

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Sutton Valence



Maidstone Borough Council

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SUTTON VALENCE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

1.1.1 The concept of conservation areas was first brought into being by the Civic Amenities Act 1967, but the relevant legislation now is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This Act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

1.1.2 Designation as a conservation area makes additional controls available to the local authority. Briefly these include the control of demolition of unlisted buildings, more restricted permitted development rights for single dwelling houses and protection of trees.

1.1.3 In addition to these enhanced powers, the local authority is also required when dealing with applications for planning permission to have special regard to the question of whether or not the proposed development would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. ([Section 72.1 of the Act](#)) There is a presumption that developments which would not preserve or enhance this special character should be refused planning permission.

1.2 Background to the Appraisal

1.2.1 Local authorities are required, by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to carry out reviews of conservation area boundaries ([Section 69.2 of the Act](#)). This is to consider whether the boundaries should be increased or decreased depending on the continued contribution that the areas within the boundary contribute to the special character of the area. It will also assist in the process of making informed decisions on planning applications where it is important to value and take into account the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.

1.2.2 The clear understanding of the conservation area’s qualities which such an appraisal produces will provide suggestions for future actions and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual proposals may be assessed.

1.3 Scope and Nature of the Appraisal

1.3.1 This appraisal will set out the key historic forces which have led to the village developing to its present day form and the resulting characteristics which describe the conservation area today and which are significant in any development decisions.

1.4 History of Designation

1.4.1 The conservation area was set up under the authority of Kent County Council on 24 September 1971. There is no available record of any appraisal that may have been carried out at that time. Maidstone Borough Council subsequently became the authority for the conservation area when the county council relinquished that role .

2.0 GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The conservation area boundary comprises an area of 13.9 hectares. It is a reasonably tightly drawn area largely adopting an east/west profile following the Greensand ridge. Although small the conservation area forms a complex whole with a multi-faceted range of building types and styles. It is this eclectic mix which makes for the charm and character that is the experience of the area today.

2.2 Open spaces are small and limited within the conservation area and tend to be effectively widening of the roads as in Broad Street or The Green but the overall feeling is not one of enclosure (except fleetingly in the High Street) because there are frequent gaps between buildings. There are also a significant number of opportunities for long range views over open countryside to the south.



View of the High Street looking east

2.3 Buildings of an interesting mix of period, style, material and scale line the streets which predominantly run east/west along the escarpment which the conservation area straddles. The materials deployed on the elevations include render, brick, weatherboarding and tile hanging with some Rag stone most significantly on the larger buildings and boundary walls.

2.4 The conservation area is richly provided with trees and other flora thanks to much small scale forecourt planting coupled with well established trees on private or semi-public land. There are ever present background views to the woodland and farmland beyond the conservation area. These outward, often glimpsed, views are fundamental to the character of the conservation area.

2.5 The presence of Sutton Valence School with its estate laced into the fabric of the village has a strong and positive impact on the overall character. Brooding over it all is the presence, though not often visible, of the castle which stands on a commanding high point of the ridge at the eastern end of the conservation area dominating views from the south.

3.0 LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 Sutton Valence lies about 5 miles (8 kilometres) to the south east of Maidstone to which it connects via the A274, a road which runs from the County Town to Tenterden which is some 13 miles further south.

3.2 Sutton Valence is reasonably compact and therefore the surrounding countryside extends from a close proximity to the heart of the village to the far distance. This setting is important to the village as open farmland dominates the view particularly to the south. Given the elevated nature of the village these green panoramas are part of the intrinsic quality and character of the conservation area. The Greensand Way – a long distance path of 108 miles running from Haslemere in Surrey to Hamstreet in Kent – passes through the conservation area as it follows the Greensand Ridge (see below). Views of and into the village from the approach routes are restricted by ribbon development of high banks and hedges but it is the occasional view out, afforded by the nature of the development, which are hugely significant and open out an otherwise tightly packed urban form. This aspect could easily be damaged by inappropriate infill development and should therefore be material in assessing proposed developments.

