Character Area Appraisals	13
<b>A</b>	<b><i>Main Road Frontages</i></b>	<b>14</b>
A1	Pembury Road and Goldsmid Road	17
A1.1	Pembury Road West	17
A1.2	Pembury Road East	20
A1.3	Goldsmid Road	24
A2	Quarry Hill Road	27
A3	London Road	30
A3.1	London Road Frontage and Courtlands	30
A4	Shipbourne Road Area Frontage	34
A4.1	Shipbourne Road (South) Area	34
A4.2	Shipbourne Road (Central) Area	38
A4.3	Shipbourne Road (North)	43
A5	Hadlow Road	46
A5.1	Hadlow Road (West)	46
A5.2	Cornwallis Avenue	50
A5.3	Hadlow Road (East)	53
A6	Higham Lane Area	56
<b>B</b>	<b><i>Nineteenth Century Cottages</i></b>	<b>60</b>
B1	Douglas Road/Barden Road Area	63
B2	Priory Road Area	67
B3	St Mary's Road Area	70
<b>C</b>	<b><i>Edwardian Villas</i></b>	<b>74</b>
C1	Springwell Road Area	75
<b>D</b>	<b><i>Early Public Housing Schemes</i></b>	<b>79</b>
D1	Barden Park Road Area	81
D2	Baltic Road	84

	D3	Lodge Oak Lane (North) Area	86
	D4	King's Road Area	89
<b>E</b>		<b><i>Inter-war Semi-Detached Housing</i></b>	92
	E1	Deakin Leas Area	94
	E2	Quarry Rise Area	97
	E3	Estridge Way Area	100
<b>F</b>		<b><i>Post-war Public Housing Schemes</i></b>	103
	F1	Trench Road Area	105
	F2	Royal West Kent Avenue Area	108
	F3	Hunt Road Area	112
	F4	Bishops Oak Ride Area	115
	F5	Lodge Oak Lane (South) Area	118
	F6	Masefield Way Area – Radburn Layout	121
	F7	Waveney Road Area – Radburn Layout	125
<b>G</b>		<b><i>Open Plan Housing Developments</i></b>	130
	G1	Tulip Tree Close	132
	G2	Audley Rise	135
	G3	Stacey Road Area	137
	G4	Molescroft Way Area	139
	G5	Royal Avenue	141
	G6	Longmead Way Area	143
	G7	Whistler Road Area	146
	G8	Willow Lea Area	148
	G9	Hopgarden Road Area	151
	G10	Barchester Way Area	154
	G11	Chiltern Way	157
	G12	Shelton Close	159
	G13	Gorham Drive Area	161
	G14	Dowgate Close Area	163
	G15	Farm Lane Lane	166
	G16	Keswick Close	168
	G17	Whitelake Road	170
	G18	Pine Ridge Area	172
<b>H</b>		<b><i>Lower Density Detached Housing</i></b>	174
	H1	Exeter Close	176
	H2	Ridgeway Crescent	179
	H3	Yardley Park Road	182
	H4	The Ridgeway	184
	H5	Vauxhall Gardens	188
	H6	Streamside	190
	H7	College Avenue Area	192
	H8	Old Hadlow Road Area	195
	H9	Dry Bank Road	198
<b>I</b>		<b><i>Clustered Cul-de-sac Development</i></b>	200
	I1	Douglas Road (West) Area	202
	I2	Brindle's Field	205
	I3	Brickworks Close Area	208
	I4	The Haydens	211
	I5	Brook Lane Area	215
	I6	Quarry Bank Area	218

	I7	Bickmore Way Area	220
	I8	Old Barn Close	223
	I9	Townacres Area	225
	I10	Portman Park (East)	228
	I11	Royal Rise	231
<b>J</b>		<b>Bungalows</b>	233
	J1	Thorpe Avenue Area	235
	J2	Orchard Drive Area	238
	J3	Audley Avenue (West) Area	241
	J4	Cranford Road Area	243
<b>K</b>		<b>Arcadian Areas</b>	246
	K1	Bourne Lane Area	248
	K2	High Hilden Area	251
	K3	Hadlow Stair Area	254
<b>L</b>		<b>Mixed Character Area</b>	257
	L1	Portman Park (West)	259
	L2	Kendal Drive Area	261
	L3	Garden Road Area	264
<b>M</b>		<b>Chalets</b>	268
	M1	Towngate Wood Park Area	268
<b>N</b>		<b>Commercial Areas</b>	271
	N1	Vale Road and Woodgate Way Areas	271
	N2	Drayton Road Area	275
9		Design Guidance	279
Appendix 1		By Design: Urban design in the planning system towards better practice	287
Appendix 2		Glossary	289

