

WEST MALLING CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

The objective of the West Malling Conservation Area Appraisal is to analyse and record the special character of the Conservation Area, which was originally designated in 1971 with further extensions in 1990 and 1993. The appraisal also 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 has been adopted for development control purposes.

West Malling Conservation Area is one of two Conservation Areas within the Parish of West Malling. Separate appraisals will be carried out for each of them.

It is intended that this 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 by these bodies, subject, of course, to financial limitations and other priorities they may have.

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 are no opportunities to improve the character of the area.*

Location, Setting and Physical Form

West Malling is of a significant size and has grown into a small rural town. It is situated west of Maidstone immediately to the south of the A20. The town lies on the edge of the Greensand Ridge with views overlooking the North Downs just 4 kilometres to the north. The village of East Malling lies 1.5 kilometres to the east whilst the small village of Offham lies 1.5 kilometres to the west, but West Malling is clearly separated from these and any other settlements.

The outstanding characteristic of the Conservation Area is its diversity. It can be divided into areas of similar character as shown on plan 1 (page 5).

Maps 2a and 2b (pages 8-11) show the extent of the Conservation Area.



Sub-area A - The historic centre of the town has a distinctive character resulting from the dense arrangement of commercial and residential buildings of considerable age . The great width of the High Street contrasts with the intimate narrowness of King Street, Swan Street and part of West Street .

Sub-area B - The Abbey and Monastery and the many associated buildings are set in extensive private grounds and have a unique spacious and leafy character of their own.

Sub-area C - The area includes Churchfields, Offham Road, West Street, Norman Road and Ryarsh Lane and has a distinctive residential character, featuring medium density buildings and The Old County Ground.

Sub-area D - The assortment of workers' housing in Police Station Road and Frog Lane combine to form a characteristic set of closely arranged older properties of similar ages and styles.

Sub-area E - Douces Manor overlooks Manor Park and was originally part of its setting. It has its own special character due to the classically designed formal landscape, combined with open green spaces, rolling grassland, a lake and densely grouped trees which serve as an important setting to the town.



Sub-area F - The separate character of the open area of pleasant countryside to the north east of the town includes the original formal landscapes of Malling House and The Hermitage. It also provides an attractive setting to the town and is defined by its noticeable greenery and sense of open space.

Sub-area G - The interesting group of buildings in St Leonard's Street has its own distinguished character. It has a rural appearance and contains a range of dwellings from varying periods linearly arranged along the road. Landmark buildings particularly help to distinguish its character.



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.



Origins and Development of the Settlement

The name Malling is believed to originate from the name 'Mallengetis', reference to which can be found in the Domesday Book. One theory is that the name is linked to the term 'Meolling' which means 'the rising of water springs'.

Archaeological evidence indicates the earliest settlers in the area to be pre-Roman. A Roman settlement existed near St Leonards Street. The area was well served by pathways, tracks and droveways, and in Roman times an ancient highway along the route of the present A20 was established for military purposes.

The Saxons were believed to be the first to settle in numbers in the area due to the proximity of this Roman road which they named 'The Military Road' (Haere Straet). They undertook deforestation and cultivation and erected buildings

in this area. They operated under a feudal leadership and formed an ordered community. The Saxons, recognising

the value of the area, then created 'Wyde Straet', a road to the south of the town.

A monastic foundation may have been located in this area as early as 699 AD. However the first recorded mention

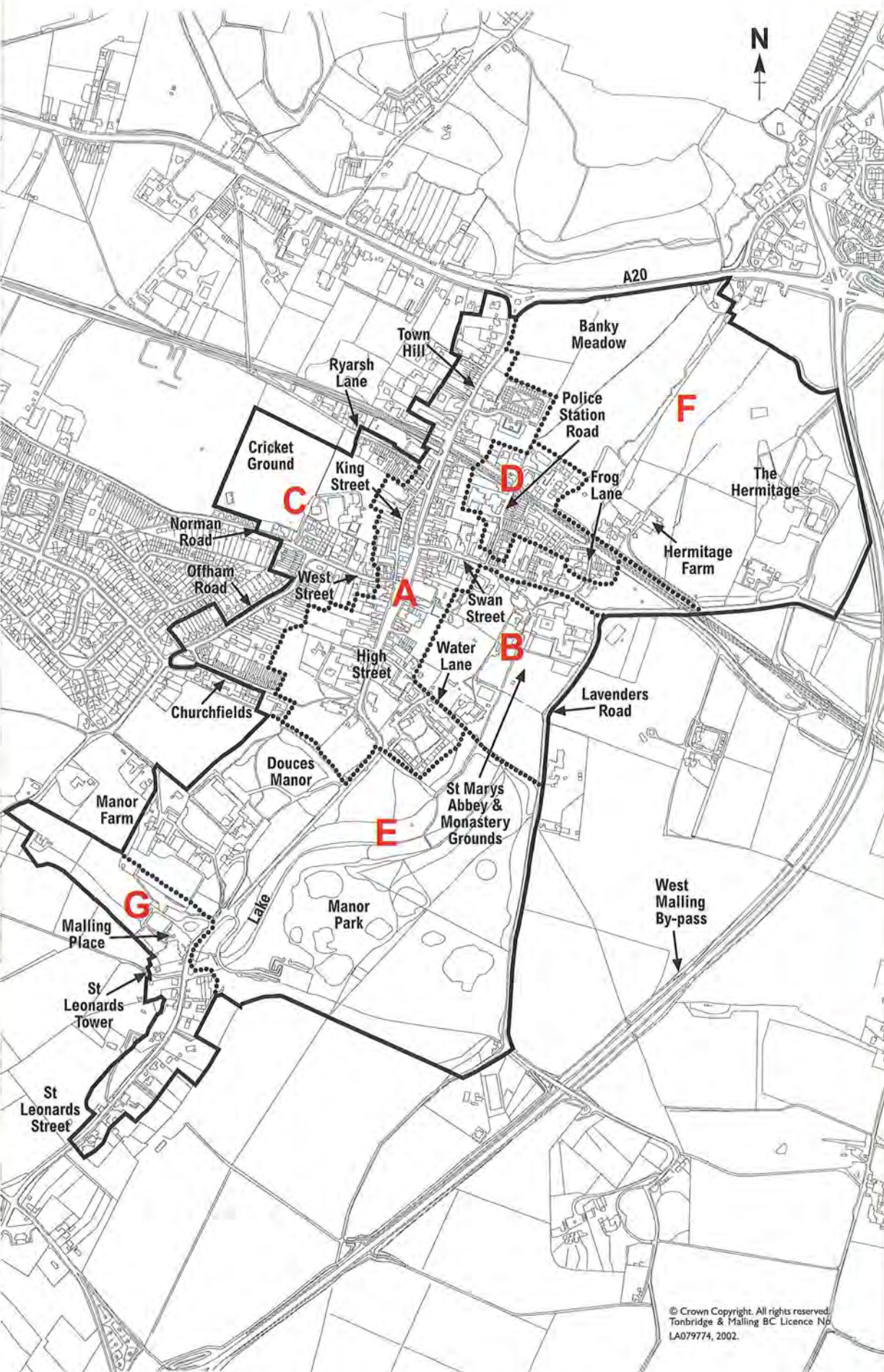
of West Malling dates back to 945 AD when King Edmund gave this land to the See of Rochester. In 1090 the then Bishop of Rochester, Gundulf, built St Mary's Abbey and St Leonard's Tower, believed to have formed part of

Gundulf's important fortified manor. The Abbey was used as a Monastery and a Benedictine Nunnery was founded at a later date. The influence of the Abbey meant West Malling became a focus for trade. In 1190 the original abbey and much of the village was destroyed by fire.



