

QUARRY HILL CONSERVATION AREA



Introduction

The objective of the Quarry Hill Conservation Area Appraisal is to analyse and record the special character of the Conservation Area, which was originally designated in 1991. Following an assessment of the Conservation Area boundary, the Borough Council proposes to update it principally to include new areas but also to exclude others. The appraisal covers the area within the revised Conservation Area boundary and provides further details to assist with the interpretation and use of planning policies. It will help guide the Council in making planning decisions on planning applications and to this end will be adopted for development control purposes.

It is intended that this appraisal will inform and influence the activities of the Council and other bodies (eg. Kent County Council and other statutory agencies) where these impact on the Conservation Area. It will also assist in the identification of any programmes of action that are considered appropriate by these bodies, subject, of course, to financial limitations and other priorities they may have.

Importantly, it is hoped that the appraisal will prove to be of help to residents, businesses and landowners. For anyone proposing new development or changes within the Conservation Area, the appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Borough Council's **Conservation Area Advice Note**. This includes guidance on the broad issues to be considered and the special controls that apply in Conservation Areas.



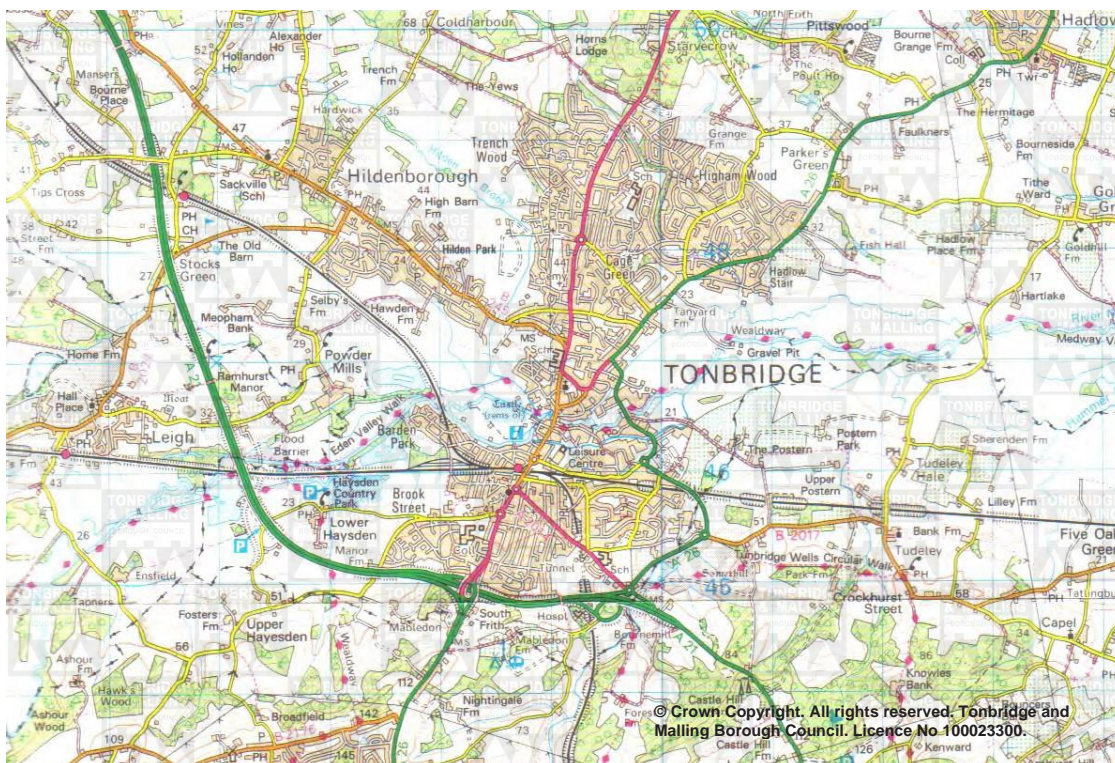
*As the purpose of this appraisal is to describe the **character** of the area, it does not include a detailed description of every feature or building. Omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken therefore, to imply that it is not of interest or similarly that there are no opportunities to improve the character of the area.*

Location, Setting and Physical Form

Tonbridge is situated at a crossing point of the River Medway about 6 km north of Tunbridge Wells, 10 km south-east of Sevenoaks and 20 km south-west of Maidstone. The old settlement stood on the north side of the river which was less prone to flooding but, protected by flood control barriers, the town now extends across the floodplain. Quarry Hill Road and the High Street together form the principal north-south axis of the town connecting routes from London and Tunbridge Wells to the town centre. Tonbridge is narrow at the river crossing point by the Castle, the ancient town centre, but more recent development fans out to the north and south giving the town its characteristic dumbbell shape. The wooded, hills and ridges of the Low and High Weald rise sharply to the north and south of the floodplain creating an attractive long distance back drop to the town. The Quarry Hill Conservation Area is situated on the lower slopes of Quarry Hill on the southern approach to the town. To the east lies extensive Victorian and 1920s/1930s residential areas and to the west more recent housing development, Judd School and West Kent College which spread along Brook Street.

Brook Street is set at right angles to the main axis, and runs below Bidborough Ridge south westwards towards Hayesden and Penshurst. It is less built up than Quarry Hill, particularly on the northern side, allowing a wedge of green open space to penetrate the town. The Judd School lies on the northern side and is set in extensive grounds. Beyond the Conservation Area, Brook Street quickly becomes a narrow, winding country lane. The landscape setting to the north of the town is important to the character of the conservation area as it is seen from a number of vantage points. However, long views to the south are constrained by the gradient, curve and landscape of Quarry Hill.

The Conservation Area covers an area of the town from the junction of Quarry Hill with Woodside Road in the south to St Stephen's Church and adjoining buildings in the north and includes Quarry Hill Road, Brook Street and Waterloo Road. Map 1 (page 4) shows the extent of the Conservation Area. For the purposes of this appraisal, the Conservation Area has been divided into three sub areas of similar character (see Map 1).



Sub-area A – This area covers Quarry Hill Road from Woodside Road to the junction with Brook Street. It comprises a row of Victorian villas set along the main southern approach road into Tonbridge.

Sub-area B – The northern section of Quarry Hill Road runs from the Brook Street junction towards the High Street. It is a mixed use area including residential properties, shops, St Stephen's Church and community buildings.

Sub-area C – The north side of Brook Street includes several large Victorian villa-style properties and the late 19th century Judd School buildings (which retain many of their original characteristics) more modern buildings and the landscaped school grounds. The south side comprises the landscaped frontage of West Kent College.

