

Windmill Hill

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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This document was prepared on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council based on an extensive survey dated 2007 by:

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1. STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The Windmill Hill Conservation Area lies to the south of the historic centre of Gravesend in Kent. The lower slopes of the hill are circuted by two of the historic arterial routes (Windmill Street and Parrock Road/Parrock Street) into the riverside town from the London to Rochester road. These roads once crossed open fields and untilled land.

From at least the 14th century, the summit of the hill has been used as the location for beacons to warn London of impending invasion. Beacons on the hill have been mentioned in 1377 and 1719. The hill has been known variously as Ruggen and Rouge Hill. The beacon currently in situ was erected as part of the Armada celebrations in 1988.

The hill has been the site of farms and flour mills, and remnants of these buildings survive. The hill was named Windmill Hill in 1719 after the mills which stood on its summit, and two mills are known to have existed during the 18th century. The hill became an attraction for visitors to Gravesend from the late 18th century. Windmill Hill could be accessed directly by visitors arriving by steamer at the Town Pier, progressing along High Street and Windmill Street. Visitors to the town peaked in the first half of the 19th century; former agricultural and mill buildings were converted as the hill was developed into a resort attraction, such as The Millers Tavern PH. These historic structures provide a reminder of the rural history of the land, prior to the extensive residential development as Gravesend extended southwards during the 19th century.

residential suburb, containing a large number of buildings of architectural and historic interest. The buildings are relatively unaltered and generally in a good state of repair. The topography has shaped the street pattern, with narrow lanes meandering up the steep slopes of the hill, and buildings arranged to take full effect of attractive views, both of Windmill Hill, and across the countryside of Kent. The two typical forms of buildings are paired villas and terraces, many of which are set back from the pavement line behind front gardens. These front gardens, together with other large private gardens contribute to the spacious and green character of the streetscene. Windmill Hill Gardens and Windmill Hill itself are significant green spaces within the town, and cater to various leisure and recreational uses.

The character of the Conservation Area is of a

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area

Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area was designated on 29 July 1975 by Gravesham Borough Council. The boundary was extended to the north to include a stretch of Parrock Street in 1991, and was extended again to include two groups of buildings on the west side of Windmill Street following a review in 1999. The Conservation Area's boundary comprises the roads that skirt the base of the topographical landmark of Windmill Hill, including Leith Park Road, a section of Windmill Street and Clarence Place. The eastern boundary is formed by Parrock Road, connecting to the southern part of Parrock Street, and encompassing the streets around Christ Church Gardens.

2.2 Purpose of the appraisal

This conservation area appraisal has been written by The Conservation Studio on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council. It was prepared in July 2007 and was followed by a process of community engagement, which informed the content of this document. This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area merits designation. It identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Borough Council in considering proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments. It will also help property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the Conservation Area.

This conservation area character appraisal will lead to a Management Plan, setting out policies and actions to conserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest and to mitigate the effects of negative features. The proposals set out in the Management Plan are proposed to be included as a background papers alongside the emerging Local Development Framework and, as such, will be a due consideration in the planning process. In due course the appraisals and management plans may also be adopted as separate Supplementary Planning Documents within the LDF.

Preparation of the appraisal involved an extensive survey of the conservation area undertaken in June 2007. The omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2.3 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). Local Planning Authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Local authorities must submit proposals for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration at a public meeting within the relevant area. They must also have regard to any views expressed by people attending the meeting.

- Broadly, the effects of designation are: Conservation Area Consent must be obtained from the local planning authority or Secretary of State prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions;
- The local planning authority must consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area when assessing applications for change in conservation areas;
- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas;
- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or lop a tree over a certain size.

Further, more detailed information is provided in the Management Plan.

As well as receiving statutory protection, conservation areas are protected by regional, county and local planning policies. Relevant policies include:

- Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) (published March 2001), Key Development Principle No.9; Policy Q2; Policy Q5; Policy Q7; Policy E1.
- Regional Planning Guidance 9a: The Thames Gateway Planning Framework (1995), Paras. 5.4.7 & 5.4.8: Built Heritage, Annex 1: Planning Framework Principles No.13.
- Draft South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) (submitted to Government on 31st March 2006), Section D8 Management of the Built and Historic Environment: Policy BE1; Policy BE2; Policy BE7; Section E4 (Kent Thames Gateway).
- The Kent and Medway Structure Plan (adopted 6th July 2006), Policy QL1:

Quality of Development and Design; Policy QL6: Conservation Areas; Policy QL7: Archaeological Sites; Policy QL8: Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance; Policy QL9: Historic Landscape Features; Policy QL10: Heritage Assets – Enabling Development

- Gravesham Local Plan First Review (adopted November 1994), Policy TC0, Tc1, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6, TC7, TC8, TC9, TC10, TC11, TC12, Policy R3, Proposal PM13, Policy AP3.

Thames Gateway

In addition to the various conservation areas in the town, Gravesend is recognised as being in a Growth Area within the Kent Thames Gateway Sub-region by the Draft South East Plan of the South East Regional Assembly. The various policy documents outlined above have, since RPG9 (1994), recognised Gravesham and Gravesend's important place in the Thames Gateway (incorporating the former East Thames Corridor). RPG9a emphasizes the importance of Gravesham in achieving the Thames Gateway's overall vision (para. 6.8.1) and that future development of industrial sites should "avoid adverse impacts on the historic townscape of Gravesend town centre and its relationship with the River Thames" (para. 6.8.14).

The Thames Gateway is an overarching term for the regeneration of large parts of East London and parts of Essex and Kent, including Gravesend. It was first embarked on as a major planning concept in the 1980s and has developed at various stages since then. The Thames Gateway London Partnership estimate that the expected investment in the whole region will provide 150,000 jobs and 200,000 homes over the next 10 years. The large scale of this scheme will see a great

deal of change across the area, including the introduction of new large scale transport infrastructure such as the Channel Tunnel Rail link (with a proposed connection to Gravesend and major road building schemes such as the widening of the A2 south of the town).

Gravesend is in the Kent Thames Gateway Sub-region, recognised by Central Government's sustainability plan as a growth area (Sustainable Communities in London—Building for the Future, ODPM, 2003). An interregional assembly group has produced a planning statement that states that there is the capacity for 20,000 new homes in Gravesham and Dartford by 2016.

The policies included in the local and regional guidance as outlined above seek to guide this period of change and the specified policies all recognise the importance of retaining the built as well as natural heritage of Gravesend. This document identifies the special character of Gravesend's built heritage and the accompanying management plan, which will stand alongside the emerging Local Development Framework and South East Plan, will propose how that special character can best be preserved and enhanced in the light of the large scale changes that are currently taking place in the area.

2.4 Community involvement

The survey of the Conservation Area has included a process of public consultation to identify the following:

- The special characteristics of Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area;
- The key negative features and issues;
- A range of possible actions that would mitigate or offset these detractors.

The consultation began with the notification of key stakeholders in Gravesend at the beginning of the appraisal process. It was followed by the distribution to every property in the conservation areas of an invitation to a public meeting held on 5th September 2007. Leaflets were also displayed in public places. The meeting included a description of the principles and desired outcomes of appraisals and management plans and led into a general discussion. The meeting was attended by various representatives of the Borough Council and local interest groups.

Following the meeting, the outcomes were discussed by Gravesham Borough Council and The Conservation Studio. Subsequently, a four week period of full public consultation was held after which revisions were made to arrive at this final agreed document. A Public Consultation Report is attached as Appendix 4 to this document for information.

3. LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

3.1 Location

Gravesend is the administrative capital of the Borough of Gravesham, which contains 25,000 acres of countryside and is generally rural in appearance, containing a number of attractive historic villages. The town lies in north-west Kent 40 kilometres to the east of central London. Canterbury is approximately 65 kilometres further along the Thames estuary coastline to the southeast and the major A2 and M2 trunk roads link the settlements. Due to the major transport infrastructure in the area, including the M25, M20 and the rail link to the Channel Tunnel, Gravesend is very well connected to other parts of the country and beyond.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit's Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001), commissioned by Kent County Council and English Heritage, notes that: "The process of 19th and 20th century urbanisation is particularly marked in the northern areas of Kent". The Dartford and Gravesham Conurbation is characterised as "a well defined urban conurbation with some limited marshland and horticulture along its edges".

Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area lies to the south of the historic river-focused town centre. It is connected to the historic and commercial centre and the river by two principal arterial routes, Windmill Street and Parrock Street.

3.2 Activities and uses

Windmill Hill Conservation Area is a residential enclave of Gravesend, containing a variety of accommodation types. Dwellings

range from the five storey houses of nos. 1-5 Constitution Crescent, to two storey paired villas on Clarence Place, and townhouses subdivided to form flats on Parrock Street. Modest two-storey terraces of houses are found grouped around Christ Church Gardens and on South Hill Road. No. 29 Clarence Place is a large detached early 19th century house which has been converted and extended to form the Ashley Down Nursing Home. Opposite this, the large house at no. 1 Parrock Road is in use as a Bed and Breakfast.

Two public houses serve the residential community of Windmill Hill and the surrounding areas, and also attract customers from the commercial centre of the town during their leisure hours. The Windmill Tavern PH and the Millers Cottage PH are both located on the west side of Shrubby Road, at the heart of the Conservation Area.

Further leisure pursuits are well catered for on Windmill Hill itself and within the adjacent Windmill Hill Gardens. Windmill Hill attracts walkers and dog-walkers to this haven of green within the town and those wishing to take in the all encompassing views of Gravesend itself and the outlying Kent countryside, the River Thames, and across the water, Essex. A childrens' playground is located close to the summit of the hill. To the north-east of the rough-cut grassland and native trees of the hill, Windmill Hill Gardens provide more formal garden spaces. Paths meander between specimen trees, flower beds, seating areas and the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts.

Clarence Place contains public and religious buildings integrated into the wider residential streetscape. Gravesend Veterans Club lies on the south side of the street and the

Gravesend Spiritualist Church occupies a former villa on the north side. Siri Guru Nanek Darbar Gurdwara has used the former Milton Congregational Church as a Sikh place of worship since 1968, but will vacate the building once a new temple has been completed on Khalsa Drive.

3.3 Topography

Gravesend lies on the relatively shallow slopes of the south bank of the River Thames, close to where it widens into the estuary. The land rises gently from the riverside to the summit of Windmill Hill, from where there are far reaching views across the town, to the north to the river and to Essex beyond, and across the wider Kent countryside. The Hill itself rises about 51 metres above the tide level and consists of an outlier or capping of Thanet Sands, surrounded by the chalk which lies under the rest of the town.

Immediately within the boundary of the Conservation Area, the land is generally level, but the ground then climbs steeply up to the summit of the hill. Large numbers of mature trees and narrow streets of two and three storey buildings inhibit wide long views. However long-distance glimpses across the town can be obtained eastwards.

3.4 Geology and Biodiversity

Gravesend lies on the thick belt of chalk that is the most famous geological trademark of this part of Kent. Otherwise, the geology of Kent is varied and lies on a “crumpled dome” of sedimentary rock which also lies under Sussex and Surrey. Gravesend also lies close to areas of Thanet beds which contain clay and together with the London Clay found on the nearby Hoo Peninsula

to the east produced the raw materials for brickmaking. Therefore, this area supplied the London stock bricks that were used for the intensive building programmes in London and Gravesend in the 19th and 20th centuries.

While chalk is also found locally it is too soft to be used for building large structures, although it supplied the raw materials for lime and, later, cement. Flints, found with chalk, are also evident in parts of Gravesend, and are sometimes used as a walling material. Kentish Ragstone, quarried from neighbouring areas, is also found in the architecture of the town.

3.5 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings

The Conservation Area is surrounded by an urban townscape of residential streets; Windmill Street continues northwards from the Conservation Area towards the town centre and is designated as a separate Conservation Area.

The following features form the immediate setting of the Conservation Area:

- To the north-west: Windmill Street continues northwards from the Conservation Area, becoming increasingly commercial toward the town centre;
- To the north: large 20th century blocks of flats, i.e. Gravesham Court and Homestead – these do not conform to the historic urban grain. The Age Concern Day Centre is located on Clarence Row;
- To the east: Residential development, predominantly large detached dwellings, follow the route of Parrock Road. A break in the building line is created by the large Harmsworth's sports ground – this area of grass playing fields allows far reaching views eastwards. Remnants of Milton

Barracks lie to the east of Christ Church Gardens;

- To the south: Streets of 20th century residential development laid out along meandering roads;
- To the west: Linear streets of 19th century terraced houses, running on an east-west axis i.e. Wingfield Road and Portland Road.

4. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Archaeology

Evidence of prehistoric activity in and around Gravesend is limited to individual finds of items such as Neolithic axe heads and Iron Age coins, although there are indications from recent excavations at Gravesend Hospital that this site was close to an area of prehistoric occupation.

A number of excavations, including those at Gravesend Hospital, have revealed evidence of Roman and Saxon occupation in the area. It is likely that Gravesend has sustained habitation since the early part of the Roman occupation of Britain. The most important and extensive excavation in recent years, at nearby Springhead on the path of the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link, has uncovered the Roman town of Vagniacae, an Iron Age settlement that the Romans occupied in 43 AD. Hoards of Saxon coins and early Saxon pottery have also been found at various locations around the town.

Archaeology from later periods includes the site of a medieval beacon on Windmill Hill; a beacon on the hill was mentioned in 1377 and 1719.

4.2 Historical development

The name “Gravesend” is derived from Gravesham, itself meaning “graaf-ham”, the home of the reeve or bailiff of the Lord of the Manor. Windmill Hill has been an observation point and the location for warning beacons since at least the 14th century. The area lay outside the town of Gravesend and was rural in character, with activities such as flour milling taking place on the hill until the middle of the 19th century. With

the growth in Gravesend as a resort from the late 18th century, Windmill Hill became a visitor attraction and the area developed to serve this, and the southerly expanding town through the 19th century. The historical development of Gravesend has been covered in detail in a variety of publications, details of which are included in the Bibliography at the end of this document. A summary of the development of the town is included in Appendix 2.

The principal features of the historical development of the Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area are as follows:

ANGLO-SAXON AND NORMAN (450 – 1200):

- 798AD - Archbishop of Canterbury acquired a large landholding in Northfleet
- Small community established next to Thames centred on a landing place (“hithe”).
- 1086 - Reference to Gravesham in The Domesday Book: an agricultural estate in the ownership of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (the brother of William I).

MEDIEVAL (1200 – 1485):

- 1258 - Richard de Gravesende made Bishop of Lincoln. The change of name from Gravesham was established for the town.
- 1300 - Gravesend had grown into a small market town via its trade on the river and easy supplies from neighbouring agricultural land.
- 1350 - Course of High Street established. It stood at the centre of a network of streets, a direct route from the river to the old Parish Church. High Street, via Windmill Street, leads directly to Windmill Hill;

- 1356 - First market charter. Market sited on the corner of High Street and West Street next to the landing stage.
- The town grew under various lordships including the crown, nobility and the Cistercian Abbey of the St Mary Graces in London.
- 1380 - French and Spanish warships attacked Gravesend. Most of the town was destroyed. In recompense Richard II granted the people of Gravesend sole rights to ferry passengers to London giving rise to Gravesend's growth as a maritime centre and trading port.
- Gravesend Watermen operated open barges, the Long Ferry, and transported passengers to and from the Pool of London. Larger, ocean-going vessels continued out along the estuary to the international destinations beyond.
- Many inns, stables and shops were established in the town, but regularly destroyed by fires.
- Gravesend was a sizeable town centred on High Street, with a variety of wharves and quays established around the landing stage.
- Windmill Hill was first known as Ruggen Hill in the reign of Richard II, when a writ was served for the erection of a beacon on its summit. The beacon was one of a series to warn London of impending invasion.
- 1573 - First Town Hall built. Common Market held once a week on current site of Borough Market.
- Two post-windmills were in place on the hill by 1596 when they were first recorded.
- By the late 16th century the Windmill Hill was known as Rouge Hill.
- 1633 - County Assizes held at Gravesend.
- 1650 - All landing stages except for the common bridge (Town Pier) removed.