WEST MALLING

CHARACTER ANALYSIS-SUB AREAS



Key to sub - areas

A Historic and Commercial Core

(Including
High Street
Kings Street
Town Hill
Swan Street
West Street (east)
Water Lane (west))

B Abbey & Monastery Grounds

(Including
St Mary's Abbey
Water Lane
Lavenders Road (north))

C West of Town

(Including
Offham Road
West Street
Ryarsh Lane
Churchfields
Norman Road
Cricket Ground)

D Police Station Road and Frog Lane

E Douces Manor, Manor Park and Manor Farm

F North East

(including
The Hermitage
Banky Meadow
Hermitage Farm)

G St Leonards Street and Malling Place Grounds



The parish's fertile soils were one of the primary factors in the growth of the local economy. In the Middle Ages the town owed its importance to tanning, with tan yards located in the meadows near Frog Lane. Ragstone and sand was quarried locally throughout the parish from the eleventh century onwards. Much of the landscape immediately around St Leonards Tower shows signs of ragstone quarrying, probably used to build the Tower itself. In the 17th century lime was burnt in lime kilns near St Leonard's Street. These materials were used as local building materials in the town.



Cricket began to evolve as a popular village pastime in Kent in the late 17th Century. West Malling was the location for one of the earliest ever recorded county cricket matches in 1705 on the site of the current

cricket ground. The Cricket Meadow also known as The Old County Ground is home to Town Malling Cricket Club, and was reputedly the influential setting for the fictional cricket match between All Muggleton and Dingley Dell created by Charles Dickens in the novel 'The Pickwick Papers'.

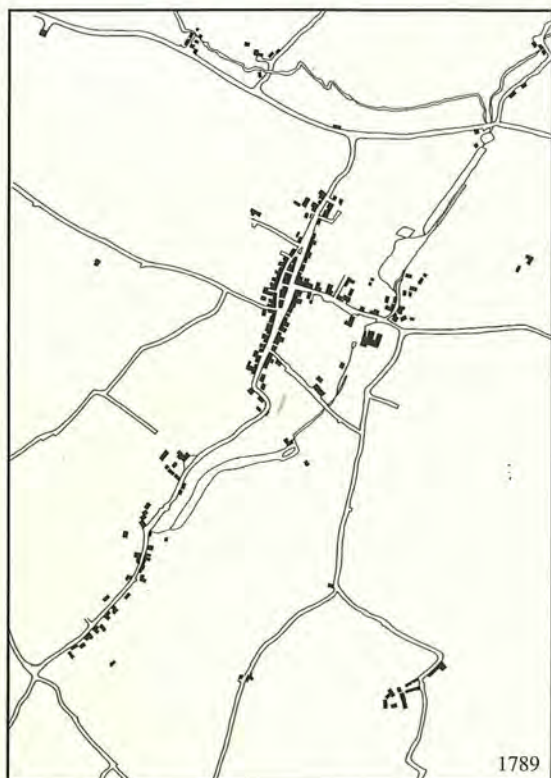
In the 18th century the town prospered. Many of the medieval properties were given new facades and significant numbers of new houses were built. Most of these buildings still exist today. A market house in the High Street was demolished in 1747. At one time a tongue of grass is believed to have stretched along the centre of the High Street and included a medieval market cross and the parish-pump, which was moved to its current location opposite Water Lane after the War.

The growth of the town continued apace in the 19th and 20th centuries. Brewing became one of the largest employers, with terraced properties built for workers in Frog Lane. In 1810 corn mills began to operate from Windmill Lane and in 1855 the North Kent Railway was constructed. West Malling Station opened in 1875 and as a result the town expanded, with terraced houses being provided for railway workers and employees. In 1853 streetlights were introduced to the town for the first time.

West Malling is widely known for its connection with the former airfield and its associations as an important air base during World War Two.



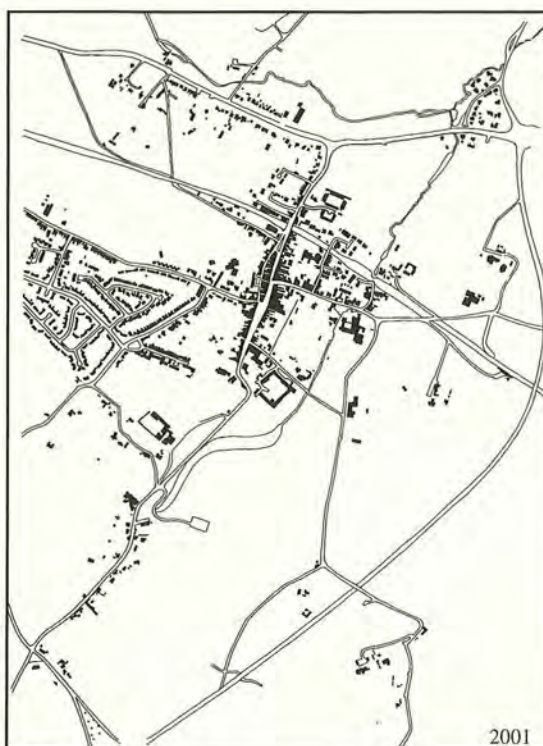
*Figureground sketches-
showing growth of town.*



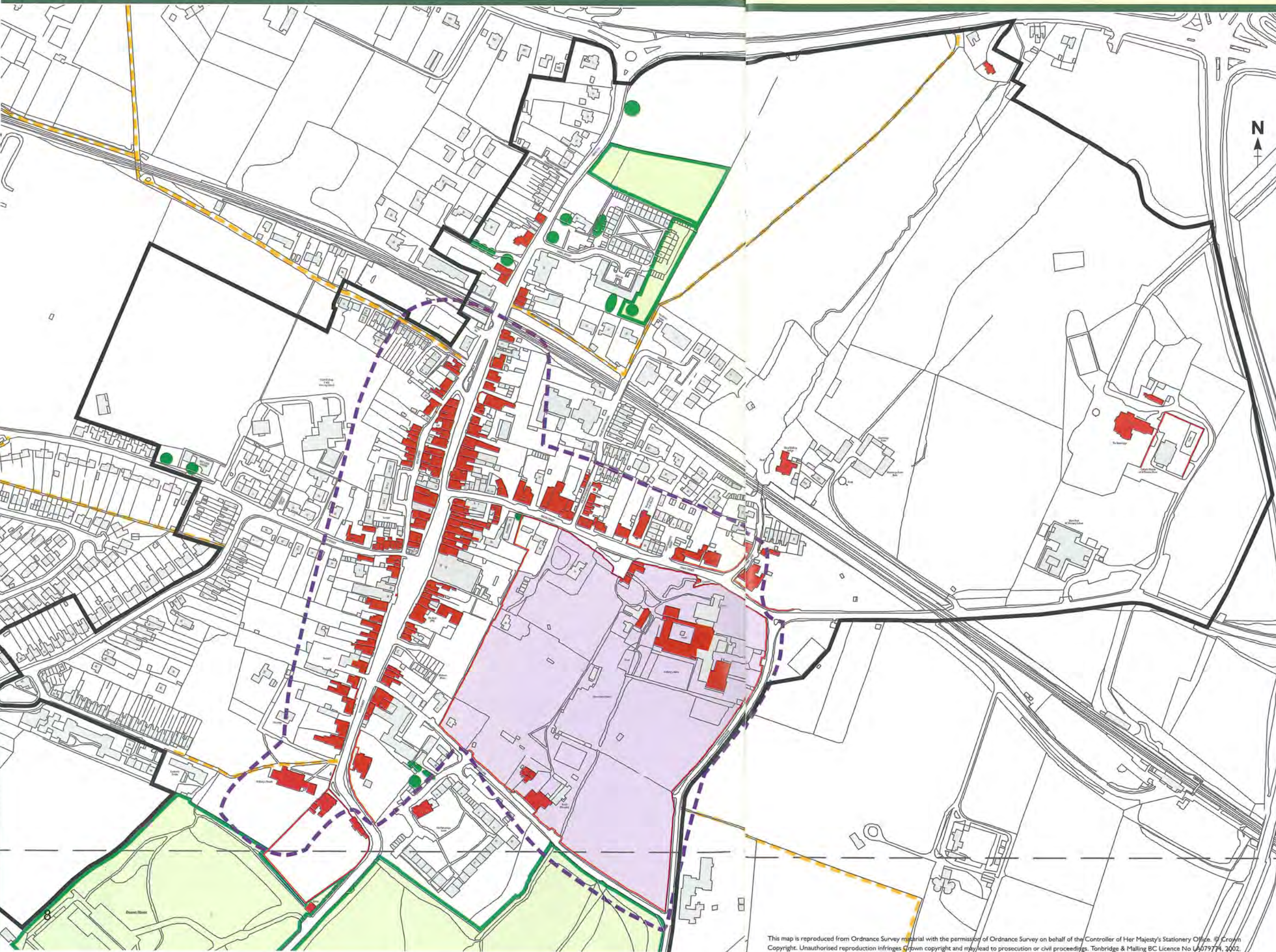
The plans show how the town has grown around the well preserved historic centre. The significant amount of open space around the edge of the town has been well protected. Modern growth has been largely concentrated to the west of the town. The West Malling bypass to the east of the town opened in 1988.