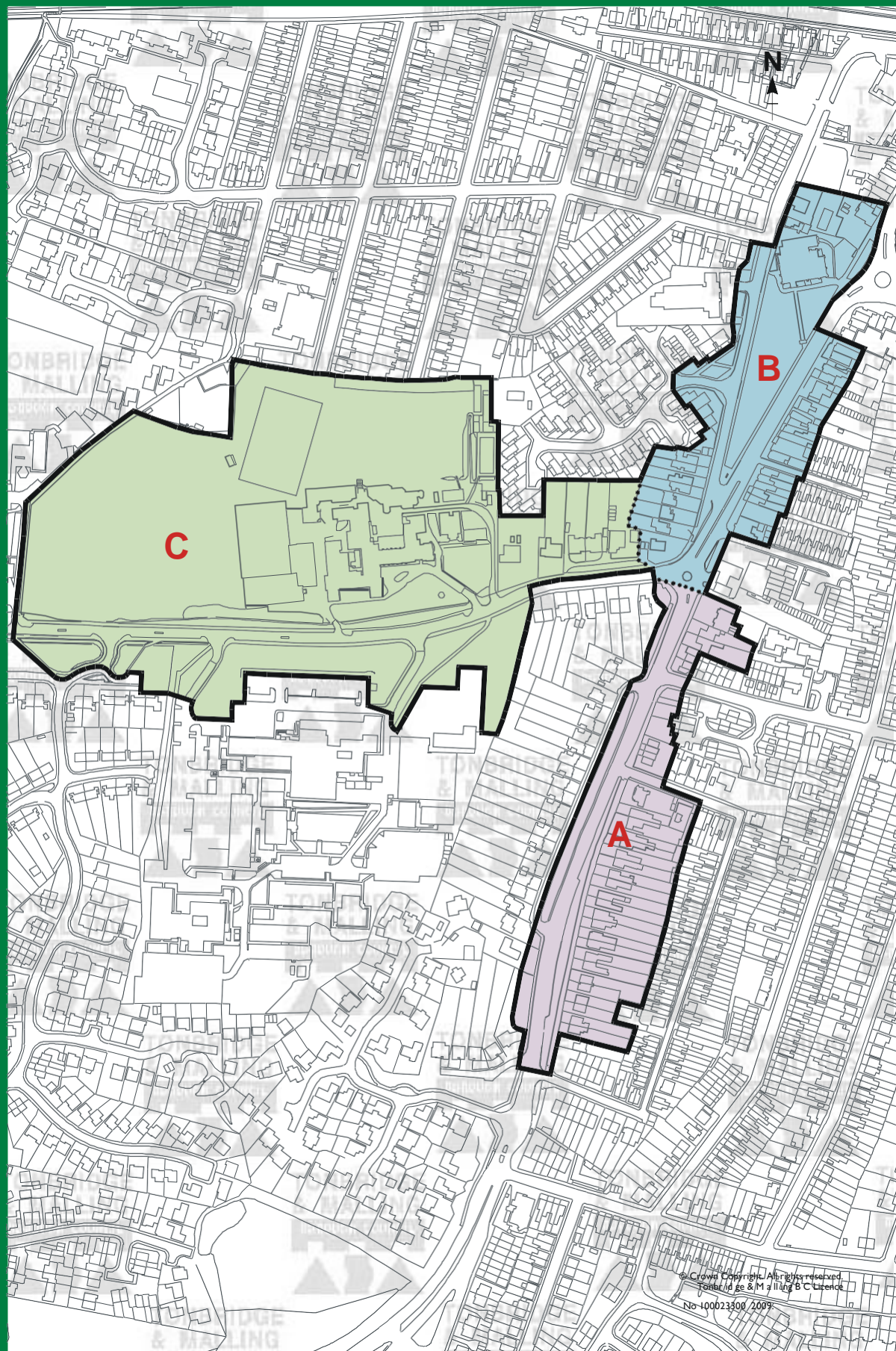
These sub-areas of special architectural and historic character are not intended to be precisely split, as there will inevitably be some overlapping of characteristics of the various areas due to the diversity of the character of the Conservation Area.

QUARRY HILL

CHARACTER ANALYSIS-SUB AREAS

Key to sub - areas

- A** Quarry Hill Road (south)
(Including part of Woodside Road)
- B** Quarry Hill Road (north)
(Including Waterloo Road)
- C** Brook Street
(Including Grounds of the Judd School)



Map 1

Origins and Development of the Settlement

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 were 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 defense for the town. Medieval development was enclosed within these defenses giving the town a compact form. 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 land that frequently flooded. The road split with the eastern spur running past the priory buildings over Primrose Hill (see map below) to the south coast. The western spur split with one route running westwards along the sandstone bluff at Barden and the other along Waterloo Road and steeply up Quarry Hill to the village of Bidborough. Waterloo Road was a turnpike road, but in time a new more direct turnpike road was constructed along the route of Quarry Hill Road. The old and new turnpike roads merged at the junction of Quarry Hill Road with Brook Street.

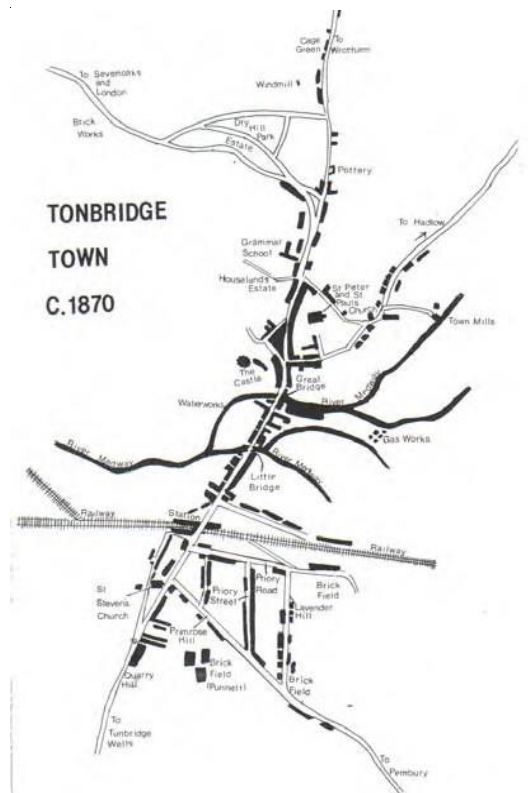
In 1740 the river Medway was made navigable and a town quay was constructed. The following year the Upper Medway Navigation company started to ship out timber and iron and bring back coal, stone, gravel and lime mainly to make bricks (with local clay) for the growing town. Quarry Hill was so named because of a quarry on the east side of the road leading from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells. 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, many new buildings were constructed within the confines of the town defenses. 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 rapid increase of housing and population and the town expanded to the south of the river. Tonbridge grew from what was predominantly a farming community and became a market town centre of commerce and light industry. Fine houses were built for the middle classes on the higher, drier land to the north and east. The demand for trade, shops, public buildings and services increased markedly.

In 1840, the land south of the river was still frequently subject to flooding and there were few houses, restricted generally to sites either side of the main road. Three farms occupied the land adjoining the road towards Tunbridge Wells: Priory Farm (which incorporated the ruins of the former priory and lay to the east of the High Street), Tile House Farm and Brook Farm which flanked the lower slopes of Quarry Hill. These farms disappeared in the second half of the 19th century following the introduction of the railway as the land was sold for development. Priory Farm and Tile House Farm belonged to the Somerhill Estate owned by James Alexander. Prior to selling the land he laid out new roads including Pembury Road which replaced the old lane over Primrose Hill. Priory Farm was sold in 1848 as individual building plots which all fronted onto the new or existing roads. Tile House Farm was sold

by his executors in 1849. The land was sold to local builders and a variety of small investors including Punnett, Weller, Tanner and Chalklin. However, little building took place until after 1890. Punnett used the land for a woodyard and brick and tile works. At the foot of Quarry Hill, 2 plots opposite the junction with Brook Street were used for 52 small red brick houses built by working men of which Waterloo Place and George Road remain. Much of the building consisted of small brick terraced houses in rectilinear streets connected with narrow alleys.