GEORGIAN & REGENCY (1714 – 1837):

- In 1719 the Rouge Hill was named Windmill Hill, after the windmills which were situated there.
- 1727 - Fire destroyed most of High Street and surrounding streets. The town was rebuilt.
- 1749 - Other fires blighted the town and citizens started a subscription for buying fire engines.
- 1750s/1760s - Many improvements made by the Corporation – including the Town Hall being replaced.
- There were two windmills on the hill in the 18th century; one mill was destroyed by fire in 1763, and replaced by a new structure in 1766, and the other was demolished in 1787;
- 1797 - Gravesend population was 4,000.
- The building now known as The Windmill Tavern was an 18th century farmhouse. In the early 19th century the tenant was the King family, and former cottages on the hill were known as 'King's Cottages'.
- 1815 - First regular service of pleasure steamers from London to Gravesend.
- 1818 - Market area partially roofed for the first time.
- 1833 – the first pumping works of the Gravesend and Milton waterworks erected on the corner of Constitution Hill and Parrock Road.

TUDOR AND JACOBAN (1485 – 1714):

- 1539/ 40 - Blockhouses erected at Gravesend, Tilbury, Milton and Higham to defend London from attack.
- 1562 - Charter of Incorporation united the two parishes of Milton and Gravesend – Windmill Hill lies inside Milton Parish, although the west side of Windmill Street lies in Gravesend Parish.

VICTORIAN (1837-1901):

- 1840s Rosherville Gardens opened. A promenade established along the riverfront along with more piers.
- Commerce boomed: banks and companies founded. Commercial area spread from High Street to include Queen Street, New Road, King Street and Windmill Street.
- 1843 - The hill was purchased by the Gravesend Corporation at auction and developed as a resort attraction, with a maze, donkey rides, a fair and a camera obscura. The visitors could climb the windmill on the summit for views across Kent; the entrance fee was one penny.
- Windmill Street was developed to cater for the accommodation needs of the large number of visitors arriving in the town by steamboat from London, and it became the thoroughfare linking the river and the town to the attractions on Windmill Hill.
- There were three public houses to cater for the refreshment needs of the visitors – the Windmill Tavern, the Millers Cottage, and the Belle Vue Tavern. There were also two tea gardens – at the Tivoli Hotel and at the Clarence Hotel. A further tea garden opened at The Shubbery.
- 1845 - Gravesend & Rochester railway opened.
- 1851 - Population of Gravesend and Milton had risen to 16,633.
- 1856 - Metropolitan Board of Works scheme to discharge London sewage onto the Thames at Crossness led to end of Gravesend's status as a resort.
- The last windmill to work on Windmill Hill closed in 1856 when it was converted and a viewing tower added. Its associated mill house became the Belle Vue Tavern.
- Christ Church was erected in the parish of Milton in 1856 in Parrock Street, which was built to replace St John's when this was sold to the Roman Catholics. The church was lengthened circa 1867 to accommodate the troops from Milton Barracks close by.
- 1889 - the Gravesend Corporation transformed part of the hill into a formal pleasure gardens with a bowling green and tennis courts (Windmill Gardens);
- 1890s - Improved railway network took day trippers to other resorts such as Margate and Ramsgate. Gravesend became more industrial. Windmill Hill became neglected, and the windmill and the Belle Vue Tavern became derelict and were demolished.

20th CENTURY:

- The industrialisation of the north shore of the Thames continued into the 20th century.
- Gravesend continued to grow as a small market town with areas of light industry. Much of the industry was occupied with producing building materials for houses.
- The granite stones on Windmill Hill mark the site of the first bombs dropped on Gravesend from a German Zeppelin in June 1915.
- 1934 - Christ Church was dismantled from its site on Parrock Road and moved to Old Road East.
- Post 1945 - area to the north of the market cleared of all residential and commercial buildings as far as the river.
- 1950s - A large power station constructed at Tilbury.
- As transport links to the city improved, Gravesend became a commuter settlement.
- 1958 - Creation of Inner Ring Road removed East Street and changed

appearance of Crooked Lane from narrow short street with sharp turns to broad modern highway.

- 1969 - Town Pier closed. Car ferry discontinued and passenger service moved to West Street Pier. The river lost its relevance to life in the town. The commercial centre shifted from High Street to New Road and King Street. Large shopping malls built in New Road.

5. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Layout and spaces

The residential development of the area surrounding Windmill Hill as a part of the town of Gravesend did not occur until the 19th century; parts of the lands comprising Windmill Hill were purchased by the Gravesend Corporation in 1843 for development as a resort attraction. Prior to this the land was open countryside of open farming or market garden ground lying to the south of the town. A farm lay on the north-eastern slope of the hill from at least the 18th century and the farmhouse was altered to become The Windmill Tavern in the 19th century. The hill took its current name from the flour mill which took advantage of the exposed location to grind the grain and The Millers Public House also references the location of this former flour mill. Other former mill buildings on the summit of the hill were converted to the Belle Vue Tavern. The Belle Vue Tavern (then closed) was destroyed by fire during the celebrations of Mafeking Night in 1900.

Windmill Street developed as the principal thoroughfare for the visitors arriving by steamboat to the town, and progressing to the attractions of Windmill Hill. The Tivoli Hotel is highly visible in views south along Windmill Street toward Windmill Hill and would have been a landmark building for tourists. The large hotel grounds were ranged along the foot of the western slope of the hill. The Tivoli Gardens were built upon by a group of paired villas in the early 20th century.

Windmill Hill itself is retained as an extensive area of open green space, now surrounded by urban development on all sides. The Corporation developed the hill as pleasure

gardens, firstly in 1843 and then in 1889 on the northern slopes with Windmill Hill Gardens.

The layout of roads within the Conservation Area has been influenced by the relationship of planned residential development to the established tourist attractions of Windmill Hill in the 19th century. A circuitous network of spacious roads encircles the base of the hill. The road on the north side of the hill, and therefore closest to the town, developed most completely at any early date, with pairs of villas overlooking the hill. Two narrow roads climbed to the summit of the hill from Clarence Place (formerly Star Street), Rouge Lane and Shrubbery Road, and villas and short terraces developed along these. Large villas on the east side of the hill, such as Bronte Villas (nos. 5-7 Parrock Road), turn their backs to the hill to take advantage of the long open views eastwards. Further narrow routes meander up the steep slopes of the hill toward the summit from Parrock Road, such as Constitution Hill.

The open green of Christ Church Gardens was created when the church was moved in 1934. The terraced houses facing over the green originally would have overlooked the church. The development is tightly grouped, a result of the restricted site between the church and Milton Barracks on the land to the north and east, both since gone. In contrast, many of the clusters of residential developments from the 20th century were erected on the former pleasure grounds of The Shrubbery, or on the extensive gardens attached to a villa, such as Westhill Close on the former site of West Hill Villa; these houses are typically set in spacious grounds belying the former garden use of the land.

5.2 Relationship of Buildings to Spaces

Many of the buildings within the Windmill Hill Conservation Area are set back from the pavement line behind front garden areas. This enhances the spacious character in wide streets such as Clarence Place. The common built form is of the paired villa, with interesting spaces created between, and glimpses through to rear gardens beyond; the overall impression is of harmonious groups of buildings, rather than an unbroken building line.

There are a few instances of continuous terraces; a short stretch of three-storey over basement terrace houses on Parrock Street, and the two-storey terraces on South Hill Road and those grouped around Christ Church Gardens. The two later examples are all constructed at back-of-pavement line, but in the case of Christ Church Crescent and Christ Church Road, the spacious setting of the central green creates an open aspect and attractive views of the buildings across this space.

Where large detached houses are set in extensive gardens, such as no. 1 Parrock Road, these private spaces make an important contribution to the streetscene; the streets do not feel overshadowed by buildings. Where there are structures which rise above the predominant two and three storey building height, such as the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara, the wide road, and the open space of Windmill Hill Gardens help to create a 'breathing space' for the building, and allow for unobstructed views of the imposing south entrance front.

5.3 Landmarks, focal points and views

The principal landmarks in the Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area are:

- The summit of Windmill Hill;
- The Sikh temple Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara;
- Tivoli House;
- Ashley Down Nursing Home (no. 29 Clarence Place);
- No. 1 Parrock Road;
- War Memorial, Windmill Gardens;
- Nos. 1-4 Constitution Crescent;
- Echo Lodge;
- 5-7 Parrock Road.