In 1901, 2312 people resided in the town. Little further development or growth occurred until the late 1940's, when a major new housing development, known as the Fatherwell Estate, was started on the west side of West Malling. Several other smaller residential schemes have since occurred within close proximity to the town centre. However, despite the growth in developed areas, the population figures have remained stable. In 2001, it was estimated that there were 2200 people living in West Malling in 970 dwellings.

West Malling today contains a vibrant mix of uses including shopping, leisure, employment, health and residential facilities, unusual for such a small town. The commercial centre has a busy and active atmosphere during the day and at night. West Malling is a very popular town with many visitors attracted by the well preserved historic environment.

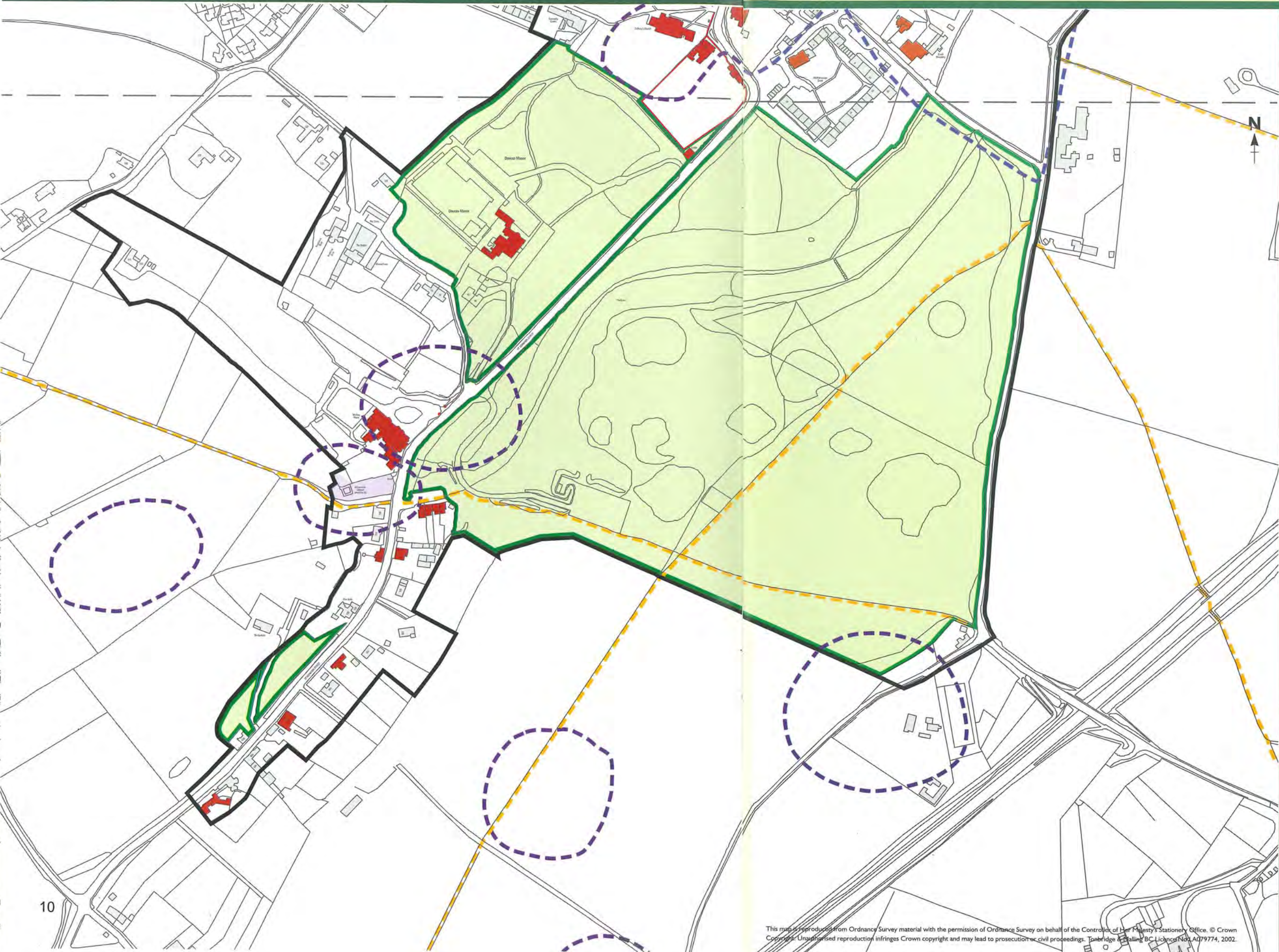


WEST MALLING



- KEY**
-  Boundary of Conservation Area
 -  Listed Buildings
 -  Public right of way
 -  Ancient Monuments
 -  Area of Archaeological Potential
 -  Tree Preservation Order

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Townscape/Landscape analysis

Plans 3a and 3b (pages 16-19) 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

West Malling has its own very marked individuality as a rural market town featuring a medieval layout of buildings at its centre with mainly Georgian facades. The High Street leading into Town Hill runs along an elevated ridge. All approaches to the town centre are therefore along interesting inclines. The gently undulating topography of the surrounding landscape contains several shallow tree-lined valleys.

The town is sited on the north side of the greensand ridge. Impressive panoramic views of the North Downs exist from many parts of the Conservation Area and are a key characteristic. They provide an attractive backdrop to the setting of West Malling.

The density of the town relaxes at its fringes, allowing green space to permeate through these spaces up to the road edges. This allows good views between buildings of the countryside beyond and towards the more built up form of the town centre. The combination of open green spaces and the close urban environment is important. However in Town Hill the development ends abruptly. The gradual increase in the density of development closer to the centre of West Malling is a distinctive quality of the Conservation Area and heightens the sense of arrival to the town. The combination of gardens and plots to the rear of many buildings close to the centre of the town, have generally remained undeveloped and combine together to form important green, open spaces. This is an important feature of the town.

Where gaps in the building line exist, in many instances, small outbuildings and extensions are set back in these spaces and are arranged to form small enclaves. These spaces are usually quite tightly confined and secluded. The narrow views into these spaces contrast with the formal arrangement of the frontages along the street. They add visual depth to the streetscene and are an integral part of the distinctive character of the town.

Away from the centre of the town, where the density of the built environment relaxes, the buildings are sited further back from the front edges of their plots and brick or ragstone walls enclose many of the spaces. The front and side garden spaces are softly planted and landscaped. Mature trees and garden spaces are important visually to the character as they soften the appearance of the streetscene.

The approach from the south along St Leonard's Street is particularly impressive. The road enters the town centre via a sharp double bend before revealing a dramatic view of the full length and breadth of the enclosed urban form of the High Street.

St. Mary's Church spire and the dome of Malling House stand out above the overall roofscape of the town centre when viewed from many of the open areas within the Conservation Area. Douce's Manor and St Leonard's Tower are key focal points in the landscape. The various open spaces close to the town are vitally important to West Malling's setting and character and provide good views into the town.

Sub-Area A - Historic Core including High Street, Swan Street, King Street, Town Hill and eastern part of West Street.