St Stephen's Church was built by public subscription and was consecrated in 1852 to cater for the burgeoning population. A separate parish was created in 1853 and the church was extended in 1866. The parish was very poor compared with the northern part of Tonbridge and incorporated the St Stephen's National School for boys in Waterloo Road (now a community hall) and the girls' school which was opened in 1870 on the corner of St Stephen's Street and the Pembury Road.



St Stephen's: looking towards the Town

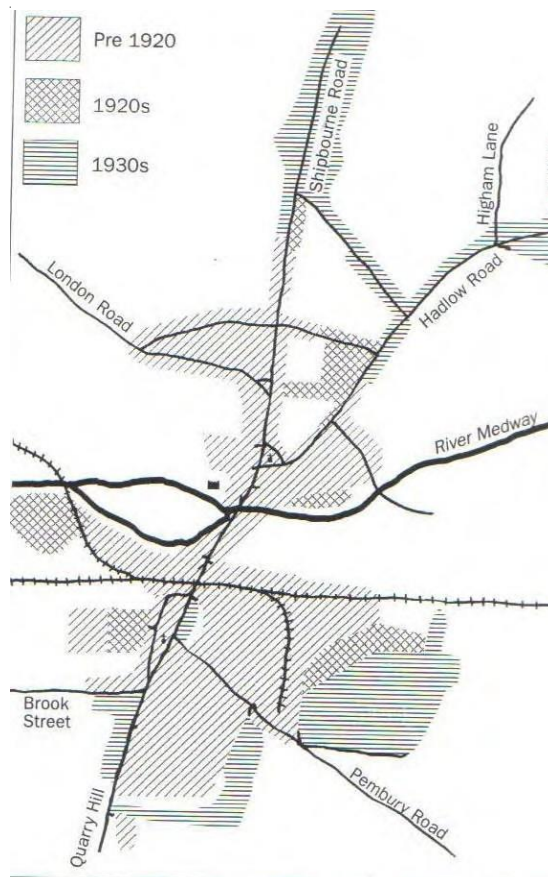
Tonbridge Historical Society Historical Collection No. BB.001

The Judd School was started in 1888 in Stafford House but grew rapidly and in 1896 moved into its current buildings in Brook Street. Originally founded as a private ('Commercial') school with an endowment from the Judd Foundation, the school was intended to meet the educational needs of the sons of local tradesmen. It was considered that the prestigious Tonbridge School which drew pupils from a wide area did not meet the need of the town's burgeoning commercial community. Judd School became state aided after 1918 subsidised by the Skinners Company and today is a voluntary aided grammar school with just under 1000 pupils

In the period 1881 to 1911, the housing stock of Tonbridge increased by four fifths with most of the development taking place in the area between Pembury and Quarry Hill Roads, directly to the east of the Quarry Hill Conservation Area. 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.

In the late 19th century the southern High Street connecting the Quarry Hill area to the historic town centre north of the river was still very narrow, lined with small shops and cottages and prone to flooding. From 1892 onwards improvements were carried out which involved the demolition of most of the west side of the High Street.

Tonbridge continued to grow in the 20th Century. The west side of Quarry Hill, adjoining the conservation area, remained undeveloped as part of the Mabledon Estate until Quarry Rise, a development of mainly semi-detached houses was built around 1936.



How Tonbridge grew in the 1920s and 30s.

Brook Street ran westward from Quarry Hill Road following the route of an old country lane past Hayesden towards Penshurst. Initially the lane wound between tall hedges past the meadows of Brook Farm, but in the 1930s, the tall banks were cut back at the Quarry Hill end and the road widened to give better access to Judd School and a row of 1930s semi-detached houses built on the south side of the road. Also during the 1930s a number of older properties were demolished and new housing was developed on the south eastern slopes of the town in the Deakin Leas area. Construction of the Tonbridge bypass and flyover in 1971 completely altered the landscape of the upper section of Quarry Hill.



Brook Street junction with Quarry Hill prior to widening



Quarry Hill Road around 1950

Photographs, maps and historical information courtesy of Tonbridge Historical Society

Townscape/Landscape Analysis

Maps 2-4 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

The Conservation Area marks the southern entrance point to the town. Quarry Hill Road forms a broad avenue which sweeps down towards the High Street and is lined with trees and grassed verges which give it a spacious character. Brook Street is also lined by trees, vegetation and open space giving way to long distance views and is less urban in character, forming a transition from town to countryside.

The Conservation Area has a late 19th century character with most of the buildings dating from that period. The buildings are of different styles and scales and vary from substantial mostly semi-detached four storey town houses, to more modest two storey terraced shops and cottages. Unity is brought through the use of a limited pallet of traditional red brick, render and tile.

The form of the conservation area reflects the historic evolution of the town with the more modest properties being located on the low lying ground and the more gracious houses extending up Quarry Hill.

The two principal landmarks of the Conservation Area are St Stephen's Church and the Judd School. The church spire is a prominent landmark visible from many points within the town and is a readily identifiable feature which signifies the town from the surrounding countryside. The trees and grass of the triangular churchyard create an oasis in an otherwise built-up area which is appreciated by residents and has considerable townscape value. The late 19th century buildings of the Judd School which front Brook Street contribute to the historical character and the cupola atop the Old School Room forms a distinctive landmark which is visible from a number of viewpoints within the town and the surrounding countryside.

Trees and soft landscaping are a feature of the Conservation Area, contributing significantly to the local townscape and providing a structural setting for the town. The elegant substantial late Victorian and Edwardian houses along Quarry Hill Road and Brook Street are set back from the road behind heavily landscaped frontages comprising trees, hedgerows and grass verges. This vegetation complements and partially screens the buildings, encloses the roads and penetrates far into the town from the surrounding countryside.

There is a contrast between the southern end of Quarry Hill Road which has retained its late Victorian/Edwardian residential character and retains many of the original architectural and decorative features and the northern part of the road which is a more mixed use area that has seen more change.

Sub Area A – Quarry Hill Road south of the junction with Brook Street

This section of road connects the A21 and A26 to the south at the Quarry Hill flyover with Tonbridge town centre. The wide, gently curving road sweeps down from Quarry Hill to the low lying town centre. The curve in the road constrains views to the north, giving occasional glimpses of St Stephen's Church spire and longer views towards the open countryside of Greensand Ridge. The road is flanked by grass verges and trees which give a verdant character, provide unity to the streetscene, enclose the road space and lead the eye down the hill.



Looking north down Quarry Hill Road

The houses in Quarry Hill date from post 1890. A row of late Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached and detached villas is set back below the level of the road behind a grass bank with trees, footpath and narrow front gardens. Varying in height from 3 to 4 storeys the substantial pairs of houses are faced with painted render or brick with original tile or slate roofs and are of a scale which matches the mature trees. Together they enclose the wide road space. Many have tall chimneys and decorative roof, door and window details but the design of the buildings vary. Several properties have retained terracotta finials and ridge tiles. The majority of houses have single glazed sash windows but on some the upper sash has been subdivided by glazing bars. Rounded and stained glass windows are also in evidence. Much of the paintwork of the windows, entrance porches and barge boards is white painted, giving a strong unity to the group of buildings. Some of the properties are flat fronted whilst others have single or two storey bays with single pane sash windows. Roof height and pitch also vary, some with steep gable ends facing the road emphasising the scale of the building. On one pair of semi-detached houses, a continuous roof runs over the bay window and door. Several of the properties have half-timbered frontgables.