3.3 Geologically Sutton Valence is located on a band of cretaceous Greensand (Lower Greensand) which forms a ridge so that the highest parts of the village, to the north and east, are approximately 70m higher than the lowest parts to the south. This allows for panoramic views from the castle ruins and other elevated parts of the village over the Weald and the land to the south.



View from School Lane – looking south

4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The Village

4.1.1 There is some evidence of Roman activity in the area now known as Sutton Valence but that evidence is scattered and not comprehensive. It is known that a Roman road ran through what is now the conservation area near to the present school.

4.1.2 The Saxon settlement, however, is referred to in a charter of the King of Mercia. Its name then was Suthtune (South Town). In the Norman period the village, having grown, is referred to as Town Sutton. It had been granted by William the Conqueror to Odo Bishop of Bayeaux and its commercial activity was based very much on agriculture. At this time there were 18 smallholders and 5 cottagers. While measurements are not exact there were about 640 acres (300Ha) of cultivated land and pannage (the right to forage in the forest) for 50 pigs.

4.1.3 In 1166 the town was granted to Baldwin of Bethune who, most likely, rebuilt the abandoned defences - creating a new stone castle. The next 50 years witnessed a frequent changing of the ownership of the manor until in 1265 Henry III conferred the town to William de Valence. William is succeeded by Aymer de Valence and on his death in 1344 the town passed to the Hastings family and accordingly was renamed Sutton Hastings. There followed another turbulent time until the Clifford family bought the manor in 1418 and remained in ownership for 130 years before selling it on to the Filmer family. The Filmers were a rich Elizabethan family who appear to have been active landlords who purchased more land and organised infrastructure improvements to their estate until the whole was broken up and sold off in 1916. Since then ownership patterns have remained reasonably stable.

4.2 The Church



View of St Mary's Church Sutton Valence

4.2.1 There is mention in the Domesday Book of a church on the present site but no information survives to identify its form. The earliest element of a church building in Sutton Valence which survives is a 14C alter piece carved from Caen stone. For many years this was in private hands and adorned a local garden but now it is on display at the Victoria and Albert museum.

4.2.2 The church which preceded the present one is shown in a drawing of 1823 by Edward Pretty. It has a nave with a lower roofed chancel and two separately roofed chapels on either side. The tower is built into the north side of the nave. It originally had a spire but this collapsed as a result of a fire so at the time of the Pretty drawing all there is to be seen is an ill proportioned cap roof with a weathervane. The drawing also shows a crudely restored east window.

4.2.3 By 1823 the church was in a dilapidated condition and was considered too small for the population of the time which had grown from around 700 parishioners in 1801 to 1144 in 1831.

4.2.4 The church of St Mary today is arguably more interesting than beautiful. It incorporates part of a late fifteenth century structure (chancel piers and transept arches) and possibly some elements from its Norman origins. This is, however, predominantly a church of the 1820s when it was rebuilt, using largely local Rag stone, wide and tall to fit in galleries which were the pre-requisite of the day. Then in the nineteenth century certain features of the church were reworked to give it a more Gothic appearance probably by architect Edward Habershon. He formed aisles where there had been galleries and had tracery added to the windows in a style he had deployed elsewhere. The font survives from the medieval church as does a fine thirteenth century coffin lid in the north aisle.

4.3 The School



Sutton Valence School

4.3.1 Sutton Valence School was founded by William Lambe (1495 – 1580) in 1576, at his own expense, as a free grammar school for boys. It was entrusted to the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers of which he was a member and served as Master late in his life. His fortune appears to have been made through his involvement with the cloth trade in East Anglia though he was born in Sutton Valence and lived most of his adult life in London.

4.3.2 The original school building was constructed in brick – an expensive material at that time – on the site now occupied by Lambe’s House. This building was modified and updated over the years until it was demolished to make way for the present building, Lambe’s House, which was constructed initially in 1864. This building is still in use by the school even though its centre of gravity has moved up the hill to the ‘new’ block designed by Adams, Holden and Pearson and completed in 1914.