The green tree-covered slopes of Windmill Hill can be seen from a number of locations within and outside of the Conservation Area, with some of the clearest views obtainable from Clarence Place. The eastern slopes of the hill contain tightly-knit terraces which obscure views to the open space beyond. From the summit of the hill itself, looking north, the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara is a significant landmark. The building stands much taller than the neighbouring two-storey villas, and is therefore visible above the mature trees in Windmill Gardens; the large circular window in the southern gable elevation is a particularly recognisable feature.

Tivoli House is a principal landmark building particularly on the approach to the Conservation Area from the north along Windmill Street. The building is set on the pavement line and therefore projects far further forward than neighbouring structures which are set back from the pavement behind spacious front gardens. The scale and detailing, such as the heavy rustication above the windows, highlight Tivoli House as distinct from surrounding residential villas and

terraces.

Ashley Down Nursing Home and no. 1 Parrock Road are located on opposing corners of the junction of Clarence Place, Parrock Street and Parrock Road. Ashley Down Nursing Home is a late 19th century Gothic style villa, since converted and extended. It is constructed from cream brick with red brick dressings, and is therefore distinct in both style and use of materials from the typically stuccoed villas of Clarence Place. The building is set on a promontory of land between Clarence Place and Parrock Street, making it highly visible on the approach into the Conservation Area along Parrock Street. No. 1 Parrock Road is in a distinctive Arts and Crafts style, and is set high above the road; the attractive pargetting details are visible despite the dense tree growth surrounding the site boundary.

Gravesend's War Memorial was erected in Windmill Gardens in 1922. It was damaged in the bombing of the town in 1940, and re-erected in 1949. The granite memorial surmounted by the bronze winged figure of peace is located at the centre of a formally landscaped garden and is visible to all those passing along Clarence Place.

Nos. 1-4 Constitution Crescent comprises an early 19th century stucco terrace, set close to the apex of the hill. While the buildings are only of three storeys in the main, they are set above a full-height basement storey and are approached up a grandiose set of balustraded steps. The buildings have a towering presence, set close to the street frontage, and the unified composition of the north elevation in the manner of a 'palace façade' heightens the grandeur and impact of the buildings on the streetscene. They are part of an intended scheme, of a scale and ambition not found

elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

Within the Conservation Area there are extensive views obtainable from the top of Windmill Hill. These are most far reaching to the north, where the view extends panoramically across the town, the River Thames and to the county of Essex on the far river bank. The factory chimneys at Tilbury are a particularly prominent eye-catcher. There are a large number of mature deciduous trees on Windmill Hill and in Windmill Hill Gardens; the views are more extensive during the winter months through the bare tree branches. Far reaching views are also obtained from Parrock Road, looking east across the playing fields.

Other important views include those up and down the steep, narrow streets which meander across the hill, such as along Shrubbery Road. The changes in gradient and twists in the road often make these short deflected views. However, views east along Constitution Hill and South Hill Road are tightly framed by built development, but then widen out to the far reaching views across the countryside of Kent.

The principal positive views are:

- Northwards from the top of Windmill Hill:
- Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara;
- across the town and river to Essex on the opposite river bank;
- Eastwards from Parrock Road across the playing fields to the outlying Kent countryside;
- Across Windmill Gardens to the War Memorial;
- West along South Hill Road to Constitution Crescent;
- From Christ Church Gardens across to the surrounding buildings;

- East and west along Clarence Place;
- East and west along South Hill Road and Constitution Hill;
- Various views up and down Shrubbery Road;
- Southwards across the built-up suburbs of the town to the countryside beyond.

5.5 Trees, boundaries and planting

Windmill Hill is managed as rough cut grassland, interspersed with groups of native deciduous trees. The southern part of the hill is dense woodland. Trees line the approach up Rouge Lane; the lane marks the boundary between the hill on the south side and Windmill Hill Gardens on the north side. Windmill Hill Gardens have the character of a formal park; the area is fenced and is presented as an area of manicured grass interspersed with specimen trees, and an area of formal flower beds surrounding the War Memorial. A run of cast iron railings, painted black and gold, formally separate the gardens from Clarence Place. However, the railings are in keeping with the area railings to the houses on Clarence Place, and provide a unifying link between the boundary treatments of the public and domestic green spaces.

Most of the buildings within the Conservation Area are set on large garden plots, with front gardens to the fore bordered by dwarf walls and railings. Front gardens are generally attractively planted. Some of the largest domestic plots are to be found at Glenview House, no. 1 Parrock Road, and no. 3 Parrock Road. These are all visible from the public realm, contain a large number of mature trees, and make a positive contribution to the setting of the individual historic building on the plot in question and to the overall 'garden' character of this Conservation Area. Rear gardens are generally enclosed by high

boundary walls, typically constructed from brick such as on William Street, but there are also some examples of flint walls, such as on Constitution Hill.

The large areas of public open space, including Christ Church Gardens, and the domestic gardens form a complimentary dialogue with one another and form a green, open character with many mature individual trees and tree groups.

6. STREETSCAPE

6.1 Public realm

Pavements

Few remnants of historic street surface treatments survive in the Conservation Area. The most complete area of historic surfaces is located on Christ Church Road and Christ Church Crescent, where the pavements are of stone flags, the kerbs of granite, and the gutters marked with four rows of setts. This all contributes to a coherent and attractive public realm.

Otherwise the street surfaces through the area are modern, with concrete kerbs, and pavements a mixture of concrete slabs and poured tarmac.

Street furniture, signage and other features

Street signs are generally modern. A historic cast iron sign survives on William Street. Clusters of modern directional sign posts are positioned along the busy arterial routes into the town centre, Parrock Road and Windmill Street.

Windmill Hill Gardens contain a neat arrangement of cast iron and timber benches grouped around the War Memorial. Black painted slatted litter bins are located close to some of the benches.

Street lighting

Gravesend has utilised street lighting in one form or another since the 19th century. There are no historic forms of street lighting within the Conservation Area, although good examples of a historicist style of lamp posts adds to the character of Clarence Place.

Elsewhere in the Conservation Area, street lighting is in the form of modern lights; the street lighting is minimal on some of the lanes across the hill, such as Shrubbery Road, helping to retain a semi-rural appearance.

Pedestrian movement and footpaths

A footpath network connects across the open spaces of Windmill Hill. These are of tarmac, and in the more formal areas of Windmill Hill Gardens the paths are defined by narrow concrete kerbs.

Traffic and parking

Much of the Conservation Area is free from constant busy traffic flow. The exceptions are Windmill Street and Parrock Road/Parrock Street, which are two of the arterial routes into the town, and Clarence Place which seems to serve as a rat-run between the two streets.

The area is heavily congested by parked cars, for example on Rouge Lane, many of which are left during the day by people who walk into the town centre for work, or by those who come to use the hill for recreation and leisure. The amount of off-road vehicle parking which has been created by residents in former front garden areas, or at the rear of the plot, indicates that parking space is at a premium. Such a solution is detrimental to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area due to the associated loss of boundary walls, railings and front garden areas.

7. THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

7.1 Building types

Many of the historic buildings in the Conservation Area date from the middle of the 19th century, reflecting the rapid expansion of the town's residential suburbs during this time, and the cultivation of Windmill Hill as a resort attraction. These buildings were largely erected on virgin ground, formerly in farm and market garden use; the design and layout could be implemented as 'set-piece' designs on newly laid out plots.

A few buildings within the Conservation Area predate the urban development, and provide reminders of the area's rural roots. The two public houses, The Windmill Tavern and The Millers Cottage, are surviving remnants of the farming and flour milling activities which took place on the hill from at least the 18th century; the buildings were converted to public houses in the 19th century.

The buildings within the Conservation Area are predominantly residential. Two and three storey stucco houses, arranged as paired villas, and short terraces are particularly characteristic along Clarence Place, Primrose Terrace and Parrock Road, generously arranged within large garden plots. There are also a number of large detached villas, such as Echo Lodge. Tight-knit two storey brick terraces are to be found on South Hill Road, Christ Church Road and Christ Church Crescent. 20th century residential units have been erected as infill development on previously large garden areas.

Tivoli House was built as a hotel, and became the Jewish Academy and Synagogue in 1857. It has been converted into flats. The

present Sikh temple, Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara, was originally constructed as the Milton Congregational Church. It was the second church in the area; only some rubble stone indicates the location of the former Christ Church in Christ Church Road. These important buildings are reminders of the urban development which grew up to serve this new residential enclave of the town and the visitors to the resort attraction of Windmill Hill in the 19th century.

