

Townscape/Landscape Analysis

Maps 3-13 show the key features of the Conservation Area and form part of the townscape appraisal. They should be looked at in conjunction with this text.

Special Character

Close to the river, features representing the ancient origins of the town remain visible adding a strong sense of history to the Conservation Area around the motte and castle and, although less visible, the fosse.

Water is a feature of the Conservation Area. The River Medway formed the southern boundary of the medieval settlement and the Big Bridge forms the entry point to the Conservation Area from the south. On the western side of the High Street the river forms part of the defenses of the castle and to the east, the industrial heritage of Tonbridge is apparent from the wharf style buildings on both banks. The Town Lock, Mill Stream and Mill Pond and other ponds and channels of the Medway are important historical and townscape features which contribute to the area's special character.

The medieval road layout, the river and town quay, and the coaching inns in the High Street are all indicative of the town's importance as a transport hub located at a river crossing of the Medway on the route from London to the south coast.

The High Street forms the main axis of the Conservation Area with narrow strongly enclosed streets leading off to the east and west. The scale of development with generally continuous facades and increased height, and the monumental buildings of Tonbridge School, appropriately signify the centre of the town. A significant proportion of buildings in the High Street area are medieval in origin and consequently have narrow widths. Most were refronted with brick Georgian facades. The mixed ages of buildings results in a lively street frontage. A limited number of gaps in the frontage formed by side streets and carriage arches allow glimpses of complex backland development to the rear of plots which has resulted in tight enclosed courtyards and enclaves.

At the northern end of the High Street, the road forks and the spacious, well landscaped Victorian suburbs are laid out as a planned residential park. To the west, the tight knit form of Victorian terraced and semi-detached properties radiate out along narrow streets from a breach in the fosse. Victorian social distinctions are reflected in the style and scale of housing with more modest tightly developed terraced housing to the west and middle class housing to the north.

There is a contrast between the historic core of the town centred around the High Street, which has evolved and changed through time reflecting building styles and materials over a period of seven centuries, and the more homogeneous outer areas of the Slade, Dry Hill Park, Mill Crescent and the Bordyke which reflect the architecture of a particular period.

Sub Area A1 – Castle including the River Walk.

The castle occupies an elevated position bounded by the Medway to the south and west and by the High Street to the East. It is a scheduled ancient monument and the gate house, adjoining office building and castle walls are Grade 1 listed buildings. The motte and solid 3 storey gatehouse are landmark features visible from various points in the Conservation Area and the wider setting. The importance of the larger scale buildings of the castle (as well as Tonbridge School and the Church of Ss Peter and Paul outside this sub area) is symbolised in their sandstone construction in a town with predominantly brick facades. The castle provides a window on the past and an important link with the origins of the town. Its dominant impact on the townscape of the Conservation Area is enhanced by its spacious green setting.

The Motte and Bailey are surrounded by the moat on the north and west sides which connects with the River Medway. Sections of the mellow sandstone castle walls remain around the Bailey and on the top of the Motte. The three storey gatehouse, built in 1230-1260 consists of a large square building with a wide carriage arch and four circular towers. To the east of the gatehouse, the Council Offices occupy an L-shaped house with a hipped dormers and a tiled roof built in 1793 using stone from the castle walls.

The three tier topography of the River Walk, Castle Bailey and Castle Motte provides a series of vantage points from which to view the town and the surrounding landscape setting. From the River Walk level there are views westwards of the diverging arms of the Medway against a backdrop of trees which screen views of the recreation ground beyond. A house at the fork in the river provides a visual focal point. To the east, the white ironwork of the Big Bridge is an attractive feature. To the north the mellow weathered castle walls and grassed motte enclose the space but between the two a vista of the castle gatehouse opens up.



Castle gatehouse

The top of the bailey is a lawned bowl which is not visible from the lower level. It is enclosed by the gatehouse and offices to the north, the Motte to the west and trees on the southern side. The enclosed space feels separate from the bustling town and is a unique, centrally located open space used for civic functions and community events. Between the trees there are long views over south Tonbridge to hills and open countryside beyond.

A footpath climbs the Motte and from the top, between the trees, there are commanding views over the recreation ground and northwards to open countryside. To the east there are views of the castle gatehouse, the Church of St Peter and St Paul and across the fascinating roofscape of the Conservation Area. From this vantage point, the consistently low scale of buildings in the town is apparent.

In this sub-area, the River Medway wraps around the southern and western sides of the raised castle and gives the feeling of space around the mound. The natural beauty and tranquillity of the river can be appreciated from both the riverside and from higher on the castle.

A feature of this sub-area is the quality of the landscaping. The mown lawns and banks, flowers and shrubs create a setting worthy of the historic structures. The trees soften the landscape and mask the modern sports buildings to the west. There is however some debate over the trees on the motte and castle walls which obscure the true outline of the castle defences. The paths are naturally coloured gravel in tarmac and the black lamp posts, railings and bins enhance the scene. Well designed interpretation boards provide information on the history and layout of the castle.