4.3.3 The school occupies a number of premises around the village including the former congregational church (as a craft centre), Holdgate House, and a number of properties on the north and south sides of the High Street.

4.4 The Castle



Sutton Valence Castle

4.4.1 The stone keep is all that remains of a strongly defended castle, which most probably, occupied the entire spur of the hillside in medieval times.

4.4.2 Ruined sections of a curtain wall and an additional tower, visible until the early twentieth century, also suggest that the castle occupied a much larger area than today. A bailey probably lay beyond the keep and its outer bailey ran along what is now Tumblers Hill and contained buildings such as the hall, chapel and kitchen. The barbican possibly was located adjacent to Baker Lane. The extraction of stone for the construction of the defences is possibly why Baker Lane and parts of Tumblers Hill are sunken with high banks either side. In any review of the conservation area boundary consideration should be given to an extension to give protection to the whole site area of the castle which might reveal significant archaeological information in the future.

4.4.3 The great tower, probably built about 1200, was at least three storeys high. The ground floor was most likely used as a storeroom, and external stone stairs led to the main entrance on the first floor.

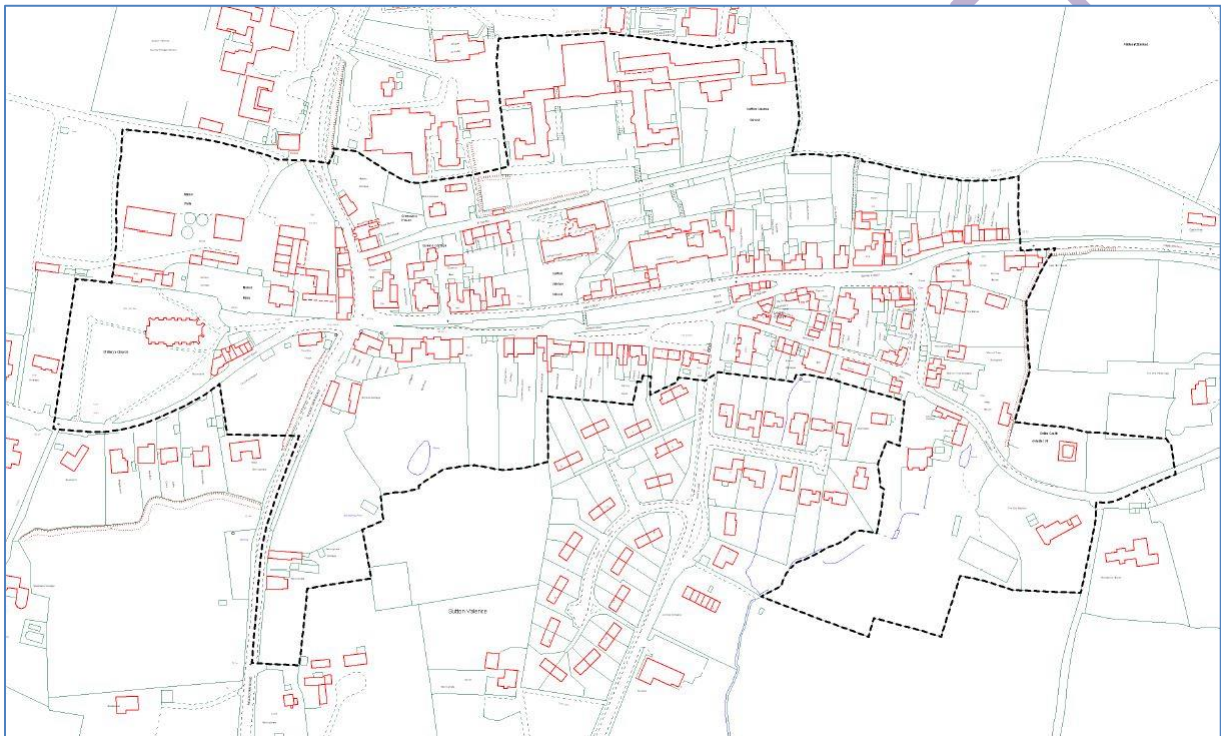
4.4.4 The main room at first floor was probably used for public business, with withdrawing chambers and storage space for treasures and documents on the upper floors. Recesses in the walls, which you can still see today, were used as cupboards or latrines.