7.2 Building form

The buildings of Windmill Hill are generally arranged as terraces and paired villas. Many of the villas are grouped to create the appearance of terraces. The terraced buildings range in scale, from nos. 1-4 Constitution Crescent, which is of three storeys and attic over a full-height basement, and the two-storey terraces surrounding Christ Church Gardens. There are large detached villas, often set on prominent corner sites, such as no. 1 Parrock Road.

Buildings are typically arranged on large plots, set back from the street behind front garden areas. While these front gardens create a cohesive appearance in views along the streets, subtle variances in the building line reflect different phases of construction, and in some instances the positioning of the building on the plot to take advantage of the underlying topography. This has resulted in an attractive streetscene and interesting roofscape, as groups of buildings climb up the steep lanes and line the terraces. There are few instances where a group of buildings is reflected by a corresponding group on the opposite side of the road.

Some of the later 19th century development is much denser, with buildings set at back of

pavement line. In instances such as these, the terraces are unbroken, and a uniform building line and roofscape presented.

7.3 Listed buildings

There are 13 listed buildings or structures in the Windmill Hill, Gravesend Conservation Area, all of them listed grade II.

The listed buildings are nearly all in domestic residential use, the use for which they were constructed. Tivoli House was built as a hotel, but has been converted into flats. No. 29 Clarence Place was built as a large villa, and has been converted and extended as the Ashley Down Nursing Home. No. 1 Parrock Road provides bed and breakfast accommodation.

There is a listed K6 telephone kiosk at the junction of Parrock Street and Christ Church Crescent.

The listed buildings in the Conservation Area are widely distributed across the area. There is a good cluster at the junction of Clarence Place and Parrock Street and an important group located on Shrubbery Road.

7.4 Locally listed buildings

Government advice is that the preparation of a List of Locally Significant Buildings is a useful planning tool. "locally listed" buildings are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for their local historic associations, but are not considered to be of national importance, so they are usually not eligible for statutory listing. Policies to control them can be included in the Local Development Framework.

Gravesend Council does not currently maintain a formal list of locally significant buildings (usually called the 'Local List') either in Gravesend or elsewhere, although all buildings that were identified in the 1974 Listed Buildings Survey for their architectural or historic interest, but were not awarded a listing status, have been treated as 'Buildings of Local Interest' ever since when considering planning applications. Following the importance the Government places in its Heritage White Paper on the compilation of Lists of Buildings of Local Interest, Gravesend Borough Council's will be reviewed in due course.

The Management Proposals for the Gravesend conservation areas contain a list of buildings which might be considered for inclusion in a Local List, once the Council have approved the criteria to be used for selection. All of them are considered to be key unlisted buildings.

7.5 Key unlisted buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified as being buildings of townscape merit. Buildings identified as having 'townscape merit' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded. Key unlisted buildings include:

- Nos. 1-18 Primrose Terrace;
- Nos. 1-16 Christ Church Crescent & nos. 2-21 Christ Church Road;

- The Windmill Tavern Public House;
- Nos. 1-27 Clarence Place, nos. 32-35 Clarence Place & nos. 37-38 Clarence Place;
- Nos. 90-95 Windmill Street;
- Nos. 1-5 Hillside Terrace.
- 5-7 Parrock Road (Bronte Villas)
- 13-19 Parrock Road
- 33-35 Parrock Road

Government guidance in PPG15 'Planning and the historic environment' advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area (paragraph 4.27). The guidance note states that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

7.6 Building Materials

The historic buildings of Gravesend, including those outside the conservation areas, have been built using mainly local materials, particularly red and yellow stock brick. There are good examples of exposed brickwork within the Conservation Area; the terraced houses surrounding Christ Church Gardens are constructed of yellow brick, with interest provided by red and blue bricks. There are also instances of the utilisation of white brick; Echo Lodge is one of the most prominent examples. The most common roofing material is Welsh slate although many buildings have had their roofs unsympathetically replaced with concrete tiles.

Gravesend was at the centre of some innovation in construction techniques in the 19th century, including the claimed invention of Portland cement. Many cement works and

chalk pits were established in the area and therefore there was no shortage of supplies at this time. A large number of the buildings in the Conservation Area feature an external render coat, such as on Primrose Terrace. The material is also used to create detailing on brick buildings, such as the pilasters on the brick terrace on Parrock Street.

Attractive fragments of the boundary wall to West Hill House (demolished 1967) survive on the corner boundary of Windmill Street and Leith Park Road. West Hill House was being constructed by William Aspdin, whose father, Joseph was the patentee of Portland cement; the house was unfinished when Aspdin went bankrupt and the materials used to construct Portland Villas.

Another building material used in the Conservation Area is flint, which is found in some of the boundary walls, for example those bordering Constitution Hill. Timber weatherboarding (with boards usually fixed horizontally) is still found on some of the buildings in the Conservation Area, where it is painted white, such as no. 8 Shrubbery Road.

7.7 Local details

Some of the details on buildings in the Conservation Area are particularly distinctive. These include:

- Red and yellow brick;
- Stucco;
- Iron balconies, balconettes and railings;
- Weatherboarding;
- Polychrome brickwork (red, yellow and white brick);
- Sash Windows;
- Good range of architectural detailing based on the Classical language.
- Shallow pitched slate roofs.

8. CHARACTER AREAS

8.1 Summary of Character Areas

Within the present boundaries the Windmill Hill Conservation Area can be divided into six Character Areas according to landscape, topography, historical development, layout, building type, and uses.. Positive features that contribute to the character of each area, or negative features that detract from it, are summarised at end of each section. The six Character Areas are:

Character Area 1: Clarence Place, Windmill Hill Gardens and Parrock Street;
 Character Area 2a: Shrubbery Road, South Hill Road and Constitution Hill;
 Character Area 2b: Windmill Hill;
 Character Area 3: Parrock Road;
 Character Area 4: Windmill Street;
 Character Area 5: Leith Park Road and Sandy Bank Road;
 Character Area 6: Christ Church Road and Christ Church Crescent.

8.2 Character Area 1: Clarence Place, Windmill Hill Gardens and Parrock Street

This area, lying to the north of Windmill Hill, was one of the earliest parts of the residential suburb which developed around the hill. It lay closest to the historic commercial, river-focused town centre and became part of the town's rapid growth southwards during the 19th century. Two principal approach roads into Gravesend became the anchor for urban growth; the existing Windmill Street and Parrock Road/Parrock Street ran northwards off the east-west course of the old road from London to Rochester.

Nos. 70-78 Parrock Street comprise the northerly reach of the Conservation Area.

The early 19th century terrace is distinct from the mid 19th century paired villas comprising the remainder of Parrock Street, and is part of the earliest residential expansion of the town southwards. Additional historic streets to the east have been lost under the 20th century development of Homestead Close and Gravesham Court. This comprehensive redevelopment has created a cul-de-sac of William Street, which is now characterised as a back lane to the north side of Clarence Place, with a high brick boundary wall protecting the rear gardens.

With the growth of Gravesend as a tourist destination for the many visitors arriving at the town piers by steamboat, Windmill Street became the principal thoroughfare linking the Town Pier and High Street to the attraction of Windmill Hill. Clarence Place was laid out during the mid 19th century, connecting Windmill Street to Parrock Street. It was initially known as Lacey Terrace at the east end, from the name of the builder of many of the houses, and mayor of Gravesend in 1850. This wide street follows the level ground at the foot of the northern slope of Windmill Hill. While street surfaces are modern, lamp posts of historic design make an important contribution to the streetscene. Clarence Place is residential in character, with paired villas and stucco terraces grouped to form a continuous plot development on the north side of the street. The residential development on the south side of Clarence Place is more fragmentary and varied, with the greater density of buildings concentrated at the western end. With the exception of Nos. 1-4, which were formerly shops, all of the buildings in Clarence Place are set back from the pavement line, by varying degrees, behind front gardens and this contributes with the wide road to create a spacious appearance.