## Key to Maps



**Views**



**Panoramas**



**Local Landmark**



**Visual Intrusion**



**Nodes**



**Protected Trees**



**Protected Woodland or Groups of Trees**



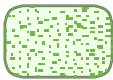
**Important Tree and Hedge Belts**



**Conservation Area**



**Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan**



**Open Space**



**Listed Buildings**

# 1 What is the Supplementary Planning Document?

Good design is a key element of sustainable development, so the Borough Council will promote a high standard of design. A high quality, well designed, development can enhance the sense of place and identity of an area and can bring significant benefits to the local environment and economy.

The 'character of an area' is often mentioned in the context of considering development proposals. What is often missing is a clear identification of, and agreement about, the locally distinctive features of an area that give it character that should be given careful regard in considering proposals for development. This Character Area Appraisals Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out to define the character of identifiable local areas across the Borough for that purpose.

The Managing Development and the Environment DPD states that it is important that unique characteristics of an area are identified and protected and where practicable enhanced having regard to the Character Area Appraisals SPD in order to strengthen this diversity rather than eroding its character and local distinctiveness. Government guidance (PPS3) advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area.

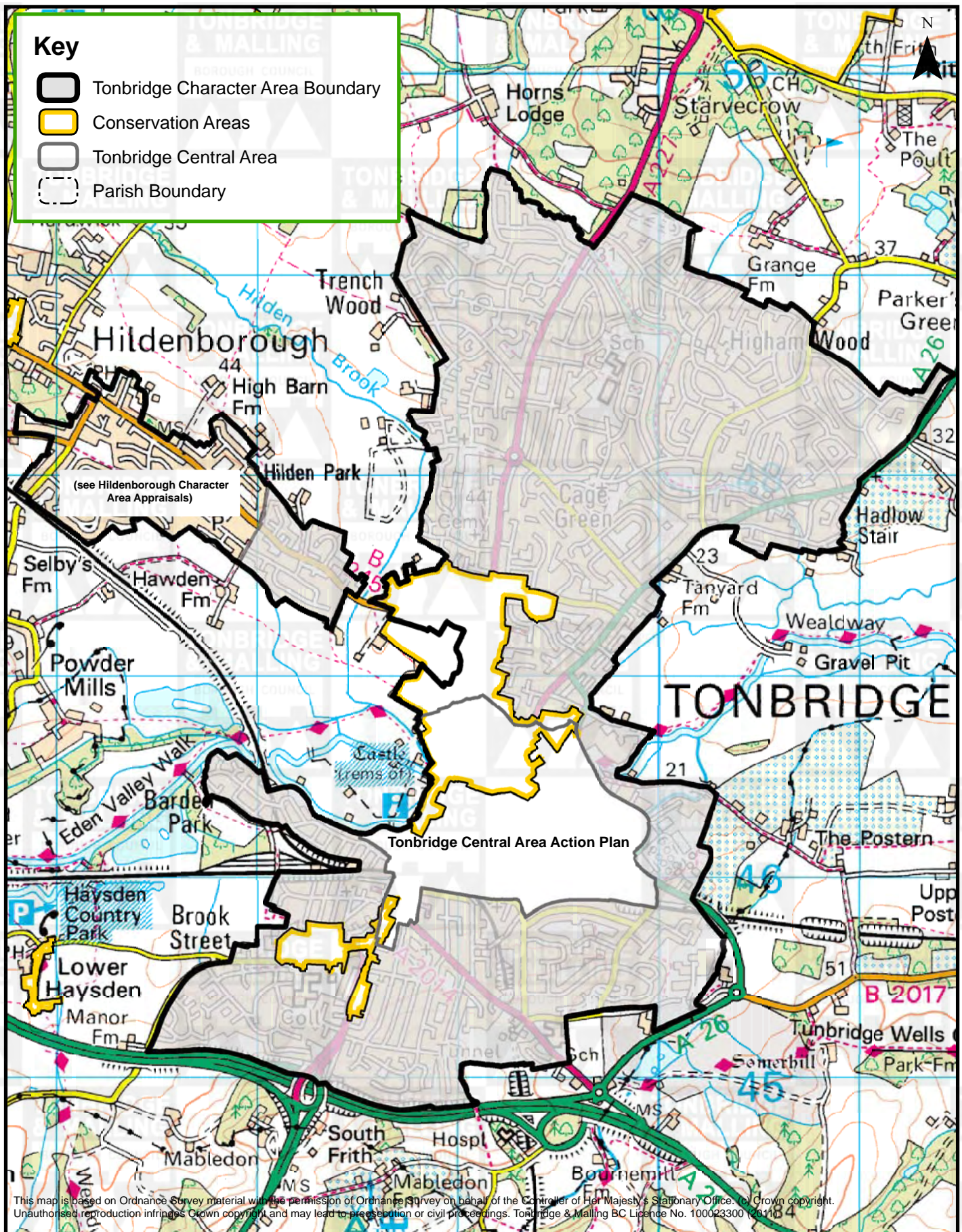
The Borough Council is undertaking character area appraisals of all of the main urban areas in the Borough, including the larger villages, defined in the Local Development Framework (LDF) as Rural Service Centres. The Character Area Appraisals SPD therefore comprises a number of separate volumes. Appraisals are being prepared for:

- the Tonbridge Urban Area;
- The northern urban areas (including the Medway Gap, Kings Hill, Snodland and Walderslade) and
- the Rural Service Centres – Hildenborough (including Hilden Park), Hadlow, East Peckham, Borough Green and West Malling

It should be noted that the Hilden Park area which, in planning terms, is regarded as part of the urban area of Tonbridge is covered by the Hildenborough Character Area Appraisal.

This particular part of the SPD sets out to define the character of, and appropriate design guidance for, the urban area of Tonbridge, including Hilden Park, but excluding the two Conservation Areas and the Town Centre - for which separate guidance has already been prepared (see Map 1).

The SPD will be adopted as part of the LDF. It provides further detail about how planning policies will be applied in those parts of Tonbridge not within a Conservation Area or the Town Centre AAP boundary. Once adopted, it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications in that part of Tonbridge to which it applies. Developers and householders should refer to the document in formulating proposals.



## Map 1: Tonbridge Area Boundary

Tonbridge Character Area Appraisal

0 1,500 3,000 Metres



The document aims to raise the standard of design of new proposals such that they fit well with the locally distinctive character of an area. Design which is considered to be inappropriate in its context is unlikely to be acceptable and efforts will be made to improve the character and quality of an area through the preparation and consideration of development proposals.

## **2 Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document**

This SPD aims:

- To supplement adopted design policies for assessing development proposals within an area;
- To identify the locally distinctive features that define the character of those parts of Tonbridge not included within the town's two Conservation Areas or the Town Centre AAP boundary;
- To raise awareness of, and provide guidance on, the appropriateness of the design of development within an area in order to strengthen diversity rather than erode character and local distinctiveness;
- To assist the appraisal of planning and allied applications; and
- To deliver improved designs, in practice, which enhance the character of the area

## **3 Policy Context**

The SPD is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with regional planning policies and is supplementary to the policies set out in the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) contained in the LDF.

### **3.1 National Planning Policies**

*Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)* states that the Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole.

Planning authorities should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space.

Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider

area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people and take the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area.

Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.

*Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing)* affirms that good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

The guidance advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area, aimed at:

- Creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, are visually attractive, safe, accessible, functional, inclusive, have their own distinctive identity and maintain and improve local character.
- Promoting designs and layouts which make efficient and effective use of land, including encouraging innovative approaches to help deliver high quality outcomes.

Good design is fundamental to using land efficiently. Local Planning Authorities should facilitate good design by identifying the distinctive features that define the character of a particular local area.

Careful attention to design is particularly important where the chosen local strategy involves intensification of the existing urban fabric. More intensive development is not always appropriate. However, when well designed and built in the right location, it can enhance the character and quality of an area.