4.4.5 The Norman Count of Aumale, Baldwin de Bethune, probably built the castle in the middle of the twelfth century. It was used as a residence for over 150 years by a succession of important lords and earls. Having passed across through numerous marriages, in 1238 the castle was owned by Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester. As leader of the baronial rebellion against Henry III, he was killed at the Battle of Evesham in 1265, and his estates were confiscated by the Crown. Henry III then conferred the castle on his half-brother, William de Valence, as a reward for his support during the rebellion. The village of Sutton, or 'South Town', became known as Sutton Valence.

4.4.6 William's son, Aymer de Valence, inherited the castle in 1307 and stayed here in June 1315. Remarkably, three of the Valence household accounts have survived. These show that the family spent their time constantly travelling between their many estates. In the period between May 1296 and September 1297, Joan de Valence (William's widow) spent time at eight different residences, including a month here at Sutton Valence.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

5.0.1 The conservation area has a unified feel of being a tight, urban entity restricted by the need to maximise building plots available on the steep escarpment it occupies. It has narrow streets and extensive countryside views to the south from all parts. The relatively small scale of the building plots is interrupted at intervals by several large buildings which dominate the scene where they occur but are otherwise hidden by the closely stacked buildings making up the majority of any panorama. Within that individual streets have their own character and thus it is appropriate to make this appraisal on a street by street basis – prior to setting out the description and value of discrete buildings



Plan of Sutton Valence showing Conservation Area

5.1 High Street



Sutton Valence High Street looking west

5.1.1 The High Street runs from North Street in the west to its continuation as Broad Street where Lower Street re-joins it. Travelling from the western end one first finds, on the northern side, the Kings Head publichouse which marks the junction with North Street. This is a Victorian brick built building which contrasts with the Queens Head – a seventeenth century timber framed building which has a Georgianised front elevation while the whole is rendered and coloured white. Between them is Bennet House which is a substantial Victorian property originally a seminary now providing accommodation to Sutton Valence School.

5.1.2 Next heading east is another pair of Victorian Villas (Helsing House and The Vines). The feel of this section of the street is very open as the land drops away to the south (down to Lower Road) where there is a strip of natural landscape with several well established and protected trees. There are also long range views over the rooftops of properties on Lower Road and across the open countryside with the Weald beyond. The same character generally follows through past Sutton House, the former Alms Houses and Lambe's House (all now occupied by Sutton Valence School).

5.1.3 Beyond Lambe's House the character of the High Street changes. The scale of the buildings is generally smaller and more tightly packed. Domestic scale buildings closely line both sides of the street giving a strong sense of enclosure. The properties on the north side are all listed and are described in the audit below. There are some modest but charming buildings to the south which add to the nature and charm of this part of the High Street. Some are now occupied by Sutton Valence School.

5.1.4 The surfaces of the High Street are tarmac for the trafficked road and hard Rag stone for the pavement which is only on the northern side. Boundary treatment is largely by well maintained Rag stone walling with the occasional run of metal railing. Street furniture is very minimal with just a single converted gas street lamp and a telegraph pole. It is the absence of street clutter here that contributes to a positive character for the street.

5.2 Broad Street



Broad Street Sutton Valence looking east

5.2.1 As one enters Broad Street the sense of enclosure lessens. This is partly due to the width of the road but also, while the buildings on the north side jostle against the back edge of the pavement those on the south side are spaced apart with areas of green planting filling the gaps.

