

# IVY HATCH CONSERVATION AREA



## *Introduction*

The objective of the Ivy Hatch Conservation Area Appraisal is to analyse and record the special character of the Conservation Area. The Appraisal will provide further detail which will assist with the interpretation and use of planning policies. It will help guide the Council in making planning decisions and to this end has been adopted for development control purposes.

It is intended that the appraisal will inform the activities of the Council and other bodies (eg. Parish Council, 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, subject, of course, to financial limitations and other priorities.

In addition, 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 with regard to 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 is no scope for additional improvements to the character of the area.*

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## *Location and Physical Setting*

Ivy Hatch is a small settlement situated at the junction of five lanes, all leading to a short central street running north to south. It is situated approximately 2.5 kilometres to the south of Ightham and to the west of the A227, which runs from the A25 in the north to Tonbridge in the south. The settlement is situated on top of an escarpment and is surrounded by woodland. The Conservation Area comprises the centre of the hamlet, an area of approximately 6.5 acres. Plan 1, opposite, shows the extent of the Conservation Area.

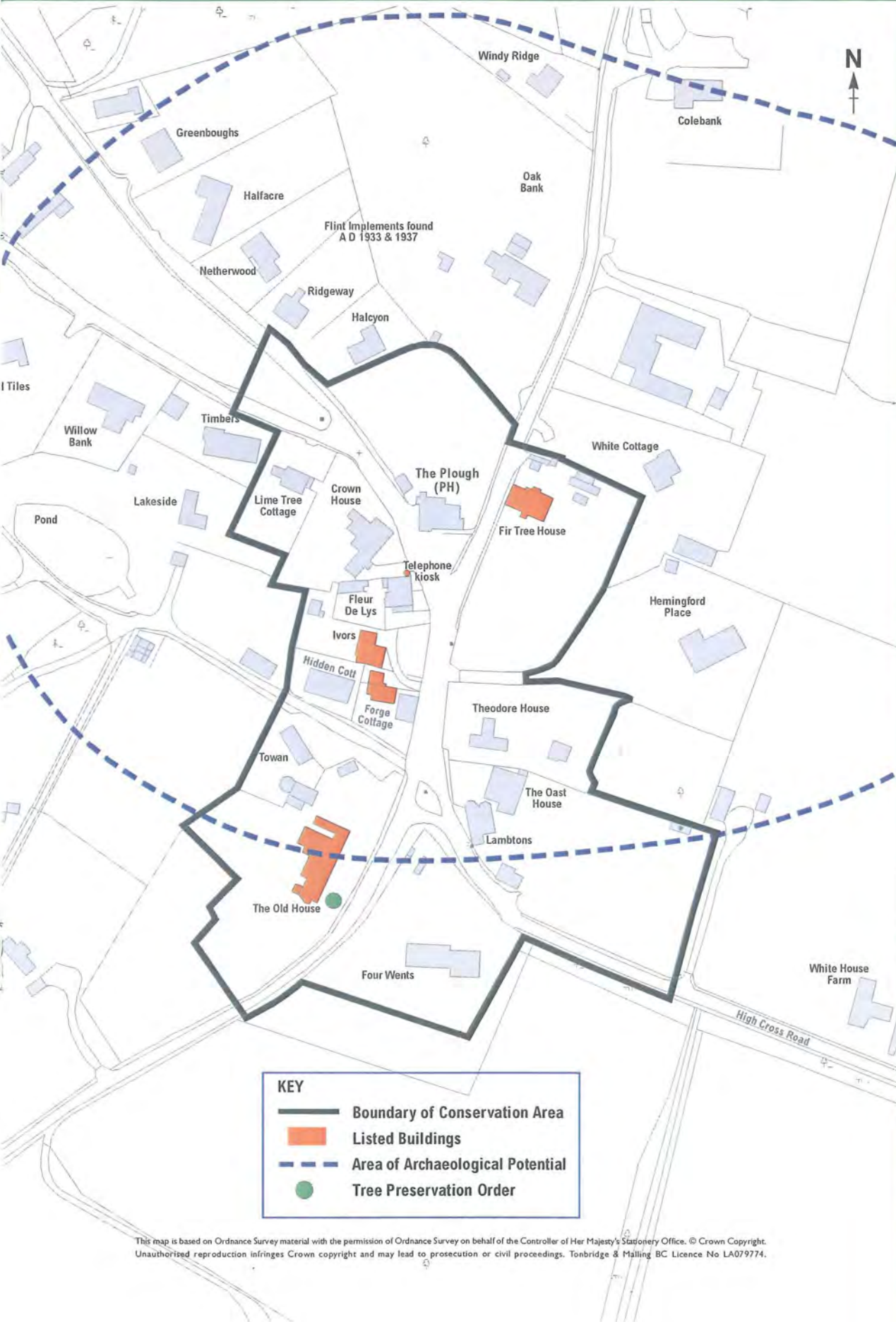
## *Origins and Development of the Settlement*