PPS3 states that the density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form. If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment.

### **3.2 Core Strategy – September 2007**

One of the prime aims of the Core Strategy is to ensure that new development results in a high quality environment by, for example, promoting and delivering new development that can positively contribute to the spatial quality of towns and maintaining or enhancing local distinctiveness.

Core Policy CP24 states that all development must be well designed and of a high quality in terms of detailing and use of appropriate materials, and must, through its scale, density, layout, siting, character and appearance, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings. Wherever possible, all development should make a positive contribution towards the enhancement of the appearance of the area.

### **3.3 Managing Development and the Environment DPD – April 2010**

The DPD states that the diverse character of Tonbridge should be protected and enhanced for its own sake as it is important for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough. It is important that the unique characteristics of the area are identified and protected and where practicable enhanced in line with Core Policy CP24 having regard to the Character Area Appraisals SPD in order to strengthen this diversity rather than eroding its character and local distinctiveness.

Policy SQ1 requires proposals for development to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the local character areas as defined in the Character Area Appraisals SPD.

*All new development should protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance:*

*(a) the character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity;*

*(b) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views...*

## 4 Methodology

Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) advises local authorities to prepare robust policies on design. These should be based on an understanding and evaluation of the present defining characteristics of an area and that is the purpose and function of this SPD.

The evaluation of the Tonbridge area has involved an assessment of the character of the development of the area through the review of historic maps; comprehensive site surveys using the approach and characteristics advocated in By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (DETR, 2000) – see Appendix 1.

An initial appraisal was undertaken of all areas of the town covered by this SPD and it was evident that a number of areas shared similar characteristics. From this assessment it was possible to identify a typology of character areas such as Nineteenth Century Cottages, Public Housing Schemes, Open Plan Housing and Compact Cul-de-sac Development.

The main road frontages, together with adjoining side roads, form the framework around which Tonbridge has developed and spread out from the medieval core. Although each road frontage is different, they also share a number of common characteristics. As main frontages accommodating the most journeys, they also have a disproportionate influence on the perception of the town. For these reasons, Main Road Frontages are classified as a character area typology.

Where an area grew up sporadically over time through piecemeal development and redevelopment, this has led to mixed house types and layouts. These areas have been classified as Mixed Character Areas.

Although not necessarily physically adjoining each other, each character area typology generally grew up over the same period (with the exception of Mixed Character Areas) using layouts, designs and materials which were based on the technology, legislation and planning and design philosophies of that time. Thus these character area typologies shared common generic characteristics which were recorded using the following matrices:

- Locally Distinctive Contextual Features (including the age, type and height of buildings, the main uses, the predominant building materials and boundary treatments, and the types of open space).
- Locally Distinctive Positive Features
- Negative Features worthy of Enhancement

Street by street surveys were then undertaken of each of the separate areas which made up the broad character area typologies. These surveys identified features which were specific to each area such as landscape features, landmarks, views and detracting features. Locally Distinctive Positive and Negative Features were recorded for each area as text and on a Townscape Analysis Map.

Identifying the generic and area-specific Locally Distinctive Contextual and Positive Features should assist in interpreting Core Strategy Core Policy CP24 and Managing Development and the Environment DPD Policy SQ1 which seek designs which fit well with the local context and protect and conserve the character and local distinctiveness of an area. By identifying the Locally Distinctive Negative Features, the SPD also indicates features which could, through the application of Policy SQ1, be enhanced particularly through development opportunities.

Representative groups and elected Members of the Borough Council assisted at each of these stages – see Community Involvement below.

## **5 Community Involvement**

Community involvement in the preparation of the SPD has closely followed the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement which states that specific consultation will take place at an early stage on a draft of the document. Consultation is to be targeted at particular groups and individuals, depending on the specific nature of the issue or location dealt with by the SPD. There has been close stakeholder involvement in preparing this SPD in order to develop a shared vision with the local community of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and to develop appropriate design guidance.

Prior to the drafting of the SPD, three local stakeholder events were held.

Firstly, a briefing session was held involving Borough Council officers, local amenity groups<sup>1</sup> and local Ward Councillors followed by a discussion on draft character area typologies and character area boundaries.