The north bank of the Medway



The north bank of the Medway and castle walls

To the north of the gatehouse, a small unobtrusive car park is laid out around a lawn and groups of trees which creates an uncluttered approach to the castle. The whole area has a peaceful quality that belies its position adjoining the busy High Street and the riverside footpaths create a green corridor linking the High Street directly to the edge of town and the countryside beyond.

There are some detracting elements. The footbridge to New Wharf Road is in poor condition and the area to the south of New Wharf Road, with 20th century offices, a retail unit and an open unsightly car parking area, provides a disappointing setting for the Conservation Area. The **Central Area Action Plan** provides the context for the redevelopment, refurbishment and enhancement of this area.

Key Features

- Unique town centre feature of castle in this elevated, prominent position forms a dominant landmark and important link with the past
- River Medway, River Walk and moat provide an important open aspect to this part of the conservation area and setting for the castle
- Sandstone symbolising an important building
- Mellow appearance of the weathered sandstone and cream render
- Peaceful, landscaped setting with quality street furniture
- Changes in elevation creating a sense of separation from surrounding uses and changing vistas and views of the countryside setting of the town and fascinating roofscapes
- Mature trees screen development, enclose space and provide visual amenity.

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Sub Area A2 – High Street and vicinity including High Street and western part of East Street.

The High Street from the Bordyke in the north to the Big Bridge in the south lies within the medieval town defences and retains a number of timber framed medieval buildings, most of which now have Georgian brick facades. The narrow and deep medieval plots remain evident with the majority of buildings two to three storeys in height (often with roof space used as an additional floor). The buildings are in mixed use including shops, hotels, cafes, inns and offices. The character of the High Street is created through a strong sense of enclosure, a unifying scale and subtle blend and limited range of materials and the bustling activity of the town centre.

The northern and southern entry points to this Sub-area are marked by a distinct change in character. From the South, a bank and public house form a gateway. The Big Bridge over the Medway in white painted wrought iron and the views of the castle to the west provide an impressive entry to the Conservation Area reflecting the town's origins as a fortified river crossing. At the northern end, there is a pronounced change of character at the junction with the Bordyke, where the grand sandstone buildings of Tonbridge School give way to the tighter grained predominantly brick buildings of the High Street. This junction stands at the medieval entrance to the town.

The High Street gradually descends and curves southwards towards the river creating a series of vistas and views. There is a strong sense of enclosure with the 2-3 storey buildings on both sides generally set close to the pavement. However, the width of the road and pavement varies creating pinchpoints and wider more spacious sections. At the Bordyke junction the road is relatively wide giving the junction a more spacious character. To the south of Bank Street the road gradually widens until South of Castle Street a triangular area of pavement (representing the remnants of the historical market area) creates a sense of space. The Chequers Inn encloses this space to the south and creates another pinchpoint.



High Street looking north from the Chequers Inn

South of the Chequers Inn the space widens out suddenly where 15th century buildings were demolished as part of a road widening scheme. A narrow grassed area planted with silver birches and wide bus lay by allow clear vistas of the castle elevated above the High Street to the west. To the east the space is enclosed by 3 storey relatively large scale buildings with use of the roof space adding extra height. Further vistas open out at the bridge particularly to the west along the river. At some points there are rare longer views southwards over South Tonbridge towards wooded hills and countryside which contrast with the enclosed space and add an important backdrop to the Conservation Area.

The predominantly 18th and 19th century buildings on the east side hug the back of the pavement, whilst on the west side there is a greater variety in the age of the buildings and an irregular building line with some buildings set behind front gardens and others set at an angle to the road.

Three buildings with timber frame details are visually unifying features spread through the High Street from the Hall House in the north, the Chequers and adjoining building in the centre and the Castle public house to the south. At either end of the High Street the Hall House, and turrets and short pyramidal spire on Tonbridge School beyond, and the Castle public house are landmark features.

On either side of the High Street narrow, strongly enclosed side roads lead off providing tantalising glimpses and vistas. The church of Ss Peter and Paul can be seen to the east down Church Lane. Wide former carriage arches on some properties also provide glimpses into courtyards and rear outbuildings.

The historic inns are a feature of the High Street. The 17th century Ivy House is situated at the entrance point to the medieval town. The Rose and Crown Inn is of Tudor origin with an 18th century façade and a porch which projects across the pavement and is surmounted by a lion and unicorn. The Chequers Inn and the adjacent building to the north are very prominent elements in the townscape due to their impressive 15th century half timbered front elevations with projecting upper storeys which contrast with the brick construction of surrounding properties. Their prominence is enhanced by their orientation to the street and the gap in the building line beyond.



The Chequers Inn

Other notable buildings in the High Street include no. 186. The two storey brick building is partly tile hung and has a steeply pitched tile roof. However behind the 19th Century brickwork is a portion of timber framed building (possibly a hall house) dating from the late 15th Century. On the east side, numbers 127-131 and number 157 are also timber framed buildings which have later been brick faced. Numbers 145-147 also on the east side are eye catching partly due to height (3 storeys and attics) but also because of their flamboyant gothic style. The attic gable is visible from the castle gatehouse.