5.2.2 Almost all the properties on this street are listed and described later in this report. Also listed is a section of raised pavement which runs for some 100m. In fact this elevated pavement runs on, albeit unlisted, along Broad Street and Tumblers Hill to way beyond the boundary of the built up village. As Broad Street curves round to the north the vista is terminated by the former chapel (now Gulland Hall and another building absorbed into the estate of Sutton Valence School) giving a real feeling of an external 'room' for the village. Surfaces continue from the High Street with a Rag stone pavement on the north side – boundaries are less uniform with a painted fence and ivy hedge to Cygnet Cottage, a Rag stone wall to Valence House and a brick wall to Shirley House. Street furniture is minimal comprising two converted traditional gas lights, a telegraph pole, a post box and a couple of vehicle bollards so has a very limited impact on the character of the conservation area.

5.3 Tumblers Hill

5.3.1 Tumblers Hill is the continuation of Broad Street out into open countryside. This is a traditional country lane and narrows significantly from the generous proportions found in Broad Street. The lane itself is sunken possibly due to the earlier extraction of Rag stone or perhaps this is connected to the defensive works of the Norman castle which, it is reasonably well established, extended to the southern side of Tumblers Hill. On the northern side beyond the raised pavement and high boundary hedge is the so called Bloody Mountain the supposed site of a Saxon battle.

5.4 Lower Road



Lower Road Sutton Valence looking east

5.4.1 Lower Road joins with the High Street at the junction with North Street. It dips down steeply following a lower contour than the High Street. At its western end is Hillside House which is a timber framed house of the seventeenth century built in red brick with tile hanging.

5.4.2 Lower Road is built up only on its southern side while the north side is occupied by the same band of planting that forms the southern side of part of the High Street. It forms a green backdrop to Lower Road.

5.4.3 Redheugh House is a modern but not inharmonious insertion into the street and sits next to Old Place a much altered but nevertheless venerable survivor from possibly the fifteenth century. Old Place is a highly decorative building with chequered brickwork, black and white timber framing and infill panels and multifarious window styles. It sits hard up against a narrow part of Lower Road. Further along Lower Road past a row of Victorian buildings, which includes a public house called the Clothworkers Arms. Past Milstead Cottage is Motto Cottages - formerly a single house the cottages, as they set back from the street with a well planted garden, provide a break in the street frontage. Lower Road then continues between two green areas – The Green on the right and an area of informal landscaping on the left rising up the escarpment to meet with the High Street.

5.4.4 The first part of Lower Road has a narrow pavement surfaced with tarmac, as is the road surface, and this is backed by a utilitarian blockwork retaining wall. The remainder of the road, in fact right up to where it rejoins the High Street has no pavement at all. There is a stretch of gravelled off road parking while the whole of this stretch to the end of The Green is backed by a fine Rag stone wall. The entire length of Lower Road is free of street furniture.

5.5 Old Place

5.5.1 Motto Cottages mark the junction of Old Place and Lower Road. Old Place runs along the south side of The Green and is lined on the southern side by a series of varied cottages and houses whose marked character is one of a diverse appearance one from the other but still constituting a harmonious and picturesque whole. Old Place is not a road but a pedestrian path –of tarmac finish but with a Rag stone gutter (similar to that found at Boughton Monchelsea Green and other locations across the borough) running down one side.

5.5.2 Generally the buildings along Old Place have generally a minimal set back from the path of 500mm or so. The first is Motto House a four square gable ended substantial property with a painted brick ground floor and tile hung upper storey. Adjacent are the more modest Candy and Townwell Cottages - listed and referred to in the matrix below. Spring Cottages are a pair of very early Victorian brick built houses with a stone parapet in front of a gabled roof. Next is the remaining listed building on Old Place which is Valence Green Cottage a timber framed and weatherboarded building of the early 1800's. From here to the junction with South Lane are a pair of twentieth century brick built cottages with a double cat slide roof and Prill Cottage which is a white painted weather boarded timber framed house.

5.5.3 These last properties overlook The Green which is the one 'formal' open space in the Sutton Valence conservation area. It was, from the thirteenth century, the site of the annual fair. The Green features a spring with constantly running water and a protected tree (TPO) –a significant Chestnut. Close to this tree in the north east corner of The Green is a somewhat untidy accumulation of street furniture which includes several types of bin, redundant concrete fence posts, a worn lamp standard and a telegraph pole.