The historic centre of the town features a combination of businesses and residential homes. The buildings are tightly arranged in an enclosed urban form that creates some very interesting townscape spaces of intrinsically high quality. They hug the back of the pavement, thereby increasing the sense of place and enclosure. The variety of materials, colours, roof forms, and ridge and eaves heights means neighbouring structures contrast sharply with each other.



The majority of buildings are two storey, although High Street and Swan Street also feature some single and three storey buildings. Many of the buildings close to the centre date from medieval times, but have been altered and extended and now feature mainly Georgian frontages. There is a diverse range of styles of traditional shopfronts at ground floor level which add to the vitality of the commercial town centre. This wealth of visual variety enhances the special character of the area and, overall, the buildings give a vertical emphasis to the appearance of the street.



The staggered siting of some individual buildings creates interest. The cropped views along the narrow pedestrian alleyways leading between the buildings, particularly in Middle Row, are a special feature. These alleyways are known locally as Twittens. The few gaps that exist in the streetscene provide good views to the west of the countryside of the North Downs and, as previously mentioned, the views into the small enclosed courtyards are important to the character of the area.

Large brick and ragstone walls enclose many rear garden spaces which form important softened green spaces behind the enclosed streets. Wrought iron railings enclose many of the small spaces in front of many properties.

The floorscape of the centre of the town contains some important local materials. Original ragstone setts remain along some of the front edges of King Street. Attractive blue diamond pavements have been used on pavements in many parts of the town. Traditional stone slabs remain along some of the alleyways in Middle Row.

A common feature within the town is the elegant traditional streetlights, which are in scale and proportion with the historic environment. The modern lanterns fixed to the frontages of some buildings in the High Street effectively reduce obstruction of the pavements.

The width of the centre of the **High Street** is one of the most defining features of the special character of the town. The original market square lies at the widest point of the High Street and is still, on occasions, used for this purpose. The square has an interesting sense of enclosure and the open space is well proportioned with the scale of the facing buildings. Good quality clay roof materials, window styles and patterns, as well as chimneys and the regular siting of buildings create visual harmony within the streetscene. Views northwards are abruptly halted by the two buildings acting as visual hinges. The narrow gateways at the junctions leading into the central High Street create pinch points which draw attention to the interesting architectural detail of many of these buildings. These are important as they allow a leakage of views away from the High Street into adjoining streets.

Where the High Street narrows to the south, the larger properties with red brick and rendered frontages have a more cohesive appearance. Here, the wider properties and repetitive rhythm of the arrangement of windows give views along the street a more horizontal emphasis. Some properties here have very small front spaces enclosed by attractive iron railings, adding character and interest. Views of the smaller ancillary buildings behind are fundamental to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

The landscaped green space formed at the north end of the High Street, at the junction with Ryarsh Lane and King Street, is important in that it provides relief from the more enclosed streets leading into this space.

St Mary's Church is an attractive ragstone church set back in its churchyard, with a splendid modern gable form and early Norman western tower and needle spire. Although seen on the approach to the town from the south, the church is set back from the road. The Spire is the most visible element from many parts of the town. It is a distinct landmark that helps orientation with the High Street and adds to the very clear sense of place which West Malling enjoys. It is also widely seen from the surrounding countryside. The church grounds are a visually important open area adjoining the grounds of Douces Manor that extend into the countryside beyond. The large specimen trees contained in the grounds serve to enhance the setting and long distant vistas of the town. The church grounds, enclosed by ragstone walls, serve as an interesting pedestrian entrance into the High Street.



King Street is a narrow street enclosed by small terraced cottages with gable end roofs set at right angles to the street with only subtle differences between ridge heights. The properties mainly have a white stuccoed finish, some with exposed timber frames. The rear elevations of the buildings in Middle Row do not cause harm to the character of the street as good materials and rear boundary enclosures have been retained. King Street has two distinctive pinch points at its entrances. 38 King Street is particularly important visually and is currently being sensitively restored. The dome of Malling House is a focal point for views northwards and the view south back into the central High Street is also important. The motor vehicle repair garage brings a low key activity to this area but does not harm its character.

Malling House, Town Hill Cottage and Top Hill House dominate views along **Town Hill** due to their location on the crest of the hill. The prominent dome of Malling House is visible from many vantage points in the Conservation Area and beyond. Its vast size and overwhelming scale stand out from the buildings within close proximity. The North Downs and Leybourne Woods act as a backdrop to views to the north.

Town Hill contains detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. At its northern section the curving road inclines towards the town and has a one-sided feel to it. On the eastern side, close to Malling House, a combination of brick and ragstone walls of a vast height along the edge of the street adds to its enclosure. Beyond Malling House both sides of the road feature buildings which are sited close to the edge of the street.

Swan Street has a contrasting character since the town houses, chapels and former brewery buildings create an imposing development along the north side of the road, with the open leafy

Abbey Grounds on the south side. Close to the High Street junction the buildings are sited close together on the edges of both sides of the street. Set back within some gaps in the street are small ancillary buildings arranged in intimate courtyards. Mill Yard is an important enclave that features a 12th century ancient chamber block with undercroft. Other such courtyard spaces feature buildings arranged at skewed angles, and a steep stone external staircase leading directly off the street adds visual interest here.

Moving east, Swan Street becomes less dense and widens before suddenly narrowing to form a pinch point of large ragstone walls. Went House acts as an important focal point here. The trees behind in Lavenders Road enclose views eastwards along Swan Street and act as a pleasant backdrop. The view back towards the High Street is enclosed by trees along the edge of the Abbey grounds and the closely grouped buildings at the top of the street.

The decorative water cascade in the Abbey's ragstone boundary wall, where the stream emerges from the Abbey grounds, acts as an entrance feature to the town from the east. The sound of flowing water is important. The Gatehouse entrance to the Abbey is another key element to the street. Views between the trees of the upper reaches of the large abbey structures bestow a considerable influence on the street's appealing character. The central tower of the former brewery site is also a prominent feature.

The extreme eastern section of **West Street** inclines up towards the High Street where the clustered shops create a very narrow entrance. The corner properties, known as 'The Colonnade', at the junction with the High Street and King Street, have an arcaded elevation fronting West Street with a number of small shops and the police office. The pinch point here forms an extremely narrow entrance to the High Street, and adds to the sense of separation between the commercial and retail centre and the residential properties beyond, which in turn heightens the sense of intrigue when turning the corner from the High Street. The older buildings, closest to the junction with the High Street, feature interesting roof forms.

Key Features

- Largely a medieval layout of medieval buildings with Georgian facades
- The width of the centre of the High Street and narrowness of side streets
- Buildings sited close to the front edge of the footway fronting onto the roads
- Diverse form and contrasting appearances between adjacent individual properties
- Spaces between properties show views of rear outbuildings and extensions arranged in small enclaves
- Pinch points formed by intimate arrangements of buildings at junctions with the High Street
- Characteristic open curtilage spaces to the rear of properties resulting from the retention of original plot divisions of significant size now featuring many attractive trees and shrubs
- Peg and plain clay tiled roofs with some use of slate
- Mainly white painted timber sash windows with some cream and black coloured finishes
- Patterned wrought iron railings enclosing many small front areas
- Ragstone and red brick walls defining many rear curtilages
- Traditional styles of streetlighting and street furniture
- Blue diamond pavements on footway
- Mainly good quality traditional styles of shopfronts in attractive commercial centre.

WEST MALLING TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



Plan 3a

WEST MALLING TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



- Natural, physical or visual barrier (i.e. edge)
- Focal point
- Views/vista
- Visual hinge
- Lack of enclosure
- Important visual space
- Visually linked 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

Sub-Area B - St Mary's Abbey, Monastery and associated grounds including Water Lane and Lavenders Road.

Although segregated from the town, the formal **grounds of St. Mary's Abbey and Monastery** remain as the historical centrepiece and contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area. The area has an open leafy character, but the extensive formal Abbey and Monastery grounds are very private and hidden from view. A degree of unity results from the use of ragstone as a building material. The enclosed lanes are rural in character.