However, whilst individual buildings form focal points and architectural highlights, the special historic character of the High Street is created by the combined impact of the number and variety of historic buildings. The subtle variations in height, age, style and roof pitch in a limited palette of colours and narrow range of traditional materials combine to give a harmonious character. The majority of buildings are brick



High Street looking south from Lansdowne Road

and the prominent materials are red brick, painted render, roof and hung tiles and half timbering. Colours are muted reds, browns, black and light paint. Many architectural details are evident on upper storeys above the shop fronts. Details include brick stringcourses, moulded wooden eaves cornices, original glazing and doorways. The historic buildings have been adapted through time but have generally retained an integrity of character. A number of shop fronts (some boarded up), however, do not fit well with the context of the building or the street scene.

As a result of the relatively low scale of the buildings, the variations in building design and age, the piecemeal adaptation of buildings and the sloping topography, the High Street is notable for its roofscapes. These can be most readily viewed from the castle motte but are an important feature along the High Street and from other parts of the Conservation Area. Bulky roofs in synthetic materials like those visible on the eastern side of the High Street south of the river, stand out starkly against the mellow tones of red brick and grey slate.

The brick, flagstone and sett pavements and coordinated black and gold street furniture enhance the High Street's historic character. There are a few street trees but in general the development is tightly packed with little green open space except at the southern end. The variations in building line to the west however, have allowed for the creation of small areas of paved public open space.

There are few 20th Century buildings, but a low scale office block (no. 182) set back behind a treed frontage and a three storey block at the Lansdowne Road junction blend into the townscape. A new 3 storey mixed use development is under construction in a prominent position north of Bank Street.



No. 184 High Street

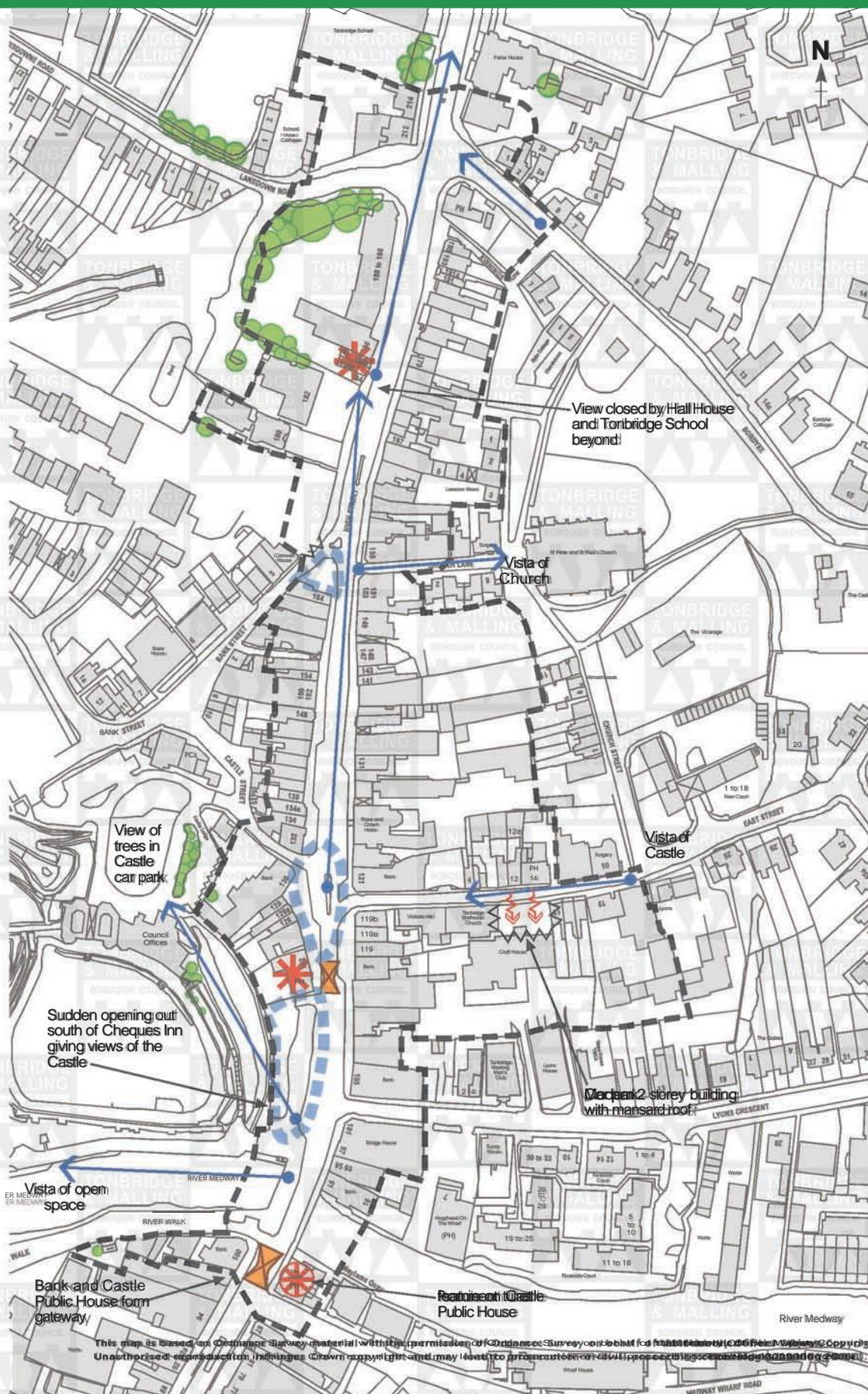
The High Street has a bustling character and is generally busy with pedestrians and traffic. Traffic noise and congestion have a negative impact on the pedestrian environment.