5.6 South Lane



South Lane looking south – Holdgate House on the left

5.6.1 Only a small part of South Lane and one of its buildings is within the conservation area. The building is Holdgate House. This impressive building with its Rag stone walling with limestone

dressings to openings, four dramatic gabled windows and array of ornate brick chimney stacks was erected as replacement almshouses for those endowed by William Lambe on the High Street when they were absorbed into the estate of Sutton Valence School. This building was, in due course, taken on itself by the school as dormitory accommodation and is where Malcolm Parkinson (creator of B & Q) began his time at the school.

5.7 Rectory Lane

5.7.1 The first part of this lane is rather broken up visually and has the feel of a 'back' lane although most of its buildings do front onto it. It is a slightly uncomfortable mix of modern and older properties set at widely varying distances back from the lane and some of those extreme set backs give rise to uncertain and undefined spaces. It is not however without interest and the prime example of this is the different ways of using Rag stone expressed in two buildings which face each other across the lane at its narrowest point. On the north side is the 'barn', of the seventeenth century, with its roughly coursed and highly textured and galletted Rag stone while the school hall to the south deploys un-coursed but smooth Rag stone with limestone dressings to openings and quoins.

5.7.2 As the lane begins to curve around the castle it opens up slightly and there is even a raised Rag stone pavement with a fine coursed stone wall behind it. Opposite is the former Court House. This is a high quality building of possibly the late fifteenth century and is a timber framed, open hall jettied house which has been much altered over the years. It is set back in its own grounds with some splendid and well established trees (many protected by an area Tree Protection Order - TPO). Further on to the north of the lane one can see the ruins of the castle perched on its hilltop position and commanding views across the Weald to the south and along the presumed Roman road in both directions. By this point Rectory Lane has become a true country lane with open fields to the south with only the occasional house. The edge of the built up village is clearly legible and this is a positive aspect of the conservation area.

5.8 Chapel Road



Chapel Road Sutton Valence looking north

5.8.1 This road connects Rectory Lane with Broad Street and rises steeply up the escarpment over its short length. It has a rather open nature due to the spaces between the buildings. The houses of interest, in terms of their contribution to the conservation area, are all referred to in the detailed audit which follows. Briefly they are Walnut Tree Cottages possibly from the early seventeenth century and rendered white, and Jasmine and Laurel Cottages largely weather boarded and both good examples of nineteenth century cottage design. Cross House has some interest for the cross indented in the brick gable which tends to mark it out as the home of the minister prior to the erection of the manse on the far side of the chapel.

5.9 Chart Road

5.9.1 Chart Road begins heading west from the junction of North Street and Headcorn Road (A274). The A road brings about a significant divide between the main part of the village to the east and that lining Chart Road to the west.

5.9.2 This is the rather constrained site of the village memorial to those who fell during the two world wars. It is immediately confronted by the A274 bringing a high level of traffic past the site and there is no assembling space for commemoration and contemplation just a small area of pavement which ends at the memorial. Nevertheless it is a fine obelisk style memorial and in very good condition. It is located on the boundary of the Old Forge which was the last to close down of three once found in the village – appropriately the last incumbent was Albert Smith. The origins of the Old Forge are hidden behind modern facings of brick, with some chequer patterning, and weatherboarding above.

5.9.3 Facing the Old Forge on the north side of Chart Road there is a coursed Rag stone wall with some very large blocks used in its construction. It is topped by a half round brick coping. This is the boundary wall of the old manor house now Manor Farmhouse likely to be a seventeenth century timber framed building itself faced with coursed Rag stone and rather random red brick detailing.