Ivy Hatch is likely to have developed as a settlement at a junction of a number of trackways and drove routes, connecting the dense Wealden Forest with the Pilgrims Way along the Downs. It is most likely to be of Anglo-Saxon origin. The first known record of the name of the settlement was in 1325, when it was spelt Heuy Hache from the Old English for heavy hatch or gate.





Evidence remains of the original use of some of the buildings in the village such as the post office and shop, and the smithy. These are indicative of the settlement's key location at this important junction and the services it once provided. However, the only use still open to the public is the public house/restaurant; all the remaining buildings having been converted to residential or ancillary uses.



# IVY HATCH



**KEY**

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Listed Buildings
-  Area of Archaeological Potential
-  Tree Preservation Order

This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Tonbridge & Malling BC Licence No LA079774.

CONSERVATION INFORMATION

## *Special Character*

### *Townscape / Landscape Analysis*

The plan opposite shows the key features of the Conservation Area and forms part of the townscape appraisal. It should, therefore, be looked at in conjunction with this text.

Ivy Hatch is not visible from the surrounding area, being enclosed by trees and woodland. The presence of large mature trees both within the Conservation Area, and forming a backdrop to it, is one of its distinguishing features. This is reinforced by the many dense and tall hedges forming boundaries to the properties. The Conservation Area is characterised by relatively large dwellings separated from one another by mature gardens. The trees and shrubs within these gardens make a key contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and add to the area's aesthetic appeal.