Key Features

- High Street of medieval origin with narrow medieval plot widths and remnants of medieval street layout
- Generally enclosed space with typically 2 and 3 storey buildings
- Sloping topography, curving road alignment and changes in width create a series of changing vistas and views
- Narrow side streets and carriage arches provide side vistas
- Large number of listed buildings from 15th – 19th Centuries
- Limited range of traditional materials, predominance of red brick
- Bustling High Street character – variety of uses, pedestrians and traffic
- Historic Inns
- Architectural details - many on upper levels
- Roofscapes
- Traditional style lighting and street furniture with brick paving

TONBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB-AREA A2- HIGH STREET



- | | |
|---|--|
|  | Landmark |
|  | Focal point |
|  | Views/vista |
|  | Visual hinge |
|  | Lack of enclosure |
|  | Important visual space |
|  | Visual pinch point |
|  | Rhythm - group of buildings with similar proportion or details |
|  | Visual intrusion |
|  | Important trees - acting as focal points etc. |
|  | Important hedges |
|  | Boundary treatment contributing to special character |

Map 4

Sub-area A3 – The Market Quarter including the Slade, Bank Street, Castle Street, Castle Fields and Stafford Road (south)

This part of the historic core lies within the defences of the Medieval Town. It has a mixed character and uses and a large proportion of it, the old Cattle Market, is being redeveloped as a high density housing scheme which runs through to the High Street. The area has a transitional character connecting the bustling High Street, the extensive recreation open space to the west of the town, and the tightly grained Victorian residential Slade area to the north. Uses include residential, school, shops, office, open space and parking.



The Fosse

The northern boundary of this Sub-area runs along the line of the medieval town ditch and bank and a section is still visible running north east from Stafford Road almost to the High Street. This Fosse is a Scheduled Ancient Monument but its historical significance is not immediately apparent as it has become overgrown by trees and weeds and is enclosed by dilapidated fencing.

In the south eastern part of the Sub-area, the medieval street pattern is retained in Castle and Bank Streets and the medley of mainly 19th century buildings creates a small scale, intimate character which

provides a pleasing contrast with the imposing castle

buildings and open landscaped grounds to the west. The entrance to Castle Street from the High Street is narrow and strongly enclosed. The north side of Bank Street has seen more redevelopment but the cottages on the corner into the Slade form an attractive group. The listed former workhouse built in 1726 for the education of poor children has been redeveloped as offices with a retained but adapted frontage. Due to its height, bulk and the large modern window in the centre of the top floor, the building has a strong impact on the townscape. The Corn Exchange (formerly 17th century chapel) has been retained. The 19th century fire station forms a focal point at the western end of Bank Street. The poorly maintained road and footpaths and modern street furniture and public toilets detract from the character of the area. The traffic along the narrow streets has a detrimental impact on the intimate character of the area.

The redevelopment of the former cattle market introduces a new residential area. The housing is predominantly 2-3 storeys with some taller units and utilises a blend of locally appropriate colours and materials. The development is designed around curving, enclosed streets and the vertical emphasis of the narrow buildings, the strong sense of enclosure, domestic scale and layout respect the context of the development.



New development, The Market Quarter



Bank Street

To the west of the historic market area, development is at a much lower density. The Slade, which follows the line of the castle outer bailey, curves around an slightly elevated open area comprising a car park and public open space. The open space has an important visual impact both because it is elevated above the surrounding development and because it forms an extension of the castle grounds. From this area there are views north westwards towards the Slade school and beyond. There are also views of the recreation ground, the castle and the Church of Ss Peter and Paul. The space is enhanced by some small trees. To the west Castle Fields and a listed former electricity power station, nestle behind a hedge.



The Slade Primary School

The Slade Primary School is a wide 19th century low red brick and slate structure with an attractive cupola which forms a landmark feature visible from the Slade area.