The grounds are extensive and are totally enclosed by the large ragstone walls that line its perimeter. Only mature trees and some of the large Abbey buildings are seen above the ragstone walls. These walls add to the sense of enclosure of some of the surrounding rural lanes. The high concentration of mature trees contained in the large gardens provide valuable greenery close to the heart of the town centre, with many attractively overhanging the adjacent lanes. The open character of the grounds results from the very low density of buildings. The overall lack of ecclesiastical buildings on the street frontages, along the perimeter of the extensive Abbey grounds, results in a relaxation in the density of the area which influences the character of adjoining streets and the Conservation Area as a whole.



The huge fabric of the remaining parts of the old tower overlook Swan Street. Tiers of arches and pillars retain their splendid integrity. Other key features set within the grounds include the gatehouse, monastery, the fourteenth century cloister-garth, the huge shell of the tower of the old church as well as a Georgian mansion. A 13th century cloister remains as does the chapter house, library and guesthouse that was formerly the ancient hospice, all sited to west of the cloister-garth. On

the far side of grounds adjoining Water Lane is a magnificent Old Tithe Barn. Modern additions include the new church, built in the mid 1960's, which is currently the only postwar listed building in the borough and is grade 2* listed. The provision of living quarters and the creation of a wing which links the eighteenth century house to the tower are other recent additions. The buildings have similar characteristics, being constructed largely of ragstone with clay tiled roofs. The structures cover a wide range of monastic designs and sizes dating from various periods.

The key characteristic of Water Lane and Lavenders Road is the enclosure caused by the pleasing mix of high continuous ragstone walls, the abundance of overhanging mature trees giving the lanes an interesting tunnelled feel. The widths of the lanes are irregular and very narrow in parts. Lavenders Road also features informal grass verges, embankments and high hedgerows that give the lane a sunken form. However the rural character of these lanes has been adversely affected by the provision of pavements and kerbstones.

In Water Lane the buildings are sited well back in their plots behind high ragstone walls. The greenery of the spaces around the buildings is important. Modern infill development has occurred along the south side of the road and is set back from the highway, but is sufficiently well screened by trees to detract only slightly from the general character of the area.

Key Features

- Very low density of buildings
- Building materials predominantly ragstone and clay tiles
- Large ragstone and red brick walls along perimeter
- Abundance of mature trees overhanging enclosed, quiet rural lanes



Sub-Area C – Western residential areas; including Churchfields, Offham Road, Ryarsh Lane, West Street, Norman Road and The Old County Ground.

The western part of the Conservation Area has a residential character. The medium density properties have been built in small linear rows, and unity comes from the siting of the dwellings rather than their appearance. Other unifying characteristics include the enclosure provided by the dwellings and the greenery of the front garden spaces that include small trees, shrubs and hedges. Ragstone walls, simple iron railings and small fences enclose many front gardens. Good views of the Downs as well as the key landmark features and the roofscape of the town centre are important. The dome of Malling House and the church spire at opposite ends of the High Street particularly stand out. There is a general lack of mature trees in this streetscape.

Many of the properties in this area date from the 19th century but there are a considerable number of modern dwellings. The properties vary in style, form and design and are constructed from a diverse range of traditional materials. The properties are spaced further apart than many in the historic centre of the town and are of a larger scale with wider plots and frontages. They are set back from the streets and mainly front the road. Ryarsh Lane and Churchfields have a one sided nature to them, but high boundary treatments opposite mean they retain their enclosure.

Many houses have been altered and changed substantially in recent times with some traditional materials being removed. Insensitive parking areas and open front boundaries have caused some harm to the sense of enclosure of some parts of this area.

Ryarsh Lane is sunken below the levels of the surrounding land and the tall hedges and ragstone walls add to its enclosure. The rural lane has no formal kerbstones or hard edging and is shared by pedestrians and vehicles. The cottages and their small front gardens are elevated above the road. The two storey buildings are arranged to front the road with gable ends and ridge lines running at right angles to the lane at a regular height. Weatherboarding for the terraces and a rendered finish for the semi-detached properties are important traditional materials in this street.

In the residential part of **West Street** there are mainly two storey dwellings of varying ages and appearances. There are several modern single storey homes to the north side of the road where it joins **Norman Road**. There is an attractive lack of formal kerbstones to the front boundaries along the south side of the road and informal hedges and small grass verges are more evident.

There are also extensive vistas in all directions from the open space used as **The Old County Ground** in Norman Road. However this important open space would continue to benefit from some environmental improvements.

The housing types in **Offham Road** are mixed and the materials varied. Red brick terraced properties and semi-detached homes are sited particularly close together. Few original roofing materials still remain. Most dwellings face directly onto the highway. However, where the road bends, the groups of semi-detached properties on the eastern side are slightly offset at an angle to the road in a staggered arrangement which results in details to their north side elevations being more visible. The distinctive semi-detached ragstone properties on the west side of the road feature strong gable forms which front directly onto the highway. These properties have deep decorative barge boards and decorative canopies over front entrance doors which provide interest and unity to the character of the street. The majority of the other properties feature full gables perpendicular to the highway. A row of modern bungalows on the west side are excluded from the Conservation Area, but have a significant effect on the character of the street. Situated on the grass verge at the junction with Churchfields stands the former Fountain Public House now used as a restaurant. This serves as an interesting element at the entrance to the Conservation Area from along Offham Road.



The terraced houses in **Churchfields** and tall hedgerow opposite give the street a one-sided appearance. The overall form and rhythm of the terracing concentrates the eye towards the end of the street and brings a horizontal visual emphasis to its character. The form of the street encourages views towards the elegant St Mary's Church spire. The hedge helps screen views of the larger modern buildings opposite.

Key Features

- Varied overall residential character consisting of terraced and semi-detached properties closely fronting onto highway.
- Groups of properties with some repetition of form and styles which adds to the local distinctiveness.
- Small front garden spaces neatly enclosed by red brick, ragstone, iron railings or hedges with many containing attractive plants and shrubs.
- Combination of mainly private rear gardens form important open spaces behind properties, many of which are walled and contain significant amounts of greenery.
- Diverse range of traditional building materials.
- Good views of the North Downs and landmark buildings in town centre.

Sub-Area D - Police Station Road and Frog Lane

The key characteristic of this small part of the Conservation Area is its residential character. It has many simple, small scale domestic 19th century properties arranged to form an enclosed narrow streetscene. In other places these streets become less compact and more varied. Some pleasant backdrops are provided by the many trees surrounding the area and in gaps between the buildings. The tree-lined railway cutting and embankment add to the character.

Most of the buildings in Frog Lane and Police Station Road date back to the late 19th century and consist mainly of red brick with clay tiled roofs. However there is some evidence of the use of yellow stock brick with red soldier courses on some buildings, whilst a few include weatherboarding and painted stucco.

Several rows of attractive terraced cottages feature in these streets. Some front directly onto the street with small enclosed front gardens. However, in places the terraces are sited at right angles to the street. This results in their rear gardens being open to views from the street. The lack of enclosure and privacy to these rear gardens is a feature that results in the rear and side elevations of the terraced cottages being as visually important as the frontages. Two storey detached dwellings also exist. In more recent times a significant number of modern properties have been built in

the spaces behind the older buildings between Frog Lane and Police Station Road, which do not harm the character of the Conservation Area.

In **Police Station Road** the Police Station buildings and former police houses are important features within the streetscene. The older Victorian elements of the buildings are good examples of police architecture for the period. Although considerably altered with a new front wing in the 1950's, the traditional building remains with little alterations and makes a positive contribution to the area. These buildings are set back from the road with enclosed front spaces set behind low brick walls with railings. Here the character of the street changes from its compact nature to a more open appearance.



The view down Police Station Road from Swan Street is foreshortened by a painted rendered building that creates a pinch point. The tight enclosure and injection of colour is visually appealing and encourages exploration. The hump of the railway bridge with trees and modern housing behind, encloses views northwards. The view southwards, from the crest of the bridge, gives an intriguing view of the roofscape of properties along the street, with the large mature trees in the Abbey Grounds beyond acting as a backdrop to enclose views.