Windmill Hill Gardens form a principal feature of Clarence Place and make an important contribution to the open, 'green' character of the street. The gardens rise up the northern slope of the hill; the land becomes increasingly steep as it rises toward the summit of the hill. A dwarf wall and cast iron railings separate the gardens from the street, and act as a visually transparent barrier between the spaces, permitting clear views across the formal gardens to the War Memorial and beyond to the summit of the hill. The War Memorial is an important landmark. The granite base is engraved with the names of those lost in the First World War, and it is surmounted by a bronze winged figure of Peace. It was unveiled by General Lord Home in 1922. These open views across the gardens to the hill play a significant role in establishing the special character of this Character Area. Only the lower part of the Windmill Hill Gardens has been included within this Character Area (the remainder is in Character Area 2b – Windmill Hill); the formal gardens surrounding the War Memorial and the adjacent tennis courts and bowling green have a direct visual correlation to Clarence Place, whereas the upper reaches of the garden are screened by a bank of trees and are of a less-cultivated character.

One of the last buildings to be erected on Clarence Place, the Milton Congregational Church and lecture hall, of 1873 is a feature building in views along the street, and from other parts of the Conservation Area. The architect was John Sulmar. The church was erected on a vacant plot on the north side of Clarence Place, and while it is of a much larger scale than the adjacent two-storey dwellings, the structures sit well together to form an important group. The church was originally presented as a stone building in Gothic Revival style, but now has a stucco

coat. It has been the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara since 1968. A new Sikh temple is being constructed on Khalsa Way, and the building on Clarence Place will be vacated; one of the challenges facing this area will be to find an appropriate new use for the building.

At the eastern end of Clarence Place a wide junction of four roads (Clarence Place, Shrubbery Road, Christ Church Road, and Parrock Street) increases the sense of openness created as Clarence Place widens along its course from west to east. There is an attractive view eastwards across to Christ Church Gardens and the surrounding terraced houses (Character Area 6). The public realm is attractively landscaped on Parrock Street; the wide pavements contain low flowerbeds with decorative timber edging. Three important buildings, both historically, architecturally and visually within the townscape are situated on three of the corner sites: no. 29 Clarence Place (Ashley Down Nursing Home); nos. 30-31 Clarence Place; and no. 1 Parrock Road (Character Area 3). Each of these buildings is listed. The buildings are all positioned centrally to their corner site and orientated to present attractive facades on more than one side.

No. 29 Ashley Down is a large detached house of irregular plan and dates from the later part of the 19th century. It is of two storeys, in cream brick, with red brick used to form features such as quoins and is built in Gothic style, with pointed windows, Gothic tracery, and two mullion and transomed windows to the ground floor beneath stone hood moulds. An interesting roofscape is created by gables with decorative wooden bargeboards, and an octagonal belvedere. The building has been extended in its role as the Ashley Down Nursing Home. Nos. 30 and 31 Clarence Place are a mid-19th century

pair of structures also built in the Gothic style. A particularly distinctive feature is the crenellations which run above the ground floor bay windows and Tudor arched porch. A post box carrying the Latin initials VR for 'Victoria Regina', the reigning monarch at the time of its installation, is mounted into the wall of these two houses.

The Veterans Club was erected and opened in 1954 as a social meeting place and games centre for men above the age of 60. It occupies the site of the maze, later Ashenden's early nurseries.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Urban character;
- Cohesive qualities of two or three storey buildings, dating from the 19th century;
- Two important listed buildings: no. 29 and nos. 30-31 Clarence Place;
- Buildings predominantly arranged as pairs of villas or short terraces, and set back from the pavement behind front gardens;
- Shallow pitched slate roofs on many of the houses;
- Roofs have similar ridge and eaves height, but there is variety in form, with some hipped, gabled and mansard roofs;
- Decorative ironwork on balconies and area railings.

Negative features/issues:

- Some unsympathetic modern infill at no. 36 Clarence Place, with garages and a forecourt of hardstanding;
- Loss of boundary walls and front garden areas to create off-road vehicle parking areas;
- Vacant building at no. 16 Clarence Place;
- Some poorly maintained buildings on Parrock Street;

- Partial loss of important brick boundary wall on William Street, to create off road parking areas for houses on north side of Clarence Place;
- Some graffiti.

8.3 Character Area 2a: Shrubbery Road, South Hill Road and Constitution Hill

This area and Character Area 2b both follow the steeper slopes of the hill as it rises toward the summit. This underlying topography creates an overlapping character between the two areas, with narrow, twisting lanes climbing the hill from the north, south and east, and the higher ground allowing clear views across the town and beyond. The two areas are linked historically, both as the land that was occupied by farmers and millers in the 18th century, and as an attraction for visitors to the town in the 19th century. In the 19th century there was more open space than survives today in between the residential streets; The Shrubbery was located in the area now encircled by South Hill Road and Shrubbery Road.

The eastern slopes of the hill have been developed as a residential suburb, whereas the summit of the hill and the northern slopes (Character Area 2b) are free from buildings and in use as public open space for leisure and recreation.

Steep, narrow lanes characterise the area, rising from the wide principal roads which encircle the base of the hill and climbing toward the summit. Shrubbery Road rises from Clarence Place and gives access to the hill, becoming increasingly rural in character as it connects to the tree-lined lanes on either side of Hillside Terrace. The road was in place by the early 19th century, and together with South Hill Road provided a direct route

to the summit of the hill. Shrubbery Road has a historic character and contains some of the oldest buildings in the Conservation Area. These include The Windmill Tavern PH, originally a late 18th century farmhouse, and The Millers Cottage PH, originally the home of one of the millers who produced flour from the mills on the hill. To the south of The Windmill Tavern no. 8 Shrubbery Road (Woodbine Cottage) is a weatherboarded cottage, which visually links to the other former rural buildings on this part of the hill. These early buildings form a distinct group which sits well with the terraced houses erected during the mid 19th century.

Nos. 9-19 and nos. 25-29 Shrubbery Road, all of which are grade II listed apart from nos. 13-16, frame the views south up the hill. Shrubbery Road has a varied and attractive streetscene; vistas open up as the road meanders and the gradient steepens along its course, creating views of layers of buildings stepping up the hillside. A particularly attractive point is the sharply angled junction of Shrubbery Road and South Hill Road, where a sharp difference in levels create interesting juxtapositions of buildings. The brick terraces are of two storeys over a basement, and are set back from the street frontage behind small gardens. Flights of stone steps approach the front doors. Nos. 9-19 are particularly attractive, built in a Gothic cottage orné manner, with rustic timber porches and decorative Gothic glazing to the sash windows. The well-stocked front gardens provide a visual connection to the trees on the hill to the south. The large brick chimney stacks with terracotta pots provide an important rhythmic motif, seen in silhouette against the sky, as the houses climb the street. The historic character of the street is reinforced through some surviving historic street surfaces, such as granite kerbs and

sett-lined gutters, but street lighting is in the form of modern lights.

Further brick terraces in the area, such as nos. 40-53 South Hill Road are more modest, with less elaborate architectural detailing than those on Shrubbery Road. The row on South Hill Road are set at back of pavement line. While these have lost a number of architectural features, such as original windows, they create an attractive hard boundary to the street, emphasising the strong curve in the road at this point. The bend in the road leads to a wide open area, where the three split parts of South Hill Road converge. Two particular buildings preside over the open area, nos. 38 and 39 South Hill Road. South Hill Road climbs gently up the eastern slope of the hill and at the point where the gradient begins to level there is an imposing terrace of four houses, nos. 1-4 Constitution Crescent, facing north. The location of these houses gives them clear views across the town and the river. The buildings are a grand three storeys, set above a raised basement storey, and with an attic storey in the roof. This terrace is one of the grandest architectural statements in Gravesend, with the elevation articulated in the Classical style in the Doric Order, with pilasters and a cornice. The imbalanced design of the existing elevations suggests that a much larger scheme was planned initially and that this was never completed.

Nos. 1-7 Royal Oak Terrace are an unusual development, largely concealed from view. These three storey single aspect buildings, rising to four storeys in regular gable features, are very narrow and set on a narrow lane, linking through between South Hill Road and Shrubbery Lane. Originally the land to the east was minimally developed and the houses of Royal Oak Terrace would have had

a pleasant long view east across the Kent countryside.