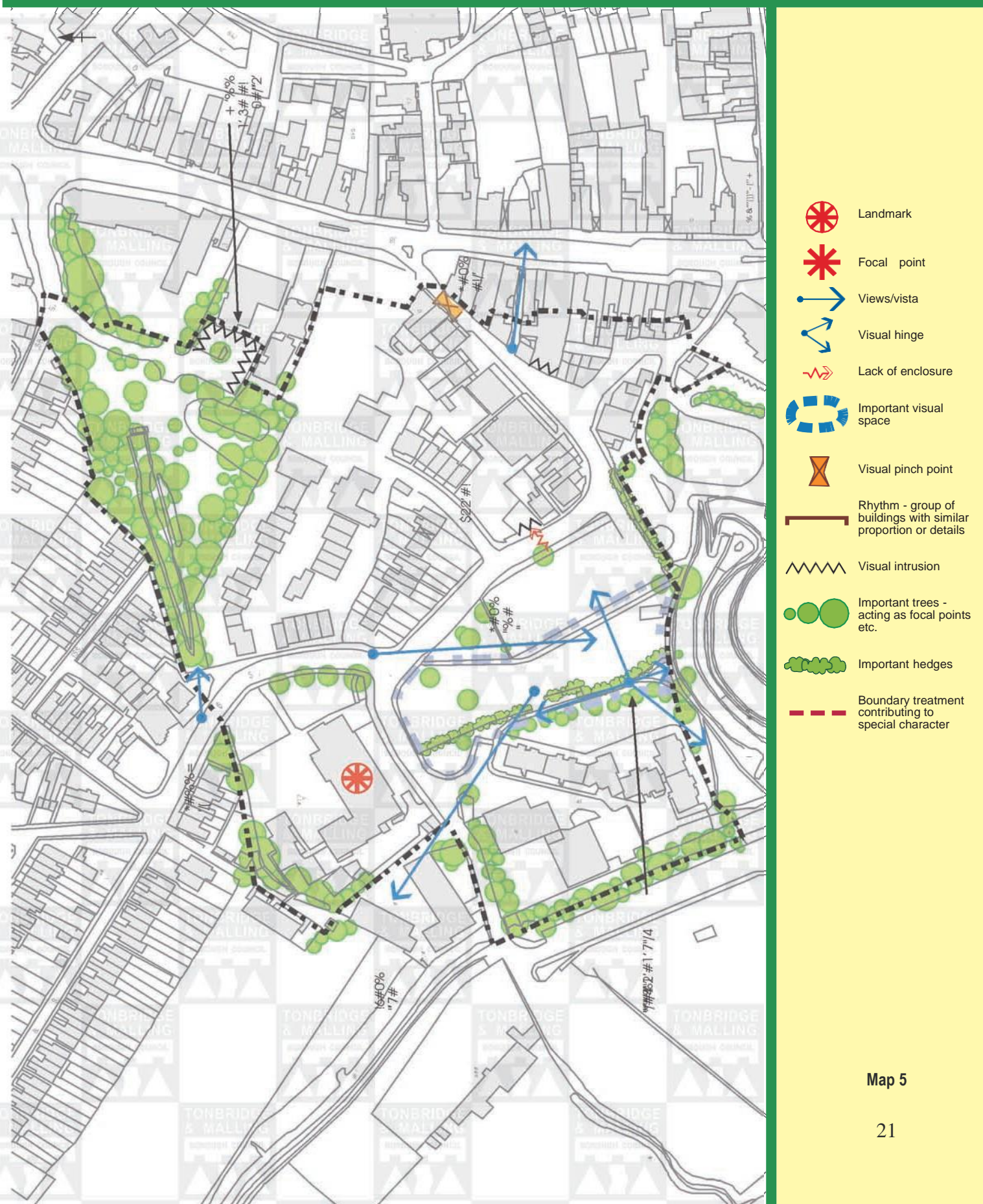
The tarmac surfacing and street furniture in the area is of poor quality and the parking area off Lansdowne Road offers considerable scope for enhancement. The area is identified for housing development in the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan.

Key Features

- Transitional area with mixed density, character and uses
- Retained medieval street pattern and historic buildings in the old market area
- Creation of a new residential area with tight grain and intimate character
- 19th Century civic buildings – Slade Primary School and the Old Fire Station
- Important visual open space with views of landmark buildings and open countryside
- Fosse Scheduled Monument

TONBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB-AREA A3- BANK STREET & THE SLADE



Map 5

Sub-Area A4 Church of St Peter and St Paul and the Bordyke including western Hadlow Road, eastern East Street, Church Street and eastern Church Lane

This sub-area forms part of the historic core of the town. The church lay within the medieval defensive Fosse which ran along the Bordyke and curved southwards to the east of the Vicarage to East Street. The majority of properties in the sub-area are substantial detached or attached houses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries set within generous plots. However, there are some older listed properties dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. To the west and south of the Church, close to the High Street, the buildings are smaller scale and the grain is tighter. The sub-area is primarily residential with some commercial uses.

The street pattern is medieval in origin. The medieval road from Maidstone and Hadlow to Tonbridge ran along Hadlow Road and East Street. Church Lane and Church Street are also medieval lanes. In recent times, the Bordyke has become the main route into North Tonbridge from Hadlow and the road is busy and noisy. The curving main roads and narrow lanes give rise to continuously changing vistas.

The scale of building reflects the importance of the roads. Buildings along Hadlow Road and the Bordyke are generally grander in scale, rising to 3 and 4 storeys and set within large plots. A group of substantial buildings stands around the junction with East Street. The buildings along the narrow lanes however are mainly small scale 2 storey semi-detached and terraced properties. The smaller buildings front directly onto the street or pavement. Traditional front boundary treatments are generally red brick or stone walls and hedges but some wooden fences have been introduced. Materials vary in the area dependant on the period of development and the importance of the building and include the sandstone church, timber framed 16th Century buildings and red brick, ashlar and stuccoed houses of the 19th Century.