Frog Lane has a diverse variety of properties in an irregular layout. The street is almost completely enclosed by direct views of the large Abbey buildings, the surrounding trees and the railway embankment. The large scale Abbey structures contrast with the small scale of buildings in Frog Lane. The gentle sound of flowing water from the small roadside stream contributes to the quiet tranquil setting of Frog Lane.

Police Station Road suffers visually from significant levels of on-street parking. Also some unsympathetic household extensions have been added. Disappointingly, the front gardens of several homes in Frog Lane feature parking forecourts using inappropriate materials and the front gardens lack any sense of enclosure.

Key Features

- Red brick and clay tiles
- Enclosure provided by small scale built form and nearby trees which act as a backdrop
- Terraces arranged at right angles to the road.
- Overall diverse mix of domestic styles and periods of buildings.



Sub-Area E- Douces Manor, Manor Park and Manor Farm.

The interesting mix of formally designed landscapes, containing natural features of open grassland, mature trees and water, defines the character of this sub area. The diverse undulating landscape contains wide open spaces as well as small areas enclosed by trees. The vast green spaces extend up to the edges of the town and provide an important setting to the town. There are impressive vistas available. This area contains only a very small group of buildings that are in business, residential and recreational uses.



The full vista of the large front elevation of **Douces Manor** is still seen in all its intended glory, being set behind its large sloping front lawn, featuring important specimen trees. It is a key focal point for the Conservation Area. Views between the Manor and its original formal parkland across the lake at the base of the valley are important. A ha-ha along the edge of the road ensures uninterrupted views from the house are maintained. Views from the road

and the lakeside upwards to Douces Manor are also valuable.

Although no longer in the private ownership of Douces Manor, **Manor Park** remains as gently rolling parkland with groups of specimen trees. It is now a public Country Park from which panoramic views of the town and the North Downs beyond can be enjoyed. These views and the parkland are key ingredients to the character of the Conservation Area.

Manor Farm, adjacent to Douces Manor, consists of a small complex of farm buildings, which were originally associated with the Manor. The buildings are closely arranged and are of varying styles, but are generally quite simple rural buildings with steep roof pitches. The buildings consist of ragstone or red or yellow stock bricks, with slate and clay roof tiles. The rural character here remains strong. The traditional form of the Oast House is a focal point for views from Offham Road. Many large trees and cultivated gardens link the views of the spaces between the buildings. The narrow lanes near to the farm are of a rural character with simple informal grass verges that are well contained by tall hedges.

Key Features

- Open area providing a green swathe from outlying countryside towards centre of town
- Formal designed landscape with many mature specimen trees planted in groups and individually
- Good views between the Manor and its grounds including the lake
- Low density of development with the few occurring buildings grouped together
- Diverse range of materials but slate roofs prominent
- Narrow enclosed rural lanes with informal grass verges near to Manor Farm.

Sub-Area F - North East section including The Hermitage & Banky Meadow.



This north east part of the Conservation Area is important to the setting of the town. It contains large open areas that are formally designed, some of which have a more natural rural appearance. There are many large specimen trees. The few buildings here have agricultural, educational and residential uses and are of a varied design.

Originally, most of this area was part of the formal parkland of The Hermitage and Malling House.

The landscape still retains its generally open character. The Hermitage itself nestles amongst a group of trees. The school, now located to the south of the house, somewhat disrupts the open setting of the landscape. Two historically important buildings fronting London Road are enclosed by trees, and contribute to the approach towards the Conservation Area from the north along the footpath linking the A20 and Police Station Road.

The road to the south leading into Swan Street features overhanging trees, ragstone walls and hedgerows and is visually divided by the railway embankment and bridge above. The North Downs and Leybourne Woods act as backdrops to views of the town. Panoramic views exist from the footpath linking Police Station Road with the A20. From the A20, Banky Meadow and the copse of trees, at its top, hide much of the town from view. The noise emanating from traffic on the A20 and the West Malling bypass is a significant distraction to this area, but the bypass is quite successfully screened from the town by landscaping.



Key Features

- Mix of natural and formal open landscape containing mature specimen trees
- Low density of building
- Diverse mix of materials and styles of buildings
- Impressive views of North Downs and surrounding countryside
- Ragstone walls and overhanging trees along rural lane.

Sub-Area G - St Leonard's Street and Malling Place's grounds.

This rural residential hamlet has always historically been a separate settlement from West Malling and is quite varied in character. The buildings are arranged linearly mainly on the east side of the road and are generally two storeys. There is little unity in the form, design or appearance of the buildings, which is an important part of its character. Large front gardens are a regular feature, containing a great deal of greenery. At the southern entrance the properties are arranged around rear courtyards and linked by ragstone walls.

The hamlet is set along a slight valley. The dense group of tall trees, set on the large embankment on the west side high above the road, is distinctive. This route through St Leonard's Street is enclosed by trees and the valley, and is an integral part of its character. Mature yew trees adjoin some properties and contribute strongly to the general quality and character of the streetscape. Along the west side of the road, informal verges and tree lined embankments still remain. The verges are set in front of ragstone walls, which contribute to the rural character of the area.

The substantial houses and their associated outbuildings form small rear courtyards. These buildings have blank elevations onto the road containing few window or door openings. Instead the buildings face inwards, towards their individual enclaves. This is a key feature of the character of this area. However glimpses into the interesting enclaves are important. The tall ragstone walls along the front edges of the street provide a visual link between the groups of buildings.

Closer to Malling Place, the detached properties are sited at varying distances from the road. Just to the south of the tower, a small group of dwellings are arranged to form an interesting pinch point which helps to define a centre for the hamlet. A key factor is the well maintained large gardens which are neatly cultivated and soften views in the streetscene. Small ragstone walls neatly enclose many of the front boundaries and are a unifying feature.

St Leonard's Tower is a remarkably preserved 11th century Norman edifice, perched alone on a sloping shelf of rock, near to Malling Place, overlooking St Leonard's Street. It is an impressive and unique freestanding Ancient Monument set behind a sloping grass verge and which sits comfortably with the surrounding landscape. Approaching from the north the tower rises impressively over Malling House. However, upon travelling from the south, the tower is hidden and only looms into view near to Malling Place. The adjoining fortified ragstone walls, which once formed part of St Leonard's Chapel, are very prominent from the road and add to the special character of the area.

Malling Place is strategically sited right on the bend in the road. It has a complex, early 20th century, north front designed in a 17th-18th century style and set around a 16th century core. The house is set in a small tree lined valley that runs north westwards and its formal grounds feature many large specimen trees.



Key Features

- Linear development pattern of medium density with most buildings fronting highway
- Buildings deliberately facing away from road with some facing into courtyard spaces
- Diverse range of buildings of various styles, materials and ages
- Important trees and green spaces surrounding the dwellings
- Prominent ragstone walls along edge of highway
- Informal verges with hedges along parts of road.

Physical Fabric

One of the particular defining characteristics of West Malling Conservation Area is the retention of traditional features, although the use of traditional materials in the town is wide ranging. Red stock bricks are the predominant building material. Despite the array of materials featured in the frontages of many buildings, the rear elevations largely consist of red stock bricks. Due to the varying ages of many buildings, the colour and tones of the red brick can vary significantly. The use of burnt-blue headers mixed with red stock bricks using a Flemish bond is also noticeable in places. Elsewhere sumptuous brick detailing can be found.



Ragstone, stucco or a painted render are used on many of the visually more important buildings. Some properties feature white painted or light stained timber weatherboarding, and rebated timber, to simulate stone, is used on some elevations.

Some others include yellow stock bricks with red brick soldier courses. The use of clay hanging tiles is evident in places. A few properties now feature pebble-dashed frontages but this is not a traditional material in West Malling.



Several properties feature a mix of materials. For instance they may have hanging tiles or weatherboarding at first floor level with exposed brick or render at ground floor level. Ragstone plinths are sometimes used to contrast with red brick frontages. In other situations buildings may have rendered or weatherboarded



side elevations and brick frontages or vice versa. Roofing tiles are mainly clay, although slate is used in places. Decorative ridge tiles feature on many properties. Some properties have seen modern concrete tiles used to replace the original materials.