Villas on east side of Quarry Hill Road



Half timbered gables with finials



East side of Quarry Hill Road

In several cases, traditional clay tiles or slate have been replaced by modern concrete roof tiles on one of the pair of semi-detached houses, reducing the unity and historic character of the pair. Overall, however, the properties have retained their historical character and there have been few intrusive additions.

The houses are set behind front gardens along a uniform building line which follows the slight curve of the road. Historical photographs indicate that originally most houses fronting the main road had railings but now the front boundaries use a variety of materials and on several properties the boundaries have been lost creating wide entrances for car parking. The boundaries are currently formed by low brick and stone walls and wooden panel fences with shrubs and trees behind.

To the south of the lower junction with Woodside Road, a detached Edwardian house with white painted half timbered gable end (which is emulated to allow the building to 'turn the corner'), bay windows, ridge tiles, finials and covered porch forms an attractive building with a substantial number of original features. Around the corner in Woodside Road a high traditional weathered Victorian red brick garden wall in Flemish Garden Wall (also known as Sussex) bond contributes to the historical character of the area.



Edwardian House

Quarry Lodge is a good example of a mid Victorian detached house retaining many original features including recessed, divided sash windows, stone sills, decorative bands of black brick and ridge tiles.

To the north of this junction, the housing is more mixed in style and age and is generally 2 to 3 storeys. A row of recent terraced town houses with mansard roofs and vertical fenestration faces away from the road, blending into the street scene behind an old red brick wall with pillars and stone coping and a hedge above. Beyond, some smaller two storey modern houses with concrete hanging tiles and roof tiles are set behind a ragstone wall. Three villas lead into the Brook Street roundabout. The last is used as an office and is fronted by a tarmac forecourt parking area. The roundabout and adjoining garage, which is situated just outside the Conservation Area, are obtrusive features but beyond the roundabout the St Stephen's Church spire and churchyard trees are prominent features. The group of protected trees on the corner between Quarry Hill Road and Brook Street soften the townscape at the junction and are a feature from several viewpoints within the Conservation Area.

The western side of Quarry Hill Road was not developed until the mid 1930s. The access road serving the houses is set behind a strip of grass with a hedge and line of trees. The trees enclose Quarry Hill Road thus avoiding a break in the almost continuous line of vegetation linking Quarry Hill Wood to the Brook Street roundabout. Quarry Rise, which is located just outside the Conservation Area, was the first service road of its kind in Tonbridge, designed to separate the residential development from the main thoroughfare.

There are some detracting elements which affect the character of this sub-area. The elegant character of the public space is harmed by heavy traffic levels on this busy access route. The roundabout and adjoining garage at the junction with Brook Street are visually harmful. The poor quality of the paving and street furniture detract from the streetscene and cycle barriers placed at intervals on the footpath to the east of Quarry Hill Road are an intrusive feature. The grass verge running alongside the footpath is used for residential parking and has been damaged by vehicles.



Southern edge of Quarry Hill Road (south) Sub-area











Key Features

- Important and busy approach road into Tonbridge from the south
- Sweeping descent from Quarry Hill down into the town centre
- Glimpses of St Stephen's Church and longer views of countryside to the north
- Street trees and vegetation in gardens creating a verdant character
- Residential character
- Elegant, individually designed late Victorian and Edwardian villas of a scale appropriate to the width and importance of the road
- Properties set back from the roadside along a common building line behind gardens, footpath and tree verge.
- Predominance of traditional materials (including red brick, tiles, slate and painted render) and original decorative roof, door and window details
- Street furniture detracts from the character of the area

QUARRY HILL TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUBAREA A-QUARRY HILL ROAD(S)



-  Landmark
-  Views/vista
-  Visual hinge
-  Lack of enclosure
-  Important visual space
-  Visual intrusion
-  Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
-  Important hedges
-  Boundary treatment contributing to special character
-  Important verges

Map 2

Sub Area B – Quarry Hill Road (north) including part of Waterloo Road

This sub-area runs north along Quarry Hill Road from the Brook Street roundabout to the entrance to the High Street. It is a mixed use area incorporating residential, community and commercial buildings. The majority of the buildings date from the mid to late nineteenth century and are 2 to 3 storeys in height, but this is an area of strong contrasts. The small scale shops and houses to the east of Quarry Hill Road have seen considerable change and display a wide variety of shop front styles and materials, whilst the area around St Stephen's church to the west of the road has a more restrained residential character.

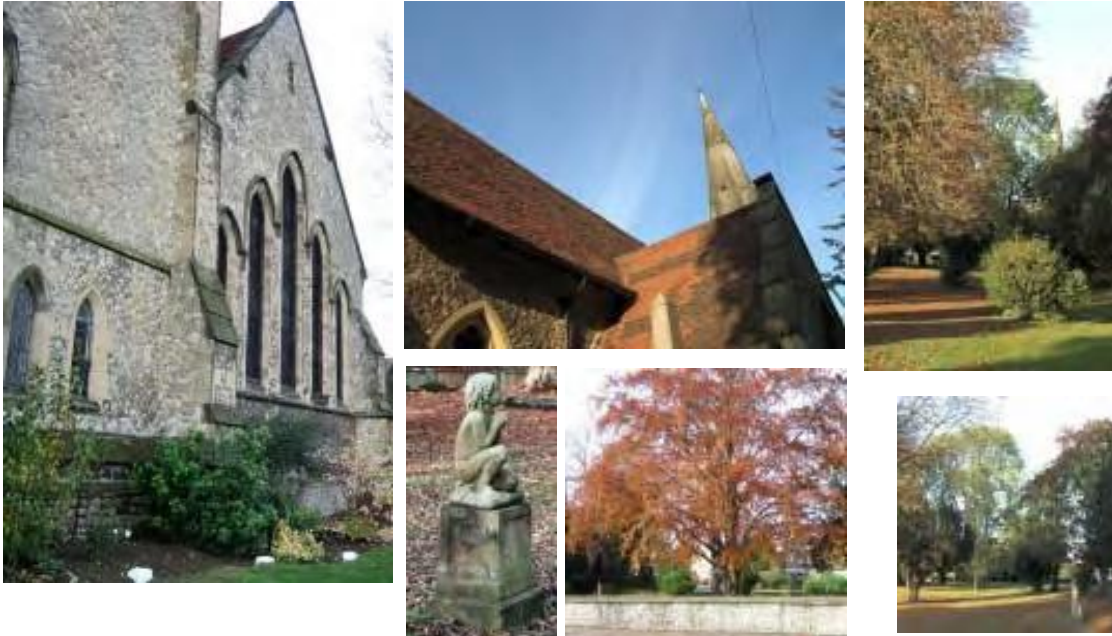
The current roads follow the historical road layout. There are some long views northwards from the sub-area towards the Greensand Ridge. To the south, the gradient, curve and landscape of Quarry Hill closes the view. The trees and hedges along the southern part of Quarry Hill Road and at the Brook Street roundabout create an attractive vista.