Trees and soft landscaping are important features of the area. In addition to the churchyard trees and hedges, there are mature trees in the gardens of properties and the north side of East Street is particularly verdant giving a semi-rural character. The bends in the Bordyke create a series of vistas framed by trees, hedges and buildings.



Bordyke west of East Street junction

There are many notable buildings in the area but the dominant landmark is the Church of St Peter and St Paul. Constructed of mellow honey-coloured sandstone, the Church was fully restored by Ewan Christian in the 1870s but preserves eleventh to fifteenth century masonry. This landmark building is set within an extensive, tranquil churchyard enclosed by buildings, walls and beech hedges and to the north by the road and houses fronting the Bordyke. The early 19th century brick wall on the south eastern boundary is a grade II listed structure. The churchyard is planted with mature specimen trees and a footpath lined with pollarded trees leads to the Bordyke. Initially the church yard extended southwards to East Street but buildings encroached onto this area in the post medieval period.

The Church is approached from the High Street via Church Lane which is narrow and strongly enclosed and has a special historic character. A grade II listed timber framed 16th century building with a half timbered protruding first floor and the adjoining building with 18th century front of weatherboarding and hung tiles are charming features. The approach from East Street via Church Street also has a historic character being lined on the west side by a row of listed 18th century 2 storey stuccoed cottages and 19th century almshouses in cottage gothic style. This historic character is lost however on the eastern side of the Street.



Church Lane



Church Street

The tranquillity and intimacy of the area around the Church contrasts with the character of The Bordyke and Hadlow Road.

Travelling eastwards along The Bordyke, the building line becomes progressively closer to the road with the last few buildings, including the red brick Red House, set immediately against the pavement. These attractive Grade II listed town houses were built outside the defensive ditch along a well line and retain many original features including glazing bars, cornices, porches and moulded architraves. No 9, The Priory, set at right angles to the road, is the oldest of the group, dating from the 17th Century, constructed of ironstone ashlar, with a tiled roof, dormer windows and a massive chimney breast terminating in 3 octagonal red brick stacks. The south side of the road is open and green with the church tower visible through the trees. There is an attractive vista eastwards towards the white painted school houses at the High Street junction. However, the special character of this section of road is marred by a small car park and the footpath entrance to the Church is unprepossessing.



The Red House, The Bordyke

The buildings around the junction with East Street are of a grander scale, set further back from the roadside behind landscaped front gardens. Situated on a curve in the road, Elmfield is particularly prominent when seen from East Street but a substantial side extension has been sensitively designed. A recent four storey residential building to the west also blends in well matching the neighbouring building in terms of height, bulk, glazing, materials and boundary treatment. Situated in the fork of the Bordyke and East Street behind high hedges, Cedars is a landmark building. This late 18th century house has a Flemish gable and 16 tall Tudor style chimney stacks which create a striking roofscape.