20th century infill development has been carried out with varying degrees of success in this area. None of the new development extends above the established two and three storey building heights, and the more appropriate of the developments have attempted to reference architectural features and building materials of surrounding historic structures, creating a harmonious unity to the streetscape. Examples of such buildings can be found on Shrubbery Road. The Kingdom Hall does not make a positive contribution to the character of the area; the building is shortly to be vacated, providing a potential opportunity for improvement through redevelopment of the site.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Urban character, but containing some older rural buildings, and with connections to the open green space of Windmill Hill;
- Buildings typically of two and three storeys;
- Landmark building of nos. 1-4 Constitution Crescent, which is much larger in scale, being of three storeys and attic over a full-height basement;
- A few buildings dating from the 18th century, but otherwise predominantly mid 19th century with some 20th century residential infill;
- Good groupings of grade II listed buildings;
- Buildings mainly arranged as groups of terraces, with some detached and paired cottages and villas;
- Buildings generally set back from the street frontage behind front gardens; many of the buildings follow the meandering orientation of the roads, creating varied

plot sizes and visual interest;

- Groups of buildings set on terraces up the hillside, creating important views up to, and down across buildings and roofscapes. The rear elevations of many of the buildings are visible;
- Use of local brick, some with an applied render coat, a few examples of weatherboarding, and a variety of architectural details all add interest.

Negative features/issues:

- Loss of original architectural features, such as doors and windows, for example on nos. 40-53 South Hill Road;
- Some inappropriate 20th century residential infill development, for example on Constitution Hill and South Hill Road;
- Some unsympathetic alterations to rear elevations that are highly visible from within the Conservation Area, e.g. Primrose Terrace, which can be seen from South Hill Road;
- The forecourt of The Windmill Tavern and The Millers Tavern are used for car parking; the areas could be enhanced through a well-considered landscape treatment;
- The access path to Primrose Terrace is in a poor state of repair and requires attention.

8.4 Character Area 2b: Windmill Hill

This area is based around the undeveloped part of Windmill Hill, which includes the northern part of Windmill Hill Gardens and the summit of the hill itself. The overriding character is of a gently sloping grassed hillside, interspersed with individual and groups of trees. Far reaching views extend northwards and eastwards across the town,

the river and over to the County of Essex on the opposite shore.

The hill has been identified as an observation point from at least the 14th century. It was the location for one of a series of beacons to warn London of impending attack. Beacons giving warnings of the approach of invading forces were erected on the hill in 1377 and again in 1588, and one was standing there in 1719. A new beacon was erected in 1988 in connection with the Armada anniversary celebrations.

The hill lay outside of the developed town until the 19th century, prior to which it was open farm and market garden land. Two windmills were situated on the hill in the 18th century to take advantage of the exposed location for milling flour. The hill owes its name to the windmills that have been built upon it at various points through history. It was previously known as Ruggen, Rogge, Rounden or Rouge Hill. It was until the end of the 18th century rough untitled ground. The mill erected in 1764 was used by the tourists as a viewing platform. The last millers, Alexander Deakin and John Fiveash were moved to Perry Street. In the 19th century a camera obscura was erected on top of the mill. The Belle Vue Tavern was created in one of the old mill buildings on top of the hill. This (then vacant) was burnt down in 1900.

The Corporation purchased Windmill Hill in 1843 and the lower slopes in 1889, allowing it to be terraced and turned into a pleasure ground.

Negative features/issues:

- Some vandalism to street furniture on the hill;
- Rouge Lane is heavy use for vehicle

parking, which threatens the 'rural' character of the hill;

- Lack of signage at the summit of the hill to illustrate viewpoints of interest.

8.5 Character Area 3: Parrock Road

This area is based around the northern section of Parrock Road, connecting through to Parrock Street in the north. It is a busy arterial route into the town centre, and curves around the lower eastern slope of Windmill Hill. Many of the historic buildings are located on the western side of the road, set on land above the road, and facing eastwards to take in the far-reaching views across the Kent countryside.

There is little stylistic unity between the buildings on Parrock Road, although many of the historic structures had been erected by the 1870s and are of a similar scale. Many of the buildings are large detached or grouped villas, and the various architectural statements create a picturesque streetscene which evolves as the road meanders along its course. Landmark buildings include Parrock Lodge, and Echo Lodge. Bronte Villas were erected circa 1840 in the Italianate style, with a render coat, moulded to create elaborate architectural detail.

No. 1 Parrock Road is dated 1879, but was altered in 1885. It is in the Arts and Crafts style, with an attractive tile-hung first floor, bands of pargetting, and various expressive mouldings to doors and windows, such as the shell mouldings over the first floor windows. The entrance to the site is through an imposing pair of brick gatepiers, each surmounted by a lion sejant.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Typically large detached 19th century villas and paired villas set in spacious grounds;
- Houses set back from Parrock Road behind boundary walls and front gardens; the houses are set on the foot of the hill, on land raised higher than the road;
- Little cohesion between the buildings, but variety in scale and architectural styles provides a picturesque evolving streetscape;
- Many of the buildings have a stucco render which introduces a degree of visual consistency; no. 1 Parrock Road is unique in its Arts and Crafts style, with tile hanging and pargetting.

Negative features/issues:

- Parrock Road is a very busy traffic route;
- Some unsympathetic 20th century residential infill.

8.6 Character Area 4: Windmill Street

Windmill Street developed as one of the principal arterial routes into Gravesend and to the river from the old London to Rochester road. The linear route connected directly to High Street and the Town Pier, running through open fields, market gardens, and brick fields to the riverside town. With the development of Gravesend as a resort in the 19th century Windmill Street became the principal thoroughfare between the Town Pier and Windmill Hill, and the town spread increasingly southwards.

This area is characterised by the development which occurred on the southern stretch of Windmill Street from the mid 19th century onwards. The western side of the hill was developed less intensively and at a later date

than the eastern side of the hill, such as South Hill Road. Initial development took place on the eastern side of Windmill Street, on the lower slopes of the hill, and was confined to the Tivoli Hotel (which became the Jewish Synagogue) and three pairs of villas, Portland Villas. By the end of the 19th century three large detached villas had been constructed to the south of Portland Villas.

Tivoli House is a landmark building within the Conservation Area, and from views into the area southwards along Windmill Street (the Upper Windmill Street, Gravesend Conservation Area). The building was built as a hotel and refreshment rooms, known as the Tivoli Tavern, for the Windmill Hill Pleasure Gardens. Its own garden ran to the south, parallel with Windmill Street; the garden has been built upon in the 20th century, but is still known as Tivoli Gardens. The building was extended in 1856 when it was occupied as the Jewish Academy. The Italianate style building is of two storeys and an attic over a basement, with the west elevation set directly on the pavement line. In an area where all the surrounding houses are set back from the street behind front gardens, Tivoli House projects proudly into the streetscape. The east wing of Tivoli House, a late 19th century extension (St. John's Hall), has recently been destroyed by fire. One of the challenges facing this area is to achieve an appropriate replacement structure on the vacant plot.

Pairs of villas characterise the stretch of townscape running south from Tivoli House to close to the junction with Leith Park Road. The houses are set high above the road, on the lower slope of the hill, and long front gardens run down to street level. While there is a great variety in architectural styles, from the 19th century Portland Villas, and 20th century residential infill on Tivoli Gardens, a

degree of harmonious consistency has been achieved through grouping houses in pairs, maintaining a height of two storeys, and locating buildings on a generally consistent building line.

The western side of Windmill Street in this area was not developed until the end of the 19th century, when the suburban growth of the town rapidly increased. A series of large detached and paired brick villas were constructed facing across Windmill Street to the hill to the east. Each of these villas is of an individual design, but they form an attractive group of a similar date. The buildings are constructed of yellow or cream brick with red brick dressings, or red brick with blue brick dressings. A common feature is the gables with decorative timber barge boards.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Large detached and paired villas from the 19th century, with pairs of 20th century houses as infill development;
- Tivoli House, a large Italianate style 19th century hotel, now apartments;
- Buildings set back from the street frontage behind large front gardens. Tivoli House is the exception, sitting at the back of the pavement line;
- Eclectic palette of materials in general, i.e. stucco render, polychrome brick, timber bargeboards, but groups of buildings are unified through materials. The east side of the street is characterised by buildings with stucco render, the west side by buildings with polychrome brickwork.

Negative features/issues:

- Loss of boundary walls, particularly on the east side of Windmill Street, to create off road parking areas and garages.