Windows are timber sashes painted white with either black or white box surrounds. However, some windows are painted cream or black and a few are lightly stained. The windows have strong vertical proportions. Generally the windows reduce in size the higher up the building they are sited. In some cases properties have had fixed timber shutters added on either side of the front sash windows. On some of the small cottages, small square, leaded casement windows are a feature, mostly with dark stained or black painted frames. Pitched, flat and arched roof dormer windows are also featured. Ground floor bay windows are common and first floor bay window projections can be seen in some parts of the Conservation Area. Some windows include decorative white, rendered arches and white or black painted sills. Traditional front doors with square proportions are a dominant feature. On many of the grander properties elegantly designed glass panels feature above the entrances with decorative casements and canopies over.

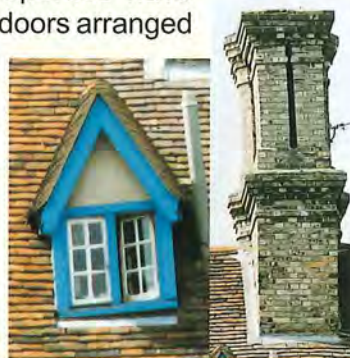




The smaller terraced properties generally contain a window at both ground floor and first floor level that are arranged directly above each other with the door provided to the side. The larger properties have frontages with windows and doors arranged symmetrically. In some instances on larger properties, paired windows share joint arches, lintels and sills.

Traditional iron rainwater goods still survive on many

buildings. Largely they are painted black but some have been painted white. Decorative dentils to support soffits, as well as the interesting use of detailed brickwork beneath the eaves, are also featured. The excellent range of chimney styles is particularly important to the many views of the town and its roofscape.



Decorative iron railings are very prominent. A variety of interesting designs are featured which create rhythm and identity for the town. Some wrought iron gates also exist. Tall ragstone and red brick walls along the edge of the street enclose many spaces, and are a regular feature in the Conservation Area. White painted and stained picket fences are evident and diamond-spile fencing can be found. In some places a mix of materials has been used to front boundaries including small ragstone walls, sometimes with fixed iron railings or perhaps a formal trimmed hedge behind. Informal verges are a feature along some lanes however most lanes have hard kerbs and pavements.



The main shopping High Street features a rich variety of traditional styles of shopfronts, some with attractive hanging and fascia signs.



Several examples of original floorscape materials remain. Blue diamond paviours feature extensively in parts of the town. Some examples of important local ragstone setts still exist, as do stone slabs along some of the small alleyways. Loose gravel driveways can be seen. Some properties have retained the single stone steps to their frontages. Alterations to some street and pavement surfaces have occurred, in an attempt to be more sensitive towards the historic environment using red tarmacadam, stone kerbs and block paving.

Little original street furniture remains but the black painted and silver finished lampposts are an attractive feature. Lanterns are fixed to the frontages of properties in a traditional manner. Some attractive iron bollards remain and the water pump in the High Street is a unique item.

Features affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area



In understanding what is special about a 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 inappropriate replacement of traditional materials with unsympathetic modern materials and styles has incrementally occurred on some buildings. Concrete tiles, pebble dashed frontages, and badly sited domestic paraphernalia are evident in West Malling. Such changes can have a significant visual impact, and can harm the overall character and appearance of the area.
- Where traditional front boundary treatments contribute to the sense of enclosure in the street, their removal to provide vehicle accesses is harmful to the character and ambience of the street.
- Many of the more modern dwellings stand out from the traditional form of development in the Conservation Area due to their size and bulk.
- Unsightly non-indigenous tree species have been planted in several domestic gardens.
- The presence of mobile refuse bins in prominent, unconcealed locations along alleyways and streets.
- Some frontages, with attractive traditional shopfronts in the High Street, feature modern signs made from non-traditional materials, some of which are unsatisfactory for this location.



- Parking, whilst essential to the life blood of the town, can, if not properly controlled, cause congestion and harm to important views. Unauthorised parking of vehicles on the footway can also damage paving and erode pedestrian feelings of safety. This can adversely affect people's attitudes to the town.

- There is a proliferation of road signs that are poorly designed and sited, though this is soon to be addressed.

- The poor quality and condition of surfacing to many of the roads, pavements and footpaths following various repair works is visually harmful.

- Overhead wires detract from the attractiveness of the Conservation Area and intrude on views, though the cost of replacing these underground is normally prohibitively expensive.

- The noise from the A20 and West Malling bypass is disruptive to the more rural north-eastern parts of the Conservation Area. It is the County Council's policy that next time these roads are resurfaced, quieter materials will be used.

- The original market section of the High Street is dominated by traffic and parked cars. However, the area of right angle parking, on the west side of the main High Street, can be said to reflect the original pattern of how historically, carts and stalls would have been arranged on market days to display goods for sale. The speed of traffic will be addressed by the introduction of a planned 20 mph zone.



- Tesco's car park, in particular, is an open area that contributes little, in its current condition, to the overall character of the Conservation Area. There is a lack of buildings with frontages that concentrate on overlooking such spaces.

Opportunities for preservation and enhancement

It is intended that this appraisal will be used as a tool where change is contemplated in the Conservation Area. It is hoped that as well as preservation of the character and appearance of the Area, opportunities will be taken for enhancement. The following, therefore, is a list of suggestions for preservation and enhancement to be considered when opportunities arise, such as a proposal for new development or when a building is being renovated. Some of these suggestions are for the Council to take on board, some are for other agencies and some for private individuals to consider.

- Where the inappropriate use of replacement modern materials and other alterations has occurred, consideration should be given to restoring the original traditional materials. Where windows have recently been bricked up on



front elevations, new traditional styles of windows, in keeping with the original styles of the area, should be reinstated.

SWAN STREET

- A limited number of appropriate new buildings with frontages onto the backland car parking areas may improve the potential of these important open spaces. Considerate siting, form and design of any such buildings will be vital, with careful attention paid to empathise with the existing character, to introduce a sense of place whilst retaining the general openness. Pedestrian accesses and movement through these spaces could be improved. For existing buildings, improving elevational frontages onto these areas would help. Some buildings could usefully provide double frontages. Removal of insensitive rear boundary enclosures would also help to improve the appearance of the area.

- The Old County Ground would benefit from a range of minor improvements. These could include better surface treatments to the access and parking area, perhaps with a bound gravel material. The unsightly vehicle bollards along the access could be screened by hedgerows or replaced with more appropriately designed bollards or even large tree logs. The restoration of the hedgerows, along the boundaries of the field, would create a sense of enclosure to this arena without obstructing any views. The removal of the unsightly fence along the hedgerow boundary with the school would be an improvement, as would planting to screen the high protective netting along the rear boundary of the row of houses in Norman Road. However, the location of planting should be careful not to block important vistas of the town. Some seating along the boundary may encourage people to sit and watch cricket games or admire the impressive views of the town or the Downs.



- The commercial centre of the town could be made more pedestrian friendly so as to relate appropriately to the scale of the streetscape. Consideration could be given to providing some temporary subtle low planting and the provision of some discrete public seating areas would encourage people to linger and admire the scene. Permitting cafes, public houses and restaurants to provide some external seating areas, where there is space, would help improve the appeal of the place for pedestrians.