St Stephen's church is the most dominant building in this sub-area. The church was consecrated in 1852 and extended in 1866. Its spire is the most prominent landmark of Tonbridge visible from southern and northern approaches to the town, from the railway and the surrounding hills. The church is an attractive unlisted



St Stephen's church spire

building constructed of ragstone with a decorative tiled roof, narrow spire and clock. A path of red brick paving and stone spalls runs around the building and traditional style black lamps and railings enhance the historic character. A beech hedge separates the church building from the triangular churchyard which is grassed with a number of mature trees providing an area of green open space in an otherwise densely developed part of the town. The tranquillity and intimacy of the area around the Church contrasts with the busy character of Quarry Hill Road. Old tomb stones and statues enhance the peaceful, tranquillity of the space. The trees have a very important role softening the townscape and, together with the ragstone wall and other shrubs, screen the church from the traffic on Quarry Hill Road. The trees not only have an impact on the local streetscene but form a striking component of vistas from the residential areas to the west and from sub-area A.



St Stephen's Church and churchyard

The churchyard is bordered on the Quarry Hill Road side by a long ragstone wall which complements the church and is a prominent linear unifying feature in this sub-area contributing to its historical character. The wall is enhanced by a traditional lych gate with tiled roof. At the Pembury Road roundabout, a small shelter erected by the Town Wardens in the 1930s for the use of the 'elderly and the weary' is an unusual feature which complements the church. A low brick planter separates the pavement from the road and prevents the need for railings. The low planting allows unrestricted views along the High Street, but is unimaginative. To the north of the roundabout, the former Vicarage, with its prominent south-facing half timbered gables and decorative brickwork, has a close historic association with the church and marks the edge of the Conservation Area and entrance to the High Street. The building now incorporates incongruous shop fronts and advertising and the adjoining car park and sub-station are detracting features.

Further features of interest are situated on the triangular pavement area south of the churchyard. A stone trough, relocated in 1913 from the old market place in the High Street, a well, dated 1857, and a 1930's red letter box are enhanced by cobbled paving. However modern signs, poor surfacing and a plastic bin reduce the positive impact of this area on the streetscene.



Trough by Waterloo Road

Waterloo Road is narrow and relatively quiet compared to Quarry Hill Road. The Conservation Area boundary runs along the western side incorporating the landscaped gardens and grassed and treed areas which flank the entrance to Tulip Tree Close. These act as a visual broadening of the public space complementing the green of the Church Yard and breaking the continuity of the built frontage along Waterloo Road.



Well by churchyard



Community Hall Waterloo Road

The Community Hall in Waterloo Road, built in 1854, was originally St Stephen's National School for boys. Although in slightly poor repair, the low, weathered brick building with red brick details and decorative tiled roof has retained its original appearance and character.

The railings and poor surfacing at the Waterloo Road entrance to St Stephen's Church detract from the character of this area.

On the eastern side of Quarry Hill Road, a row of 2 and 3 storey flat and bay fronted Victorian buildings is in mixed use incorporating offices, shops and houses. The redbrick or painted render properties have slate or tiled roofs with chimneys and white painted sash windows. The ground floor of many buildings has been modernised and altered and there is little uniformity. A few traditional shop fronts remain but otherwise the shop fronts are of variable quality and brightly coloured. Number 45 has been recently renovated. This side of the road has a more varied commercial and bustling character which contrasts sharply with the tranquillity and unity of the ragstone wall and churchyard on the other side.



Quarry Hill Road east side

At the Brook Street roundabout a Victorian 3 storey public house painted in cream and blue is a prominent feature. The surfacing and street furniture in this area is in poor repair and detracts from the historic character. The metallic safety barrier down the centre of Quarry Hill Road, creates a visual barrier which subdivides the public space at the centre of the conservation area and

detracts from the setting of the church and the surrounding important visual spaces.

Across the road three detached modern houses and a handsome pair of 3 storey semi detached Edwardian red brick houses with half timbered gable ends, ridge tiles and bay windows stand at the entrance to Waterloo Road and resonate with features found elsewhere within the conservation area.











The roundabouts at either end of the sub-area are utilitarian, designed to be functional rather than to enhance historic character. However, the Brook Street roundabout is visible from most points in the Conservation Area and the Pembury Road roundabout forms the gateway to the High Street. Other detracting elements in the sub area include plastic and wooden bollards, highway safety barriers, signage and poor shop fronts and pavement surfacing.

Key Features

- Victorian character
- The Church spire is a distinctive landmark visible from many viewpoints
- Tranquil historic character of St Stephen's church and its setting
- Ragstone boundary of the churchyard is a prominent unifying feature with the Church
- Individual buildings such as the vicarage and public house important to the historic character of the area
- Mixed use area with a consistent scale of building height of 2 – 3 storeys
- Unity of upper stories created by a limited pallet of redbrick or painted render, slate or tiled roofs with chimneys and white painted sash windows
- Trees in the churchyard, at the Brook Street roundabout and in Waterloo Road enhance and soften the townscape
- Quarry Hill Road is a busy access route to the town centre

QUARRY HILL TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUB AREA B - QUARRY HILL ROAD (N)

-  Landmark
-  Views/vista
-  Visual hinge
-  Lack of enclosure
-  Important visual space
-  Visual intrusion
-  Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
-  Important hedges
-  Boundary treatment contributing to special character
-  Important verges



Map 3

Sub-area C – Brook Street

Brook Street runs westward from Quarry Hill Road past Hayesden towards Penshurst. It forms a landscaped corridor with a wide, bustling urban character at the Quarry Hill Road end, but reverting to a narrow, winding country lane beyond the western edge of the Conservation Area.



Brook Street looking west

The road rises and curves as it leaves Tonbridge. It is lined on both sides by vegetation. Hedges and mature coniferous and deciduous trees front the Judd School and houses on the north side. A wide grass verge, hedge and trees front West Kent College and the residential area at the western edge of the Conservation Area. The curves and dense vegetation restrict long views. However beyond the Judd School buildings, the views open out northwards towards the Greensand Ridge and Sevenoaks and west towards Leigh. The rising topography gives a sensation of an opening out of space. The Judd School playing fields create a wedge of green space which penetrates deep into the town. Approaching from the west, the curve and topography of the road screens views of the roundabout. A group of protected trees between number 17 and the access into West Kent College is an important feature and marks the end of the housing frontage.

Brook Street has a character which is quite distinct from the other two sub-areas. Two schools, a nursery and West Kent College lie within or abut the sub-area. The substantial institutional buildings, set within wide plots and set back from the road, give the sub-area a spacious non-residential character.



View looking north across Judd School Playing Fields

The detached and semi detached late Victorian houses at the eastern end of the road are also set back, screened by a high hedge and trees and are substantial in scale being 2 to 3 storeys high and set within wide plots.

The Judd School buildings are the most dominant in the sub-area. The original late Victorian main school buildings face the road but are partially screened behind a row of tall evergreens, a landscaped frontage and driveway. The cupola is a landmark that is visible from North Tonbridge and the railway line. Behind and to the side of the main school buildings, more recent development, including a sports hall, create an attractive assemblage of buildings and do not detract from the historic character. The ironwork World War II memorial gates bearing the school crest are an attractive feature.

The main school building is a wide low 2 storey building constructed in red brick with striking arched white painted windows with brick lintels. The red clay tiled roof is steeply pitched with prominent white painted dormer windows. Buttresses between the windows are constructed in a Flemish bond with decorative bands of stone. The cupola is white painted with a lead covered base and domed top with decorative finial. The buildings are relatively plain as they were apparently built on a limited budget, but the entrance is decorated with carved stonework.