8.7 Character Area 5: Leith Park Road and Sandy Bank Road

This area is characterised by 20th century residential development on the north side of Leith Park Road, which connects Parrock Road to Windmill Street. Prior to the 20th century this area was relatively undeveloped; much of the land was occupied by the Gravesend and Milton Waterworks. A new pumping station has recently been built to the north-east of Glenview House.

Glenview House is the only 19th century building on Leith Park Road. It occupies a strategic visual position at the highest part of Leith Park Road, and its rendered elevation is prominent in views along the street. The large garden in which it sits contains many mature trees and these contribute to the well-treed character of the street, which is lined with mature lime trees on either side. A high brick wall runs from Glenview House along Leith Park Road and this is an important feature of the street.

At the western end of Leith Park Road an interesting decorative cement boundary wall is a remnant of West Hill Villa, which occupied a large site at the junction of Leith Park Road and Windmill Street. The villa was being erected by William Aspdin, whose father Joseph was patentee of Portland Cement.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Large 19th century villa, Glenview House, set on the pavement line;
- Important brick boundary wall running from Glenview House to Sandy Bank Road;
- Remnants of the concrete wall associated with West Hill House.

Negative features/issues:

- Remnants of the concrete wall to West Hill House of William Aspdin are vulnerable to decay and loss;
- Poor visual quality of security railings to the pumping station and the pumping station building;
- The scout hut on Leith Park Road requires maintenance and upgrading or replacement.

8.8 Character Area 6: Christ Church Road and Christ Church Crescent

Christ Church Road and Christ Church Crescent are grouped around three sides of Christ Church Gardens. Parrock Street runs along the west side of the gardens. The two roads of small-scale two storey terraced houses were erected around Christ Church, which was built in 1854 and consecrated in 1856. The church was built to replace St John's Church when this was sold to the Roman Catholics, and the town was expanding southwards. The architect was R. C. Carpenter, and it was completed by William Slater. When Christ Church was built it was one of the only structures on the eastern side of the south end of Parrock Street; the site was entirely surrounded by open fields to the east. Milton Barracks were constructed on part of these open fields in 1862, and Christ Church Road was laid out as an access road to the barracks. The church was extended in 1867 to accommodate the troops from the barracks. By the early 20th century Christ Church Road had been laid out with houses and Christchurch Crescent had been built.

These two streets comprise small scale two storey terraced houses, tightly packed into the awkwardly shaped site between the former Christ Church and the site of Milton

Barracks. The houses are set at the back of the pavement line, and an attractive rhythm is created by the regular pattern of doors and windows along the facades. Built in yellow brick, the detail of the houses is articulated by red and blue bricks all set flush with the main elevation. Architectural features such as quoins, string courses and rustication around the windows and the doors are referenced by this polychrome brickwork. The roofs are traditionally of slate and would have had decorative terracotta crested ridge tiles, few of which now survive.

Further cohesion is created in this Character Area by the historic street surfaces which survive in more complete form than in any other part of the Conservation Area. Pavements are of stone flags, kerbs are of granite and rows of setts detail the gutters; this all contributes to form an attractive and appropriately scaled context for the historic buildings. Christ Church Road is terminated by a brick screen wall erected to close off this entrance to the barracks.

The condition of Christ Church deteriorated to a point that it was closed down in 1932. It was dismantled from its site on Parrock Road in 1934 and moved to Old Road East. The site became Christ Church Gardens and the masonry remains of the church are still visible among the grass. The gardens are treated as lawn, interspersed with some mature trees; the area is bordered by 20th century hooped railings. The whole provides an attractive setting to the surrounding houses and an important green space close to the centre of the town. The spacious character of this part of the Conservation Area helps to mitigate the impact of the busy traffic moving along Parrock Street.

An important feature of this Character Area is also the K6 Telephone Kiosk located on the pavement to the west of Christ Church Gardens. The cast iron box is of the type designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1935; the square kiosk is set beneath a domed roof and the windows and door have distinctive marginal glazing. The structure is grade II listed.

The principal features of the built form are;

- Urban character;
- Uniform two storey terraced houses dating from the late 19th century;
- Buildings set at the back of pavement line;
- Yellow brick buildings, with polychrome detailing of architectural features;
- Identical detailing of houses, with a rounded headed sash window and front door with semi-circular fanlight at ground floor level, and a centrally positioned rectangular sash and first floor level;
- Many of the sash windows retain marginal glazing;

Negative features/issues:

- Some of the brick buildings have been rendered, which disrupts the visual continuity of the terraces;
- Loss of original architectural features, such as original doors, windows, chimney pots and terracotta crested ridge tiles;
- Some loss of traditional slate roofs, and replacement with concrete roofing tiles;

9. ISSUES

9.1 Definition of Issues

The following 'Issues' have been identified by the appraisal process (via extensive survey work) and have been modified to include the views of the local community as part of the public consultation exercise, including a public meeting and four week period of consultation. They provide the basis for the Site Specific Actions in the Management Proposals. These issues will be subject to regular review by the Council and new ones may be added in the future.

9.2 Education and information

Active measures for promoting better understanding of Gravesend and its place in history underpin the regeneration of the town by drawing in external interest and resources.

Gravesham Borough Council has recently published a number of guides in order to help promote this understanding and to encourage an improvement in standards in the borough's conservation areas. These include guidance on shopfronts, windows and doors.

9.3 Buildings at Risk

There are some buildings in the Conservation Area that would benefit from repairs or redecoration, notably:

- No. 16 Clarence Place.

Generally, however, the buildings are in good condition and the greatest threat derives from well intentioned property 'improvement'.

9.4 Alterations to buildings

It is clear that a considerable amount of property alteration has taken place in the Conservation Area. The Council is currently introducing an Article 4 Direction into the area which will bring further works to dwelling houses under the control of the planning system. It is evident that well-intentioned, but unsympathetic changes, especially to doors, windows and roofs, have begun to have a cumulative effect, causing loss of original architectural features that is damaging to the character of the conservation area.

9.5 New development

In the 20th century a great deal of residential infill has occurred on the streets which surround Windmill Hill, for example on Leith Park Road. Some of these buildings neither preserve nor enhance the historic character of the Conservation Area. There appears to be little scope for any more infill development in the Conservation Area without compromising some of the open space which adds to the special interest. Some opportunities may exist by replacing some of the less successful examples of late 20th century architecture.

The east wing of Tivoli House, a late 19th century extension (St. John's Hall), has recently been destroyed by fire, and one of the challenges is to achieve an appropriate replacement structure on the vacant plot.

9.6 Locally Listed buildings

There is no adopted comprehensive Local List for Gravesend (nor indeed, for Gravesham Borough generally) and the identification of buildings or structures for a Local List is considered to be a priority, once the criteria have been agreed. Any Local List should be

drawn up with the full consultation of the local community.

9.7 Enforcement

During the survey work for the Character Appraisal, a number of sites or buildings were identified where works have taken place that may not have been authorised and where enforcement action may be relevant. These include visible satellite dishes and modern windows or doors, and they include alterations to listed buildings.

9.8 Parking

The issue of car parking needs to be addressed in the Conservation Area. There is minimum on-street residents parking, and the area is heavily congested by parked cars. In turn, this has resulted in off-road parking areas being created in front garden areas and at the rear of plots. The loss of front gardens, and boundary walls and railings is detrimental to the appearance and historic character of the area.

9.9 Enhancement potential

There is a strong case for the continued maintenance of the comprehensive scheme that has regenerated the public realm of Gravesend and for extending it further to areas such as Windmill Hill.

Building repairs and enhancements are needed throughout this Conservation Area. The renovation and reuse of the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara on Clarence Place, when it is vacated in due course, is one of the most pressing issues in the Conservation Area. Another will be the reuse or redevelopment of the site of the Kingdom Hall when this is vacated.

9.10 Trees

Trees make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. A tree strategy that considered issues of amenity, practicality and, importantly, succession planning would reduce the need to take ad hoc decisions on a case-by-case basis.

9.11 Boundary walls

Boundary walls and railings make an important contribution to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area and their removal should be resisted.

APPENDICES

[Appendix 1](#) Bibliography

[Appendix 2](#)

Townscape Appraisal Map

Age of Buildings Map

Character Zones Map

Designations Map

Conservation Area Boundary Map 2009

Appendix - Bibliography

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