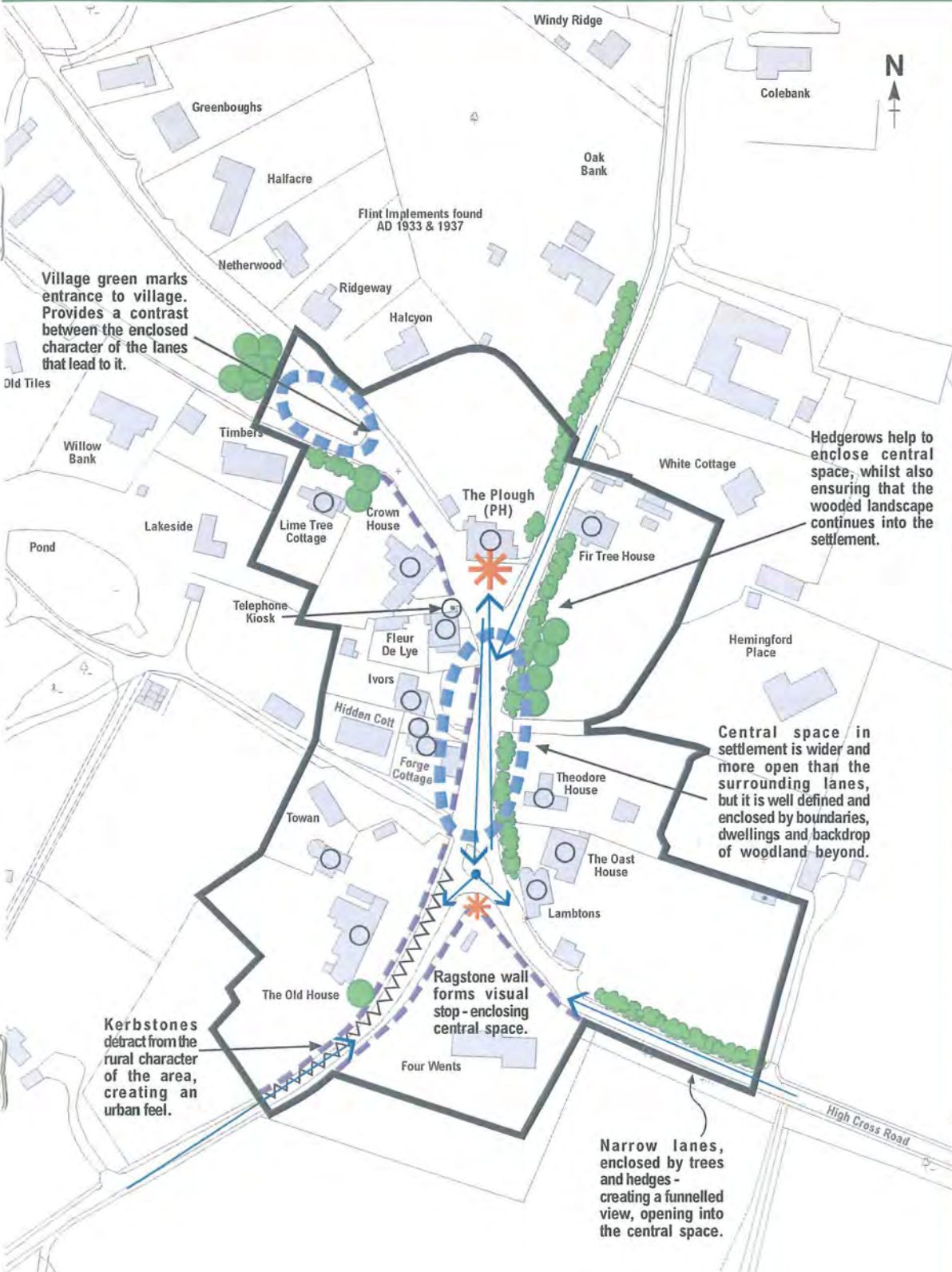
The Conservation Area is entered from wooded countryside and tree lined roads and there is a notable contrast between the enclosed environment of the lanes and the lighter more open feeling to the centre of the settlement. This creates a strong sense of arrival. The retention of hedges and trees along the roads leading into the centre is therefore very important. However, already the distinction between these contrasting environments is being eroded by the increasing number of residential dwellings along the lanes that have open, suburbanised front gardens.

The buildings in the Conservation Area are clustered around the informal space created by the merging of the roads. This space contrasts strongly with the narrow lanes in the surrounding area, being wider and more open. It is defined by the property boundaries, cultivated plants and hedging. At its northern end, the public house serves as a visual stop which contains the view along the street from the south. At the southern end, the road forks into two and the space is terminated visually by a high ragstone wall which extends along both roads forming the boundary to Four Wents. At the apex of this junction is a triangular grassed island which contributes to the open, more formal landscape of the village. Together, the wall and island are effective in closing the view to this end of the street.

The character of the Conservation Area derives from the low density nature of the development, which allows for extensive planting and soft landscaping, and unbroken lengths of boundary walls and hedges. The building pattern is, however, still one of clustered dwellings around the central space. Although having no formal building line or regular orientation, the historic buildings all have a close relationship to the road.

The Conservation Area corresponds with the central area of the village and once in it, there are only limited views out along the lanes and little sense of what might be down the road. Trees and tall hedges dominate the skyline within the village and the roofscape is predominantly seen through trees and hedges. The surrounding trees create a protected micro-climate, which contributes to the sense of enclosure.

# IVY HATCH TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



Village green marks entrance to village. Provides a contrast between the enclosed character of the lanes that lead to it.

Hedgerows help to enclose central space, whilst also ensuring that the wooded landscape continues into the settlement.

Central space in settlement is wider and more open than the surrounding lanes, but it is well defined and enclosed by boundaries, dwellings and backdrop of woodland beyond.

Kerbstones detract from the rural character of the area, creating an urban feel.

Ragstone wall forms visual stop - enclosing central space.

Narrow lanes, enclosed by trees and hedges - creating a funnelled view, opening into the central space.

- Focal point
- Views/vista
- Visual hinge
- Important visual space
- Visual intrusion
- Buildings/structures which make a positive contribution
- Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
- Important hedges
- Boundary treatment contributing to special character

This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Tonbridge & Malling BC Licence No LA079774.