Recent development on the Bordyke



The Hermitage, East Street

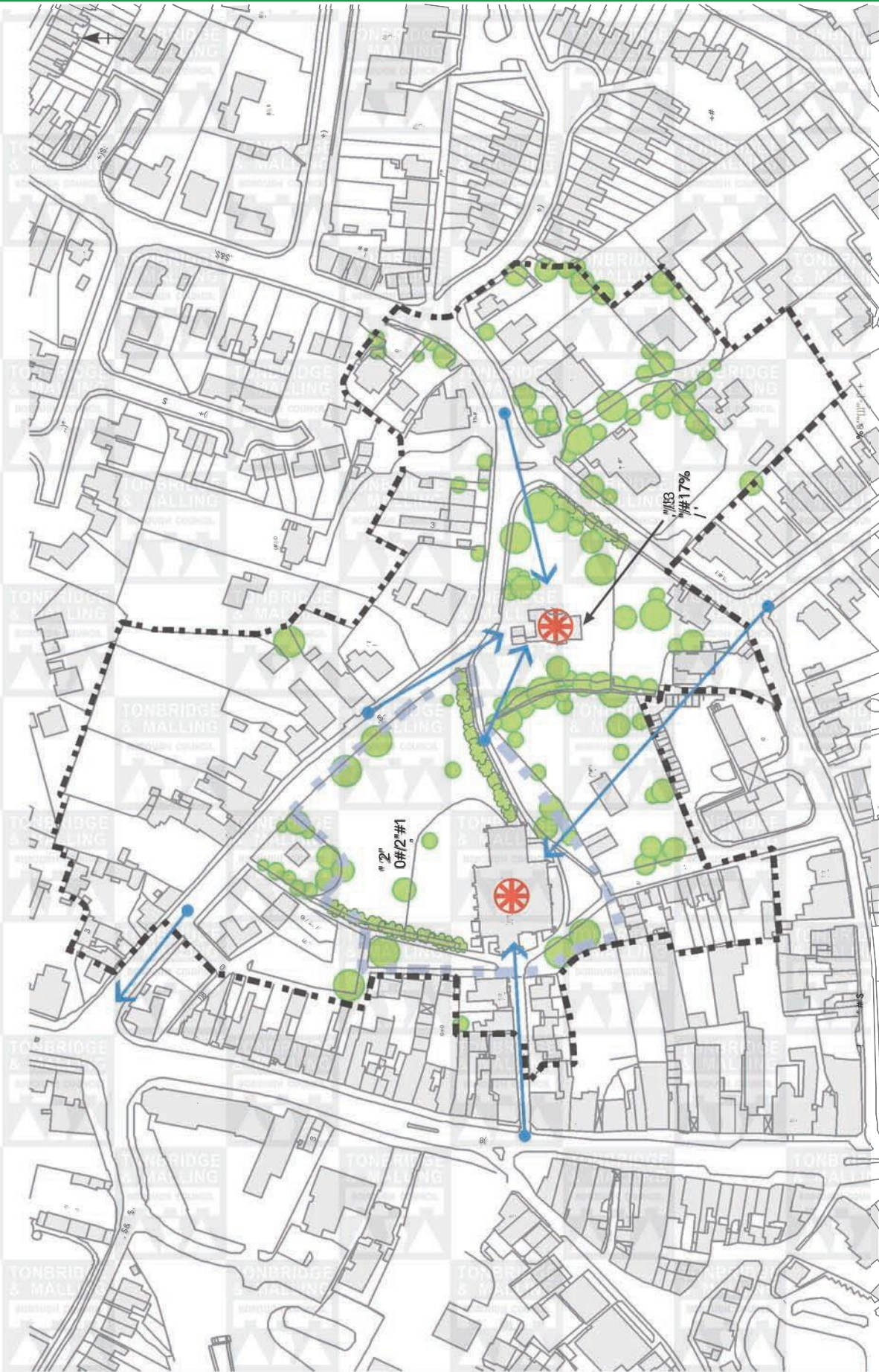
East Street is quieter than the Bordyke with less traffic. The eastern end has a semi-rural character with the verdant bank and hedge on the north side and trees framing the road. The Hermitage, a 16th Century timber-framed house which stands above the road on the north side is a prominent feature and its informal cottage character contrasts with the more formal town housing of the Bordyke.













Key Features

- Building scale appropriate to the function of the building and importance and scale of the roads
- Sandstone Church and roofline of the Cedars are landmark buildings
- Landscaped church yard
- 18th and 19th century town houses in substantial plots
- Small scale historic buildings in the vicinity of the church
- Changing vistas created by the medieval road layout
- Importance of trees and soft landscaping including landmark trees in the churchyard and the hedge and treed approach into East Street
- Mix of materials reflecting the age and importance of buildings: sandstone, timber framed, ashlar, red brick and stuccoed buildings

TONBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB-AREA A4- CHURCH & BORDYKE



-  Landmark
-  Focal point
-  Views/vista
-  Visual hinge
-  Lack of enclosure
-  Important visual space
-  Visual pinch point
-  Rhythm - group of buildings with similar proportion or details
-  Visual intrusion
-  Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
-  Important hedges
-  Boundary treatment contributing to special character

Map 6

Sub-area A5 - Riverside Walk and River Lawn Road

This area is based around the historically important river Medway and the New Cut canal dug between the north and south branches of the river in the mid-nineteenth century and is dominated by open space, trees and hedges. The Riverside Walk sub- area leads out from the historic Castle into the adjoining open space to the south of the town and contains visual links to the Castle and to the countryside to the south west.

The river is tree-lined on both sides enclosing the river space and generally screening development beyond.



The west bank of the Medway



**The Riverside Walk –
west bank of the Medway**

There are a number of walkways throughout the area which are connected across the river by a series of footbridges.

Two lengths of walkway are narrow. The first leads south from the New Wharf Road bridge on the western side of the waterway. It is enclosed on one side by a dense row of trees, and on the other by a tall blue-painted spiked railing enclosing the Water Works. The space is both intimate and somewhat intimidating and contains no lighting.

The second more enclosed space is the walkway between the River Lawn and the river at the southern end of the conservation area which is tree-lined on both sides.

Walkways are given an informal, rural character by the use of a natural gravel.

Some historic lantern-style lamps are used effectively in the area.



The west bank of the Medway



Garden of Remembrance

There are two important visual spaces close to the river.

The Garden of Remembrance is an intimate and tranquil space enclosed by a low beech hedge and curved brick wall. The Garden has a formal layout with paved straight paths contrasting with the less formal riverside walkways.

The second area is on the opposite bank of the river and is enclosed by a row of silver birch trees to the west and the tree-lined river. The space is informally laid out with tables and seating. There are views to the west towards playing fields and beyond.

There are only five buildings within this sub area. The oldest is the Ebenezer Chapel which was built in 1898. The two storey red brick building appears to have had an unusual first floor extension. The gable end of the Chapel faces the road whilst the pitched roof and side elevation enclose the car park. The building marks the eastern boundary of the conservation area.