Secondly, a series of walkabouts were held involving Borough Council officers, local amenity groups and local Ward Councillors. The area was sub-divided into north and south Tonbridge and appropriate groups visited each sub-area to observe and record the key features which made up the character of the area.

As a third exercise the recorded features were then presented back as summarised text and photographs to the local representatives at a locally held workshop for review and discussion. Representatives were also asked about the elements of the environment they most valued about their local area and important detractors to the character of the town.

Ward Councillors were kept informed from the inception of the SPD and participated in the process of assisting with the preparation of the consultation document.

The Planning Consultants preparing the SPD and the Borough Council would like to thank the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the process to date.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge Historical Society, Higham Residents Association, Longmead Residents Association

Formal consultation under Regulation 17 on the Tonbridge Character Assessment SPD took place between Monday 13 September and Friday 22 October 2010. This included an exhibition held in the Foyer of the Angel Centre from 12.00 pm on Wednesday 15 September till 12.00 pm on Wednesday 22 September 2010 which was manned from 12.30 pm till 4.30 pm on Saturday 18 September.

Copies of the SPD will also be made available for comment at the Borough Council offices, local libraries and on the website. Statutory consultees as well as the existing network of resident, community and specialist interest groups were also consulted. The SPD was publicised in the local press and on the Council's website and there was a formal Public Notice under Regulation 17.

The Council recognises that it is important to report back to the community and other stakeholders the response to their comments. The Council has published the feedback to all consultation on its website and in document format that is available in all Council offices and libraries.

## **6 How to use the Document**

Section 8 divides Tonbridge into separate character areas based on the methodology set out above.

Each separate character area is named and numbered on Map 2 below. If you are interested in a particular area, locate it on Map 2 and turn to the section on that character area in Section 8. The relevant page can be found by reference to the Contents page.

For each of the individual areas there is an assessment of the locally distinctive contextual features such as age, height and types of buildings; main uses; prominent building materials and boundary treatments and open spaces. Locally distinctive positive features and negative features worthy of enhancement are also recorded.

There are also three Areas of Landscape Significance. It is not appropriate to consider locally distinctive contextual features in the same way for such areas, and they are not identified as separate character areas in Section 8. Nevertheless, reference is made to these areas in the introduction to Section 8.

In setting out the important features and overall character of identifiable areas of the Borough, a local context is provided for the preparation and consideration of development proposals. This forms a canvas within which proposals for development should be conceived and determined. Generic Design Guidelines based on the identified locally distinctive features may be found in Section 9. These will form the basis for decision making which will interpret the individual character area appraisals.

## 7 Origins and Development of Tonbridge

Environments grow in response to local circumstances and it is therefore important to understand the principal influences which created the distinctive character areas of Tonbridge.

The name Tonbridge is derived from the Old English tun brycg which means 'the bridge of, at, or near the manor or settlement'. It is thought that the town evolved at a clearing in the great Andredsweald forest at a point where several tracks from the North Downs to the Weald met at a ford in the river Medway. The first bridge and church of St Peter and St Paul are thought to have been constructed between the 9th and 11th centuries.

After 1066, a Motte and Bailey castle was constructed to defend the river crossing. Tonbridge at this time was a small roadside town standing on the higher more defensible land to the north of the river. The only significant building south of the river was the Priory of St Mary Magdalene which was founded in 1192. By the mid 13th century the castle's defences were strengthened and a wide ditch and bank enclosed the castle, church and main street. The Medway formed the southern defence for the town. Medieval development was enclosed within these defences giving the town a compact form although routes arrived from the north and south. It was only well into the post-medieval period that the settlement expanded beyond them. The High Street formed the principal axis of the town.

In the Georgian period, the river Medway ran through five channels and south of the river, the road ran over a series of hump-backed bridges across this area that frequently flooded. In 1740 the river Medway was made navigable and a town quay was constructed. The following year the Upper Medway Navigation company started to ship out timber and iron and bring back coal, stone, gravel and lime mainly to make bricks (with local clay) for the growing town. Tonbridge became the port for the upper reaches of the Medway and an important trading centre. Tonbridge formed the focus of a large agricultural hinterland and the town acted as a centre for processing and trading agricultural products.