### *Physical Fabric*

All buildings, apart from the public house, are now in residential use, and date predominantly from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, although several are based on earlier structures. Buildings are predominantly 2-storey.

Coherence emerges from the materials used rather than the architectural styles. The materials are predominantly ragstone and red brick with clay tiles used for wall hanging as well as roofs.

At the southern end of the village, the roads are bordered by high ragstone walls and hedges, partially concealing a number of attractive houses. There is strong boundary treatment throughout the village and one of its defining features is the grass verges which run from the walls or hedges down to the road. These soften the harder edges and reinforce the rural character of the area. The historic character of the Conservation Area is strong because there is little segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. There are few paved areas and limited use of kerbstones. The central space maintains its full width as a single surface which contributes to its special character, as well as the rural nature of the settlement.



### *Unifying features*

**Walls, hedges, trees and verges give continuity to the overall street scene.**

**The unifying features of Ivy Hatch which contribute to its specific character are:**

- **The use of ragstone, red brick and clay tiles**
- **The lengths of ragstone boundary walling adjacent to the road**
- **The abundant greenery generally throughout the area – including trees, hedges and grass verges.**
- **The absence of pavements and kerbstones**

## *Features affecting the character of the Conservation Area and opportunities for enhancement*

In understanding what is special about a Conservation Area and what serves to unify it, it is useful to note those features which are out of character with the Area. This not only emphasises the importance of the remaining special features of the area but allows some potential improvements to be identified. Some of these issues are for the Council to take on board, some are for other agencies and some for private individuals to consider.

- One of the key features of the settlement is the grass verges, which maintain its rural feel. This character has been undermined where kerbstones have been installed. Kerbing is an inappropriate road edging in the rural area and opportunities for its removal would benefit the rural character of the Conservation Area.
- Overhead wires detract from the attractiveness of the Conservation Area and openness of the central space. If the opportunity arises, these should be rationalised or ideally located underground.
- Clutter on the grassed island creates a messy appearance and prevents the area from serving as an attractive green. Any opportunities to rationalise the signage and posts in this area (and on the green to the north) should be taken in order to improve the appearance of the area.
- The erosion of the grass verges by vehicles is visually unattractive and leads to pressure for kerbstones to be installed. Any opportunity to reduce the impact of vehicles should be encouraged where this ensures the rural character of the area is maintained.

## *Key Guidelines for Preservation of the Character of the Conservation Area*

It is intended that this appraisal will be used as a tool where change is proposed in the Conservation Area. The following are therefore guidelines to ensure that the special character of Ivy Hatch is preserved.

- Existing hedges and trees should be retained where possible. Where removal is necessary a programme of replacement planting should be implemented.
- Any new boundary treatments should be hedging, ragstone wall or possibly a red brick wall. Grass verges outside these boundaries should be retained or reinstated where missing.
- The rural feel to the area is a major contributor to its special character. Installation of further kerbstones will undermine this character.
- Clutter on buildings and frontages should be minimised, e.g., satellite dishes, garden furniture, car parking. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to locate these so that they are not visible from the street.

## *Planning Policy*

The appraisal will help in the interpretation of Policies P4/4 and P4/5 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998. Policy P4/4 requires proposals for development to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of each Conservation Area. Policy P4/5 seeks to retain buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Ivy Hatch is regarded as an area of low density housing within the countryside where Green Belt policy applies. Development is therefore resisted unless it can be exceptionally justified. The Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998 (Policy P4/8) also identifies the settlement and the area to its north as being an Area of Special Character where any exceptionally justified development will only be permitted if it respects the residential character of the area and its woodland setting. The loss of undeveloped woodland will be resisted.



The Conservation Area is also set within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where planning policy gives priority to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.

## *Further Information*

If you would like more advice on the Conservation Area, historic building repair and restoration, please telephone 01732 876218.

For advice on new development, including works to Listed Buildings, alterations to properties, the need for planning permission and works to or affecting trees, please telephone 01732 876303.

If you would like to discuss alleged unauthorised development, please telephone 01732 876302.

Alternatively you can write to:

**Planning and Engineering Services  
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ**

Or email:

[planning.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@tmbc.gov.uk)