Judd School Cupola



Judd School Memorial Gates

Traditional materials predominate within Brook Street. Judd School and the nursery and residential properties are constructed in red brick with tiled roofs and white painted wooden windows. A semi-detached property displays many architectural features typical of the late Victorian period with a substantial full height bay, casement windows with subdivided upper sections, pebble dash on the upper storey and cut brick lintels. The prominent gables face the road and have mock timber framing and the tall chimney is sited down the slope of the roof, echoing other parts of the Conservation Area. Decorative terracotta plaques adorn the bays. Another building has decorative courses of contrasting yellow brickwork. A wide square castellated tower with an angled bay window forms a striking and unusual feature.



Square Tower



Late Victorian House

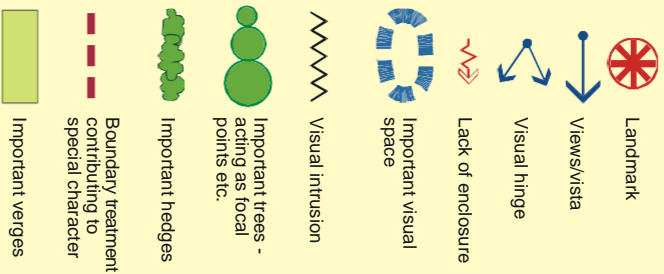
The number of educational establishments in Brook Street creates considerable pressure on the highway with high volumes of pedestrian and car traffic at peak times. Traffic calming measures have been introduced to improve pedestrian safety but this unfortunately adds an urban character to an otherwise rural setting. The phone mast and frontage of the garage which are located just outside the Conservation Area are intrusive features at the roundabout.

Key Features

- Transitional area between the town and countryside
- Wide curving tree lined road with landscaped frontages on both sides
- Substantial mid to late Victorian educational and residential buildings set back from the road within large plots
- The main Judd School buildings contribute to the special historic character
- The cupola is a landmark feature
- Predominance of traditional materials including red brick, stonework, clay tiles and white painted wood.
- Consistent 2 -3 storey building height
- High levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic at peak periods

QUARRY HILL TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

SUBAREAC-BROOKSTREET



Map 4

Physical Fabric

The Quarry Hill area remained largely undeveloped until after the arrival of the railway when the land was sold off in individual plots to a number of builders. As a result the buildings are remarkably uniform in age dating from the 1850s to Edwardian with some modern infill development but most are individually designed. They do not show gradual evolution through time as is found in the more ancient buildings of the Tonbridge Conservation Area but instead give a snapshot of social trends and architectural fashions at a particular period.

The predominant building material is red brick which in most buildings is left exposed, although some properties are rendered and painted. Yellow and dark grey bricks were used for decorative courses and details. Diagonal brick patterns adorn some elevations. Stone was used sparingly in decorative features around doors and windows. St Stephen's Church is the only stone building in the Conservation Area. Wood was utilised for window frames, balconies, barge boards and mock half timbering and, with the exception of the half timbering, is almost always painted white, brightening the brick facades and bringing unity to groups of properties. Some of the later buildings have red terracotta plaques and tiles. The retention of these traditional materials creates a uniform subtle palette of colours based around red, white and yellow/grey, with the exception of the brightly coloured shop fronts and signs along the east side of Quarry Hill Road. The substantial residential buildings on the lower slopes of Quarry Hill and in Brook Street retain many traditional materials and original features.

The roofs are generally slate or clay tiles and are varied in pitch and style. Some low pitch slate hipped roofs can be seen but the majority of roofs are steeply pitched many with prominent gable ends facing the street. The gable ends are decorated with mock half timber or brick patterns and are occasionally embellished with decorative ridge tiles and iron or terracotta finials. Whilst the Victorian properties have a regular symmetrical design the Edwardian properties tend to be asymmetric. The chimneys add to the character and unity within the Conservation Area and are centrally placed on the roof ridge or down the slope of the roof directly above the fireplaces in the front and back rooms. Some are tall with decorative brick details.



Roof features

The original windows have been retained on many properties, particularly on the larger residential properties and community buildings. White painted wooden sash windows predominate. The windows are tall, gently arched, or rectangular openings with brick, or in some cases, stone lintels and sills. On the mid-Victorian properties the divided sash windows are recessed and some have decorative raised mouldings. On later properties the windows have large single panes of glass at the base and small upperpanes.



Window features including traditional shop windows

Many properties have single storey or full height bay windows which became more fashionable after 1850. They are square or angled with flat or pitched (occasionally concave) roofs covered with slates, tiles or lead and some are enhanced with brick and stone detailing. Some of the late Victorian and Edwardian houses have dormer windows with steeply pitched roofs and decorative surrounds. In some properties modern dormers and small rooflights have been introduced which generally blend into the varied roofline.

A number of the properties have casement windows. Judd School has distinctive tall curved window openings subdivided into square and curved panes. The cottage adjoining the Community Hall in Waterloo Road has stone mullioned windows and a feature window which projects from the corner of the building. St Stephen's Church has narrow gothic style openings with stained glass windows by Morris and Co. A few traditional shopfronts have been retained on the east side of Quarry Hill Road, but many windows have been replaced on these smaller properties which generally do not retain as many original features as the larger properties.

Traditional front doors are a feature of the conservation area and are in a variety of designs, the majority being four panelled with rectangular or semi-circular glass skylights. On semi-detached properties the doorways are adjacent to each other in the centre of the building. Many are recessed within arched porches with steps leading up. Other properties have external white painted wooden porches, typical of the late Victorian and Edwardian period, in a variety of designs. Continuous porches between bays are also found, one with a balcony above.

Doors and porches



Boundary treatments include hedges, trees, red brick and ragstone walls and wooden fences. The walls and fences frequently have vegetation behind or above them, giving the Conservation Area a verdant character. The ragstone church yard wall on Quarry Hill Road is a prominent feature that contributes to the special character and the tall Victorian red brick walls facing Quarry Hill Road, and around the corner into Woodside Road, also contribute to the streetscape. Some of the walls are capped in stone. In Brook Street the hedges and trees partially screen the buildings behind.

The ground surfaces are generally in poor repair and much of the street furniture is utilitarian and does not contribute to the historic character. However some brick paving and spalls in the vicinity of the Church promote the historic character. Street furniture of interest in the Conservation Area includes the well, red letter boxes and the stone trough.



Features affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

To understand what is special about the Conservation Area it is useful to note those features that are out of character with the area. This not only emphasises the importance of the remaining special features of the area but also allows potential improvements to be identified.

- The proliferation of street furniture, including road signs, at certain locations harms the visual appearance of the conservation area. Whilst the area has some consistency of street furniture, the materials, style and colour are not consistent throughout, leading to a dilution of the special character of the area and the sense of place. Road and footpath surfaces are poorly maintained in places.



A proliferation of uncoordinated street furniture



Inconsistent design and materials used for street furniture

■ The Conservation Area is particularly afflicted by a proliferation of utilitarian railings which detract from the setting of historic buildings, including St Stephen's church; intrude into landscaped areas and visually subdivide public spaces.



- Most development within the conservation area is appropriate to the character of the area. Some modern development at the edge of the conservation area significantly erodes the character of the area because of its form, design, materials, boundary treatment and advertising.



Intrusive modern development affecting the setting of the conservation area

- The former Vicarage has an insensitively designed shop front and advertising attached to the building and the adjoining car park and sub-station are exposed to public view and detract from the setting of the Vicarage and the churchyard.