During the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, new buildings were concentrated within the confines of the town defences, but it was not until after the arrival of the railway in 1842 and a more direct line to London via Sevenoaks in 1868, that there was a rapid increase of housing and population and the town expanded mainly to the south of the river. Tonbridge grew from what was predominantly a farming community and became a market town of commerce and light industry.

Between 1841 and 1871, the population doubled. The demand for trade, shops, public buildings and services increased markedly.

Fine houses were built for the middle classes on the higher, drier land to the north and east, whilst rows of terraced cottages were constructed on the lower land either side of the railway line for the railway workers. In this area much of the building consisted of small brick terraced cottages in straight streets connected with narrow alleys. This land was frequently subject to flooding. The construction of the railway line disrupted the traditional road pattern south of the river and as former farm land was sold off for development, the new straight Pembury Road and a section of Quarry Hill Road were constructed.

The housing stock of Tonbridge increased by four fifths between 1881 and 1911, partly as a result of two printing firms relocating to the town from London. In South Tonbridge, most of the development took place in the area between Pembury and Quarry Hill Roads. St Mary's Road,

the Drive, Springwell and Woodfield Roads were built in the 1890s. In the same period short roads were developed either side of Douglas Road to the west of St Stephen's Church and leading off Barden Road, where larger bay fronted properties faced onto the river and open countryside. Pembury Road had almost continuous housing but Quarry Hill was developed only as far as Baltic Road. Most of the housing stock survives from this period forming identifiable character areas of tight knit Victorian cottages and late Victorian and Edwardian villas.

In North Tonbridge, terraces of cottages were constructed along the Shipbourne Road to just beyond the cemetery and in Uridge Road and Dernier Road. Only the eastern end of Hadlow Road was developed, beyond which stretched orchards, hop gardens and some isolated groups of cottages along the country roads.

In the first decade of the twentieth century villa style homes were still being built and can be found in Goldsmid Road, the Drive, Hectorage Road, Baltic Road, St Mary's Road and off Douglas Road. The period of rapid expansion ended in 1909 and new development was limited until after the First World War.

In the 1920s, following the passing of the Addison Act in 1919, local authorities became involved in providing housing. These early public developments were influenced by the Homes for Heroes and Garden City movements and consisted in Tonbridge of cottage style brick and rendered homes set in relatively spacious layouts and plots along curving roads and cul-de-sacs. The earliest in Tonbridge was in Barden Park, begun in 1920, but other developments followed along the Shipbourne Road, Lodge Oak Lane and in Baltic Road. In 1936 92 homes were constructed on the Little Trench Estate.

During the 1920s, some private housing was developed along Yardley Park Road, Portman Park, Bourne Lane, Goldsmid Road and the Drive. However, it was not until the 1930s that private housing development took off again. In 1930 a winding section of Hadlow Road was bypassed with the construction of Cornwallis Avenue and a new drainage system was developed which facilitated development on the former farmland. Housing spread along the Shipbourne Road and Hadlow Road and new roads were created including Thorpe Avenue, a speculative development of bungalows running parallel to the Shipbourne Road, and the Ridgeway. In south Tonbridge a new road, Deakin Leas, was constructed south of the Pembury Road and further semi-detached housing was built at Quarry Rise, King's Road and in Brook Street.

From 1935 onwards, the backland between the Shipbourne and Hadlow Roads began to be developed with the construction of the Greentrees Estate, Estridge Way and Orchard Drive. However none of these developments were completed until after the Second World War.

In the early post war period, the greatest expansion of housing was in the public sector, with Tonbridge Urban District Council funding the development of a number of estates, mainly in north Tonbridge. These estates were constructed using cheaper mass produced materials than the earlier cottage style developments. They comprised mainly semi detached and terraced housing laid out along curving roads and culs-de-sac with substantial open space and traversed by a network of footpaths. These areas include Trench Estate, Trench Woods, Cage Green, Higham Wood and the Poet's Estate in south Tonbridge. The layout of these developments and the distinctive design of the housing, gives these areas a clearly identifiable character.

Higham Lane, running north from Hadlow Road, was largely undeveloped until it was widened in 1956.