POST OFFICE

- If funds permit, further improvements to the floorscape, using appropriate traditional materials, would benefit the townscape of West Malling. By matching with the details of the area, a good floorscape can enhance the setting of historic buildings and their spaces. Preservation of the small areas of ragstone and stone slabs would be beneficial, and where appropriate, they should be reintroduced. Extending the diamond blue pavements to the other parts of the main commercial area should be the ultimate objective.
 - Whenever there is a change in signage on shopfronts, the opportunity should be taken to ensure signs consisting of traditional signwritten facias are appropriately designed and sited, projecting or hanging signs are all in keeping with the period of the building. Illumination, where considered necessary, should be sensitively provided. Only carefully designed external illumination is likely to be acceptable.
 - Regular maintenance of buildings helps to preserve the attractive appearance of the Conservation Area. Many buildings would benefit from the painting of woodwork and render, the removal or neat clipping back of untidy cables and the removal of unwanted brackets. Re-siting satellite dishes and television aerials to more discreet locations would also help.
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- It may be appropriate to apply pale, subtle colours to the frontages of certain rendered properties in the town. However it will depend on the period of the building as to whether this is suitable. For instance, Victorian buildings were sometimes painted in gentle colour tones, whereas Georgian buildings would have only had cream or straw coloured finishes. Historically, bright white frontages were a rare occurrence.
 - Consideration should be given to the removal of any unsympathetic directional signs and similar clutter that are harmful to the visual amenities of the area. The opportunity should be taken to reduce the overall number of signs in the Conservation Area. All new signs should be appropriate to the appearance of the Conservation Area. Placing small traditionally designed signs on the frontages of some buildings may be appropriate. Where such features no longer serve any purpose, they should be removed.
 - There should be an emphasis on retaining all existing indigenous trees and hedges where possible. Where disease or death of trees occurs, or where removal is necessary, a programme of replacement planting of appropriate indigenous species should be implemented. Prior to carrying out works to any trees, advice should be sought from Planning Services. Where mature specimen trees exist that act as focal points and which are of high townscape value, new matching species of trees should be planted in a position as close as possible to these existing trees, so as to ensure the continuity of these important trees is maintained. Good quality non-indigenous species will only be appropriate for trees in important focal points.
 - Where feasible outside of the main High Street, opportunities for softening the visual impact of the more modern buildings in the town should be taken. This could be achieved by carefully planting trees and providing appropriate front boundary enclosures to match with the surroundings.
 - If the opportunity arises, the areas where the overhead cables are particularly noticeable should be rationalised or ideally be located underground.

Design Guidelines

- The scale, massing, density and layout of any new development should respect the hierarchy of the town. This pattern is of a distinct relaxing of densities, from the compact centre of the town, out towards the town's periphery. In the heart of the town any new buildings should be small in scale and should be tightly arranged with narrow frontages to give a clear vertical emphasis. Away from the historic centre any new development should be arranged more spaciouly and should be larger, with wider frontages, to give a horizontal emphasis. Buildings should generally be 2-3 storeys in height.
- Whilst the opportunities for new building in the centre of the town are limited any new buildings should, in the main, be parallel with the street so as to front onto it. In some parts of the town centre there is scope for further small buildings to be set back in some of the rear curtilage spaces behind buildings to form small enclaves and courtyards. It may even be suitable for some terraced properties to be sited at right angles to the road.
- In the more rural areas, any new buildings that may be otherwise acceptable should be set back from their front boundaries, but should still retain a strong relationship to the road. Any feature buildings at the junctions of the roads leading into the centre of the High Street should be of an exceptional design. They must respect the overall scale and form of the street scene and should be aware of enhancing the townscape qualities. Modern building should be designed in respect of the context of the historic environment.
- The rich and complex mix of roof forms and pitches in the town should be maintained and respected in any new development. The roof styles should have a steep form and should consist of peg or plain clay tiles or possibly even natural slate. Concrete tiles should not be used.
- In appropriate places, new buildings should consist of a contrasting mix of the good quality materials that are prevalent locally, so as to maintain the rich variety in the town. The materials listed in the Physical Fabric section (pages 28-29) are deemed appropriate.
- Views of the many good quality townscape features, the surrounding countryside and panoramic views of the North Downs should be preserved.
- Outside the dense built up part of the High Street, where the buildings are sited further apart, the important spaces between buildings should be retained. The opportunity for further landscaping of these areas is considerable.
- Extensions and new curtilage outbuildings should be well designed to the same quality as frontages. Such alterations could feature steep roof pitches and perhaps include decorative chimneys, catslide outshots or small dormer windows, in particular, to add to the appealing visual combination of roofscapes. Any such additions should be of a smaller overall size, scale and form than the larger frontage buildings. On appropriate sites they should be sited back within the plot to form a semi enclosed courtyard space. Views of the rear groups of buildings are important. For corner buildings and properties sited at an angle to the street, careful attention to the design of prominent side elevations will be necessary.

- Additions such as satellite and digital dishes, flues, extractor fans, alarm boxes and television aerials amongst others, should be located where they are not visible from public vantage points.
- New timber sash windows should be designed to respect the proportions and details of existing windows. The size of windows generally reduces the higher up they are sited on the building. Contrasts between colours of window frames and casements may be appropriate. Where inappropriate modern windows are to be replaced, the opportunity should be taken to put back the original style. Particularly in the historic centre of the town, new doors should have square proportioned detailing and their size should relate to the scale of the property.
- Careful consideration should be paid to ensuring good quality traditional detailing on buildings is retained, e.g., decorative barge boards, eaves and soffits, brick detailing, brick bonding, decorative chimneys and glazing panels above entrance doors. Where removed, efforts should be made to restore them.
- Front boundaries should feature approximately 1-metre high wrought iron railings or low brick walls topped by smaller iron railings using a pattern that matches with others in the area. Other boundary styles could include ragstone walls with saddlestone coping, red brick walls or traditional hedgerows. Gates in the urban area should consist of wrought iron or close-boarded timber. In the more rural areas, traditional five bar gates may be appropriate.
- Agricultural buildings should include a steeply pitched gable roof and should be constructed of dark stained weatherboarding or red stock bricks with clay tiled roofs. Alternatively, materials should consist of yellow stock bricks and slate. Attention should be paid to the appearance of nearby farm buildings.
- Alterations to shopfronts should respect the scale, period, design and detail of the individual building of which it forms part, as well as harmonising with the wider shopping area.
- The modern lanterns fixed to the frontages of first floor levels of buildings are unobtrusive and should continue to be the main source of street lighting in the centre of the town. Elsewhere the use of traditional styles of matching lampposts should be maintained.
- Where informal edges currently exist, the installation of kerbstones should be avoided but, if considered essential, conservation standard materials should be used wherever possible to protect this historic character.
- The removal of existing front boundary walls, railings and hedges to create new vehicular accesses and parking in front garden areas should be avoided.
- Buildings immediately outside of the Conservation Area boundary can have a significant impact, which should be taken into account if any new development is proposed close to West Malling.

Local Plan 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 and enhancing the character and appearance of each Conservation Area. Policy P4/5 seeks to retain buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

West Malling Conservation Area mostly falls within the rural settlement confines of the town. The town centre is considered to be a rural local centre and Policy P6/20 seeks to ensure that only uses which require a shopping centre location, or which provide an appropriate service for the day to day needs of the local community, are maintained on the ground floor. Policy P6/21 identifies two areas adjacent to the retail centre that are considered appropriate for non-retail uses including business uses, financial and professional uses and restaurants.

Parts of the Conservation Area to the west of the town are situated within the Green Belt. Development here is resisted unless justified by very special circumstances. To the east, the Conservation Area is also set within a Green Wedge, which protects the areas of open land lying between West Malling and Leybourne.

The Conservation Area also partly falls within an area designated as being of Local Landscape Importance. This attractive area of orchards, oasts and parkland situated to the south and east of the town is important to the rural landscape setting of West Malling, the Conservation Area and several important buildings. Under policy P2/7, development will not be permitted which harms this rural landscape character. The grounds of Douce's Manor and Manor Park are designated as a Historic Park & Garden. Under policy P4/6 development will not be permitted which would harm this area's character, integrity or setting. The grounds of St Mary's Abbey and St Leonard's Tower are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Policy P4/2 protects these nationally important archaeological sites and their settings against development that would adversely affect it.

Further Information

If you would like more advice on the West Malling Conservation Area, historic building repair and restoration, and grants for repair work to historic buildings, please telephone 01732 876265

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 876230.

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

Alternatively you can write to:

Planning, Transportation & Leisure Services
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4LZ

Or email:

conservation.services@tmbc.gov.uk

Further information on the history of West Malling can be obtained from West Malling Library, tel.: 01732 842504 or The Malling Society, tel.: 01732 846115 for details. They hold numerous historical photos of the area, as well as details on individual buildings.