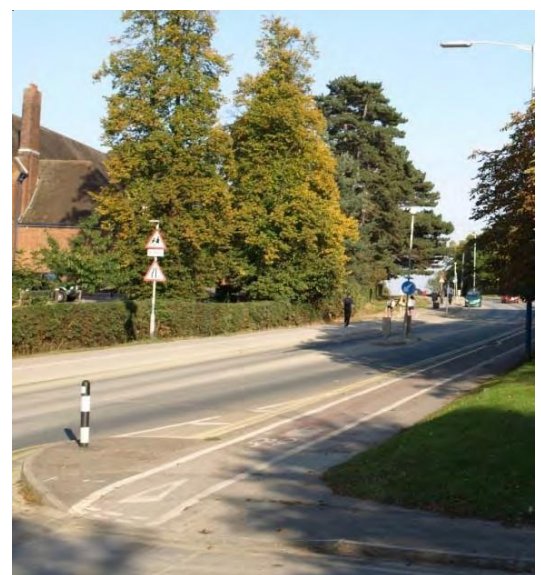
- The two stark, featureless roundabouts within, and adjoining, the Conservation Area do not add to the character of the public realm or the setting of the church.

- The traffic management measures along Brook Street, including kerb build outs, traffic signs and road markings are urban in character within an area with a predominantly landscaped character.

- The volume of traffic using Quarry Hill Road and Brook Street, particularly at peak times, affects the character of the Conservation Area by dominating the public spaces and through increased noise levels.



Featureless roundabout which adjoins the Conservation Area has a detrimental impact on its character



Brook Street traffic calming measures

- Very few traditional shop fronts remain within Quarry Hill Road but a number of insensitive shop fronts, which do not respect the traditional features or widths of upper storeys, have been introduced.



Quarry Hill Road shop fronts

- The removal of traditional boundary treatment to properties (normally to create parking spaces) or the lack of such boundaries to properties harms the unity with adjoining properties and exposes views of car parking.

- The inappropriate replacement of traditional materials and features such as windows and doors with unsympathetic modern materials and designs has occurred incrementally in some areas. Concrete tiles replacing slate or clay tiles, or replacement plastic windows or modern door designs are evident particularly on some traditional Victorian properties. Such changes can have a detrimental visual impact on the integrity of groups of buildings and harm the character and appearance of the area as a whole.

Management Proposals for the Conservation Area

English Heritage good practice advocates that local authorities should prepare a management plan to address the issues arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal and set out recommendations for action. Some of these actions will be applied generally to Conservation Areas in the Borough, whilst others, such as enhancement proposals, are specific to the Quarry Hill Conservation Area.

Management Proposals applicable to all Conservation Areas in the Borough

Application of Planning Policy

The Borough Council will consistently apply adopted and future planning policy to ensure high quality design which is appropriate to protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This will be applied to all development requiring planning or listed building consent including new development such as replacement or new buildings, small scale alterations and extensions to buildings, boundary treatment and, where applicable, surfacing front gardens. This approach will be followed for proposals both within the Conservation Area and those which affect its setting or impact on its character.

Implications for Quarry Hill Conservation Area

Within the setting of Quarry Hill Conservation Area the Borough Council will encourage the replacement of recent buildings with development where this preserves or enhances the character of the area. Such development may be of different architectural styles but should still be able to demonstrate a good relationship with its setting and the character of the area.

For example, redevelopment on the site of the petrol filling station and environs at the junction of Quarry Hill Road and Brook Street will be visible from, and strongly influence the character of, the Conservation Area and special attention should therefore be paid to the Design Guidelines set out in this document and public realm enhancements. The prominence of the site at the confluence of historic routes and at the heart of the conservation area makes this site appropriate for a landmark building.

Similarly, West Kent College on Brook Street abuts the Conservation Area and any development within this site should preserve or enhance the character of this part of the conservation area. In particular, the substantial institutional buildings are set well back from the road and fronted by a landscaped corridor and the sense of spaciousness in the public domain at this point in the street should be retained.

Shop Fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document

The Borough Council will bring forward a new supplementary planning document on shop fronts and advertisements which will have special consideration for Conservation Areas. It will amplify, illustrate and supplement Saved Local Plan Policy P4/13

Implications for Quarry Hill Conservation Area

The east side of Quarry Hill Road, north of Brook Street, contains a number of inappropriate shop fronts and fascias which, when proposals come forward, should be replaced with designs and materials which harmonise with the original character of the area and the design elements of the buildings to which they are to be fitted.

Currently, there is not a proliferation of advertising within the Conservation Area and the number of signs is limited. Strict control should be maintained over the amount and type of advertising in the Conservation Area to maintain this delicate balance. Owners of buildings, designers and development control officers would benefit from a more detailed and illustrated Supplementary Planning Document.

Repairs to Buildings in Conservation Area Good Practice Guide

It would particularly assist home owners if the Borough Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Good Practice Guides were complemented by an information leaflet on replacement doors, windows and roof materials considered to be suitable within Conservation Areas. This will have much wider application. It will recognise the need for replacement features and will also give practical guidance on design, acceptable materials and products and may assist with the selection of suppliers.

Implications for Quarry Hill Conservation Area

Original doors, windows and roof materials have been replaced in some of the Victorian properties within the Conservation Area. The Leaflet will be publicised within the Conservation Area and distributed to households and be available on the website.

Grants

As funds permit, the Borough Council will consider the costs and benefits of extending the application of its Grant Scheme to include shop fronts within the Conservation Area with a view to encouraging the replacement of inappropriate shop fronts with designs which better reflect the design elements of the building to which it is to be fitted and the character of the area.

Implications for Quarry Hill Conservation Area

Quarry Hill Conservation Area contains a number of shopfronts which could be more appropriately designed. For this reason, when funding is available the Council will consider whether to expand the grants available to cover such properties in the Quarry Hill Conservation Area.

Building Regulations

Government Guidance (PPG15) makes it clear that "in exercising their responsibilities for the safety of buildings under the building and fire legislation, local planning authorities should deal sympathetically with proposals for the repair or conversion of historic buildings". The Borough Council will continue to apply Building and Fire Regulations sensitively in Conservation Areas and to Listed Buildings to attempt to ensure that there is no conflict with the preservation of the character of the area or the building.

Management Proposals for Quarry Hill Conservation Area

Street Furniture

The Conservation Area contains a large number of uncoordinated items of street furniture such as bins, bollards, railings and signs. The amount of street furniture results in clutter which detracts from the character of the Conservation Area. As the area includes a number of main roads, traffic signs are prominent.

Manual for Streets (2007) and Local Transport Note 1/08 Traffic Management and Streetscape (2008), Department for Transport, now encourage local highway authorities to re-assess the need for signs, and, wherever possible, reduce their number and size. How many signs are needed to guide the driver around a roundabout? There are many examples within the Conservation Area where an audit of road signs may reduce street clutter.



A proliferation of signs at the Quarry Hill Road/ Brook Street roundabout



Example of coordinated street furniture

For those items of street furniture which continue to be necessary, wherever possible, they should be grouped together in a coordinated way.

Through enhancement measures or gradual replacement or repair, there is a real opportunity to upgrade and group together the existing items to a common suite of specified components such as benches, bins, railings and bollards. This would help to reinforce and unify the character of the sub areas.

The quality of pavements is also poor throughout the Conservation Area and a programme of sympathetic resurfacing by the highway authority would significantly enhance the appearance of the area.