During the 1960s and 1970s there was a private housing boom alongside industrial expansion (see below) and private residential estates expanded across north Tonbridge, filling in gaps in the built-up area and expanding out across former orchards and hop gardens, so that area from Trench to the Hadlow Road became continuously built up, whilst leaving a corridor of green space along the Woodland Walk. These estates typically consisted of semi-detached houses with private garages set back behind open lawned frontages along curving roads and cul-de-sacs.

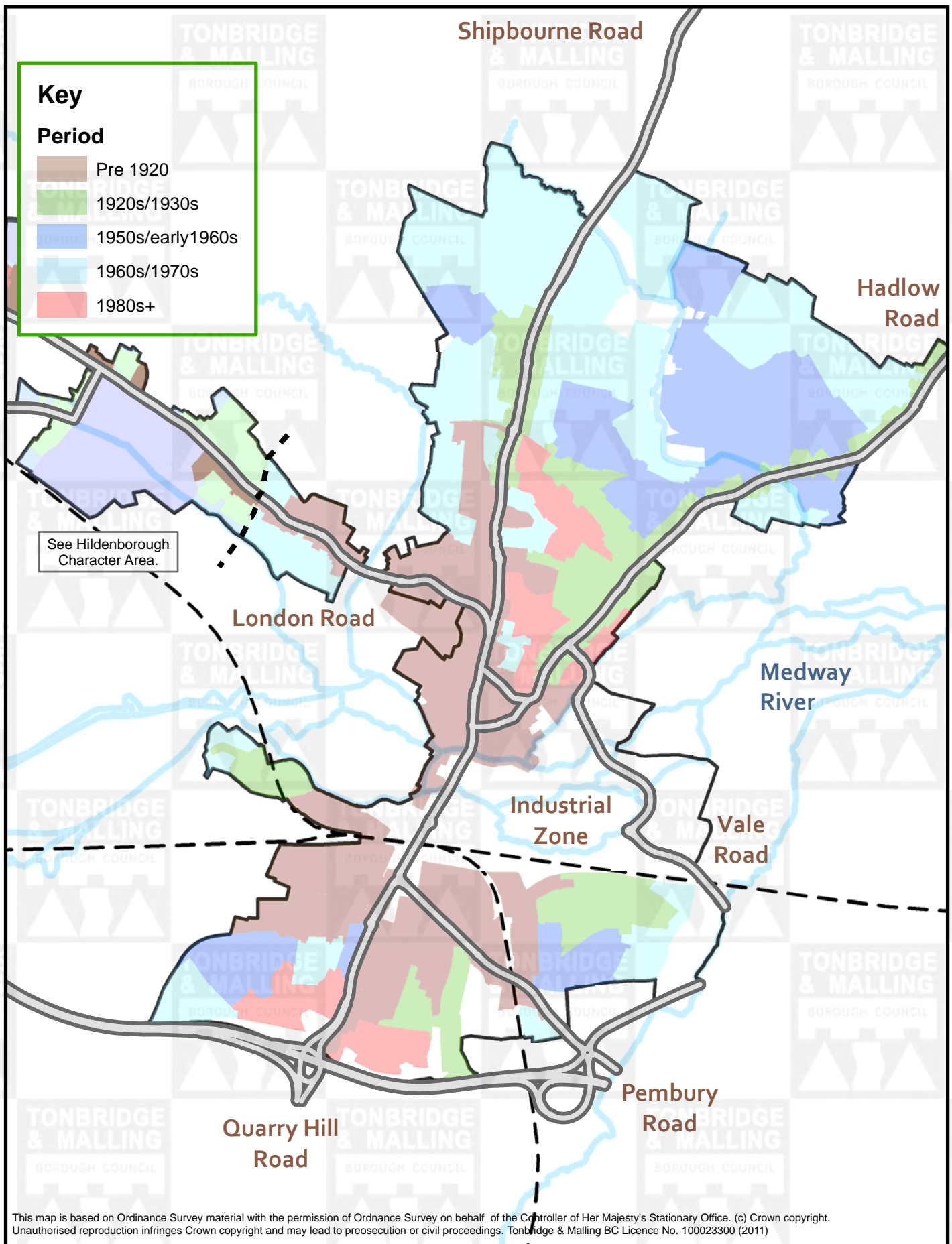
In the early 1950s and 1970s two publicly-funded high density estates designed on Radburn principles were constructed in the Masefield Way area and to the west of the Shipbourne Road respectively. Houses face onto footpaths and grassed amenity areas with vehicular access to the rear of the properties.