Ebenezer Chapel

The other four buildings are more modern and detract from the character of the area. Two single storey temporary- looking wooden buildings adjoin each other within the car park close to the road. The car park presents a degree of visual clutter with barriers and signs.

7 River Walk is a three storey building with a pitched roof and a horizontal emphasis formed by lengths of glazing. Whilst the height and materials of the building are not inappropriate, the traditional vertical emphasis of wharf –type buildings with gable end to the river would be more appropriate. The building is set above the floodplain on brick piers but this gives the ground floor an unattractive appearance with no active uses at road level.

The Teen and Twenty building terminates the vista across the River Lawn. Although partially screened by trees, the building has a flat roof, is partially set on stilts, contains a mix of windows and is out of character with the conservation area.

There are other buildings off River Walk and Bradford Street which are viewed from the conservation area and form an important part of its setting. The buildings detract from the character of the area.



Teen and Twenty building

The Crown Building is a three storey flat-roofed building dominated by glazing. The car park fronting River Walk leads to a loss of enclosure of the street.

Key Features

- Dominant trees and open space with few buildings
- River Medway and River Walk provide an important open aspect to this part of the conservation area
- Mature trees screen development, enclose space and provide visual amenity
- Peaceful, enclosed, formally laid out space of the Garden of Remembrance
- Informal footpath layout and surfacing
- Buildings and car parks significantly detract from the area and its setting

TONBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB-AREA A5- RIVER LAWN/RIVERWALK



- Landmark
- Focal point
- Views/vista
- Visual hinge
- Lack of enclosure
- Important visual space
- Visual pinch point
- Rhythm - group of buildings with similar proportion or details
- Visual intrusion
- Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
- Important hedges
- Boundary treatment contributing to special character

Map 7

Sub-Area B – Lyons Crescent including Mortley Close, Lockside (west), East Street (part) and Medway Wharf Road.

A map of 1897 shows the alignment of Lyons Crescent but no buildings had yet been developed except for a Fire Station. The south of the river at that time is shown as Medway Wharf with large wharf buildings, coal pens and mooring posts. Currently this area appears unattractive but development proposals and the Town Lock improvement scheme funded by the Borough Council aim to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area. Today the sub-area retains historical elements that link back to the town's origins. The plot boundaries preserve the outline of curving Saxon burgage plots. The fosse ran southwards across the area, crossing East Street and connecting to the river and one section scheduled as an ancient monument is still visible running through the back gardens. The Town Lock and Mill Stream have historical associations. Some buildings retain the height and character of wharf buildings and an old forge/workshop provides a link with the industrial heritage of the area.

However, in general, the sub-area has suffered from unsympathetic piecemeal development that has affected the quality of the townscape and historical character. At the western end of Lyons Crescent an open parking area, 20th century 3-4 storey office buildings and a blank facade create a harsh, uninteresting townscape from the High Street. There is a view westwards of the Castle. Further east, the buildings comprise an eclectic mix of heights, styles and materials and are in variable condition. There are two recent housing developments. The high density development in Mortley Close comprises 3-4 storey wharf style buildings in pale brown and orange brick with attractive gables and wide arched windows.



Mortley Close, overlooking Mill Stream



Lyons Crescent looking towards East Street

To the south side, the buildings face the river, Mill Stream and Town Lock. A combination of brick, tarmac and cobbled surfaces and discrete black street furniture helps to create a cohesive and interesting townscape which relates well to its context and enhances the river frontage.

As Lyons Crescent curves northwards, its character becomes more cohesive with the visual focal point of the Catholic Church, built in 1903, and red brick 3 storey semi-detached houses on either side of the road. Towards the northern end there is a view of the Church of St Peter and St Paul.

East Street was the original route into the town centre until its narrowness required the Borden to replace it.

The most notable building in the Sub-area is Port Reeve's House on East Street. This Grade II* building stands on a raised bank fronted with sandstone and is a good example of a 15th Century timber-framed house. The first floor and gable overhang. The building has a tiled roof, two oriel windows and a large chimney breast of red brick and sandstone at the eastern end. The 'L' shaped, elevated 3 storey block of flats and parking at the entrance to Church Street are out of character with the area in terms of bulk, form, materials and lack of detailing.



Port Reeves House

The Old Judd School building provides an attractive focal point at the junction with Church Street.



View from the riverside footpath













A footpath follows the northern side of the Medway. Here the large scale warehouses of Medway Wharf Road are partially screened by a band of riverside trees that continues along the Mill Stream. The footpath however is not continuous and does not link through to the Mill Pond. The Castle Public House and Big Bridge form an attractive vista to the west.

Key Features

- Mixed character, mixed use area
- Grade II* listed Port Reeve's House
- Wharf style buildings that provide a link to the industrial heritage of the area
- Views of the Castle, Church of St Peter and St Paul and the Big Bridge

TONBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB-AREA B- LYONS CRESCENT

-  Landmark
-  Focal point
-  Views/vista
-  Visual hinge
-  Lack of enclosure
-  Important visual space
-  Visual pinch point
-  Rhythm - group of buildings with similar proportion or details
-  Visual intrusion
-  Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
-  Important hedges
-  Boundary treatment contributing to special character



Map 8