There are a large number of prominent railings within Quarry Hill Conservation Area. An audit should be carried out with the highway authority to see how many remain necessary. Wherever possible, the aim should be to remove the railings. One example of a particularly prominent railing is along the centre of Quarry Hill Road. Removal of the railings would reduce the visual barrier which subdivides the public space at the centre of the conservation area and detracts from the setting of the church and the surrounding important visual spaces. Other locations requiring careful consideration include Waterloo Road close to the church and the cycle barriers on the Quarry Hill Road footpath.



Prominent railings



Example showing absence of railings

For those railings which are required, a programme of replacement by a more sympathetic design should be undertaken.



Example of coordinated street furniture



The Conservation Area contains a range of wooden, concrete and plastic bollards. A unified design of metal bollard along Quarry Hill Road would help reinforce the urban character and sense of place of this part of the conservation area.

Enhancement south of St Stephen's Churchyard

The junction of Waterloo Road and Quarry Hill Road forms an important visual space which is cluttered by a large number of uncoordinated items of street furniture (such as bollards and signs). These detract from the items of traditional street furniture, the setting of the churchyard and its ragstone wall and the character of this prominent part of the Conservation Area.



There should be an audit of this space to attempt to reduce and rationalise the amount and the location of street furniture with a view to providing a sitting area within an enhanced setting for the historic well, trough and post box. Red brick paving, as used for footpaths within the churchyard and elsewhere in Tonbridge, would complement the traditional street furniture.



Enhancement of the Brook Street and Pembury Road Roundabouts

In line with the Quarry Hill Road/ Brook Street roundabout, the Pembury Road signage should be re-assessed. This featureless expanse of public space forms the setting to both the Conservation Area as a whole, and the landmark building of St. Stephen's church in particular, and dismally announces the edge of the town centre. The space could be improved by enhancing the roundabout to give an interest to the space whilst not detracting from the setting of the church. A new feature on the roundabout could comprise a tall street planter (or other planting) or some form of public art, potentially connected to the history of the town. Such a feature would enhance the role of this space as a gateway to the town centre.



Featureless expanse of public space with potential for planting



Artist's impression taken from Tonbridge Town Centre Master Plan

More ambitiously, the Tonbridge Town Centre Master Plan promotes a much more substantial rearrangement of the public space at this junction. A realignment of the junction, removing the land-hungry roundabout, would create a more attractive gateway into the High Street. This would improve the pedestrian environment, create an enhanced setting for St Stephen's Church, and allow the public realm to function as a part of the town rather than just a traffic conduit. Unified materials should be specified, and tree planting could help define and contain the space.

Additional tree and hedge planting on the Judd School boundary

The boundary of Judd School grounds is generally well planted with mature trees and hedgerow which lend a landscaped backdrop to the Brook Street part of the Conservation Area. However, there is no planting in front of the play area which has a fence boundary and this would benefit from a hedge and tree screen. There is also an opportunity for additional tree planting to better screen the modern, grey buildings of the adjoining school. The planting would add to the rural character of the Brook Street sub-area and enhance the views of the countryside from it.

Design Guidelines

It is not anticipated that there will be significant change in the Conservation Area. However, when proposals come forward, the scale, massing, height, form, alignment, density and layout of any new development should respect the character of the area within which it is proposed as described in this Appraisal. Within Quarry Hill Road, buildings should have narrow frontages to give a clear vertical emphasis. Buildings between the Woodside Road junctions should generally be 3 to 4 storeys in height and set back from the road behind a landscaped frontage along a common building line. Elsewhere in Quarry Hill Road, 2 to 3 storey buildings would be appropriate. North of Brook Street on the eastern side of Quarry Hill Road, development should be tightly arranged to adjoining buildings and close to the road. Within Brook Street, buildings should be set back from the road behind a landscaped frontage.

- Good quality design relies, amongst other things, on the choice and combination of materials. This is crucial to the success of a scheme. A richness of design and texture can be achieved through careful detailing and use of materials, and through a fine balance between variety and uniformity in a building or development. The number of different materials used should generally be kept to a minimum. New buildings should consist of materials which respect the character of the sub-area within which they are proposed. The materials listed in the Physical Fabric section and described in the relevant sub area section are appropriate.

- Extensions and new outbuildings should be well designed and be subordinate to the original building. Where buildings are set back a consistent distance from the street along a common building line the visual integrity of a whole street should not be compromised by porches or front extensions. For corner buildings, careful attention to the design of prominent side elevations will be necessary.

- Within the Conservation Area, half timbered and gable-ended properties which face the road with steeply pitched roofs of plain clay tiles are a common feature and would be acceptable in many locations. Elsewhere, slate roofs are used. Concrete tiles should not be used.

- Replacement doors, windows and roofs should closely match the design and materials of the original features of the building. Where inappropriate new windows, doors and roofs are to be replaced, the opportunity should be taken to put back in the original style. White painted windows are a common unifying feature within the area.

- Traditionally designed shop fronts should be retained. New shop fronts and advertisements should respect the scale, period, design, material and detail of the individual building of which they form part, as well as harmonising with the wider streetscene.

- Careful consideration should be given to ensuring that good quality traditional detailing on buildings is retained eg brick detailing such as string courses, decorative tile patterns and ridge tiles, finials, brick bonding, chimneys and barge boards. Where removed, efforts should be made to restore them.

- Additions such as satellite dishes, flues, extractor fans and alarm boxes should preferably be located where they are not visible from public vantage points.
- Front boundaries should be retained or restored to the prevailing feature in the sub area: for example, approximately 1 metre high red brick wall with a coping and entrance gate pillars; brick wall topped by hedge; hedge and railings or mature 2 metre high hedge. Parking areas have been created on some frontages leading to an erosion of the historic character of the area and loss of defensible space around the building. Wherever possible, traditional boundary enclosure should be reinstated. Where the opportunity arises, new boundaries should use the prevailing materials and designs in the subarea.
- Provision of off-street parking should not erode the character of the conservation area.
- Trees, hedgerows and verges which are important to the character of the conservation area, should be retained.
- The area contains two landmark buildings which help give reference points within the area and to the town from the surrounding area. These features should be protected.
- Views and vistas of townscape features, such as landmarks, and the countryside beyond the built up area should be preserved.
- Important open spaces should be retained and their tranquil character respected.
- When a proposal incorporates new surfaces or street furniture within its boundaries, it should have reference to the Management Proposals for the Conservation Area.
- Buildings which would be visible from the Conservation Area, or form part of its setting, should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

Planning Policy Background

The Appraisal will help interpret:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 15,
- the emerging South East Plan,
- the Tonbridge and Malling Core Strategy (Policies CP1 – Sustainable Development; CP23 - Tonbridge Town Centre; CP24 – Achieving a High Quality Environment and CP25 – Mitigation of Development Impacts), and
- the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (Policy SQ1) – in course of preparation
- Saved Local Plan Policy P4/13 – Shopfront Design

Policies within the adopted Development Plan Documents seek to preserve and enhance the natural and built environment.

The Core Strategy expects all development to 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.

The Managing Development and the Environment DPD will require development to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the area, including its historical and architectural interest, and the prevailing level of tranquility and the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views.

Planning Consultants Tony Fullwood Associates and the Borough Council would like to thank representatives of the Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge Historical Society, Judd School, St Stephen's Church and individual residents who contributed to the Appraisal.