The industrial area to the east of the town centre, began in the early twentieth century, but it comprised two separate areas at Cannon Lane and Vale Road until the 1970s when the Cannon Lane Bridge was rebuilt and a mini-bypass created linking the two areas. This area saw rapid development after the completion of the Leigh Flood Barrier which reduced the risk of flooding on this low lying land. A further major development was the construction of the A21 in 1971 which bypassed the town to the west and completely altered the landscape of the upper section of Quarry Hill.

Since the 1980s, new development has been more compact, comprising mainly smaller detached developments at the edge of the built up area, redeveloping brownfield sites or infilling vacant sites. Three examples of larger such developments comprise the construction of new compact style housing on the former brickworks to the east of Quarry Hill, the construction of the Haydens on former school playing fields off Yardley Park Road (after Yardley Court School had relocated) and the redevelopment of the Dowgate (printing) Works in Douglas Road. Although in the Central Area, extensive recent flatted development alongside the river comprises compact development of a much larger scale.

On the London Road to the west of the main settlement of Tonbridge and separated from it by a strip of protected open space, lies Hilden Park. The earliest record of a manor at this location was in 1240 when the Manor House and a small community clustered around a green. The present Hilden Manor was constructed in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries on this important route from London to the coast but was rebuilt in 2005 following a fire. Several substantial villas were built in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods in the vicinity of the Manor, but the built up area expanded rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s when open plan detached housing developments were constructed on land to the south of London Road and in Farm Lane.

Today Tonbridge has a distinctive dumb-bell shape typical of towns on lowland rivers, with a narrow town centre on the floodplain, and extensive suburbs fanning out on the higher land to the south and north. Further expansion of the town is constrained by Green Belt which tightly surrounds the built up area. There is a strong distinction between the major through routes which are wide and busy with buildings of mixed age and use and the relatively homogeneous residential areas behind which clearly reflect the housing styles and planning principles of the times in which they were built, creating a patchwork of distinctive character areas.



## Map 3: Evolution of Tonbridge

Tonbridge Character Area Appraisal 0 750 1,500 Metres



## 8 Character Area Appraisals

Close analysis has been undertaken to identify the distinctive features that define the character of the different parts of Tonbridge using recognised methodologies and with public involvement. The next sections of the SPD describe the locally distinctive contextual features of each area as well as locally distinctive positive features and negative features worthy of enhancement.

Key characteristics of each Character Area are illustrated on a Townscape Analysis map and are summarised in table form. Annotated photographs are also included to depict part of the character of the area.

Whilst the principal characteristics for all areas have been summarised, it has not been possible to illustrate each individual feature and consequently the absence of a feature from this document does not necessarily mean that it is unimportant to the character of the local area.

There are three Areas of Landscape Significance within Tonbridge which provide an extensive landscape framework. Whilst it is not appropriate to consider locally distinctive contextual features in the same way for such areas, it is important to note the wider value of these extensive areas of landscape. The areas are shown on Map 2 and comprise the Tonbridge Cemetery, the Woodland Walk both in north Tonbridge and the extensive wooded margins to the A21 in the south.

These areas contain mature trees which are visible from, and form a backdrop or edge to, a number of character areas. Within these areas, the landscape is the dominant feature with buildings glimpsed through mature trees and vegetation or above surrounding boundaries.

The Woodland Walk is a narrow linear, informal natural space following the path of a stream. The natural vegetation creates an enclosed space for most of its length. The space is 'announced' at each end by contrasting larger open spaces. The walk is interrupted by Romney Way and is unfortunately bounded by the backs of properties.

The Cemetery comprises a more formal layout of rectilinear paths but some informality is given by a significant number of mature trees and a sloping topography. The area is much less enclosed than the Woodland Walk with views out to open countryside to the west from higher ground.

The woodland areas adjacent to the A21, both to the east and west of Quarry Hill, screen development from the road and the road from the built up area and form a backdrop to this part of the town.

The character of these areas is important in their own right but also in providing an extensive landscape framework to a number of surrounding character areas.