5.9.4 The remainder of Chart Road within the conservation area is dominated by the presence of St Mary's Church and its church yard which has a commanding position situated on higher ground with an open aspect facing the road. The view of the church is partly blocked by a row of Victorian, or older, cottages (Church Cottages) and Roundelle built in the 1980's but as the road sweeps round to the south the church and its grounds once again take prime position in setting the character of the road. The trees lining the approach to the church from the east have tree protection order (TPO). To the south is a sequence of modern cottages set well back from the road and screened from it by a belt of well established trees and shrubs.

5.9.5 For the pedestrian there is no pavement and a walk along Chart Road is marked by the Rag stone wall – boundary to the church - and the well landscaped grounds in front of the church. There is no street furniture to speak of and the road soon takes on the character of a country lane as it ranges westwards. Although the village continues well beyond the boundary of the conservation area the houses which line the road although varied in style are all relatively modern and have a character which sets this section of the built up area apart from the more urban feel of the village to the east.



Chart Road – view from the west

5.10 Headcorn Road



Headcorn Road looking north

5.10.1 Belringham has a strong presence as one approaches the village and presages the urban nature of the village ahead. It is a three storey brick built house originally with symmetrical north and south elevations and extensive landscaped gardens, outbuildings and an imposing brick boundary wall. Beyond the house travelling northwards nature takes over and trees crowd over the road until suddenly one reaches the centre of the village at the junction with the High Street and with Hillside House on the right. There is no doubt that this is a main road as the traffic is very heavy but turning left or right there is a much more peaceful scene almost immediately.

5.11 North Street

5.11.1 The street curves down the steep slope of the escarpment concealing the village until it comes into view at the point where one finds the Hilltop garage on the right. This is also appropriately where the boundary of the conservation lies.

5.11.2 On the left is Heaven Cottage a timber framed and jettied house of Sixteenth Century or earlier. Then Victorian buildings closely flank the road which has very narrow pavements allowing the substantial amount of traffic to dominate the scene – it can be very noisy and feel dangerous to attempt a crossing. Even on this main road, however, there is no clutter of street furniture as signage is kept to a minimum level

5.12 School Lane

5.12.1 This lane has a somewhat different feel to the rest of the conservation area but the presence of Sutton Valence School buildings ties it in. Although there are some areas of Rag stone walling and some buildings that butt up to the lane School Lane feels as if it is entirely bounded by hedges. It is also, in relative terms for Sutton Valence, rather flat as this is close to the top of the escarpment. On the left side accessing the road from North Road the scene is filled by the overwhelming presence of Adams Holden and Pearson's brick and stone edifice with its wings and central range (with unusual lead clad clock tower) around a central landscaped courtyard. In almost complete contrast to the northern side the south side of the lane is characterised by the openness of the views across

farmland and countryside to the Weald (and even to Fairlight church tower on a clear day). The few modest and mainly Victorian or later buildings take second place to the dramatic panorama.

6.0 APPROACHES AND VIEWS

6.1 Conveniently Sutton Valence can be approached from the four points of the compass with the major routes from the north or south along the A274. From the north this is named as North Street which winds its way from Maidstone and Langley and is generally reasonably flat and continuously developed until it reaches Sutton Valence where it begins to bend more sharply as it descends the Greensand ridge. The road narrows and the pavements either narrow or disappear altogether and the view is contained by the rather haphazard arrangement of mainly Victorian buildings as North Street comes to its end. There is little sense of and no visual link to the picturesque nature of the village just around the corner but there is a strong sense of this being a highly urbanised settlement.



North Street looking south

6.2 The route from the south is wholly different. Headcorn Road is a fast and flat, gently curving road which passes through open countryside almost until it reaches Belringham. There are distant views, where the trees lining the road do not block them, of the village ahead rising up the ridge. The form of the village hugging the Greensand ridge is immediately apparent with the church, school and castle being particular and important landmarks.

6.3 Closer to the village the road steepens and the views are contained by the trees which crowd over until, almost without warning, the village is left behind as the road climbs the escarpment and becomes North Street. The turning into the heart of the village is easily missed as it is a narrow and semi concealed entrance on a sharp bend which draws the attention to the left with only one property there – Hillside House – marking the arrival at the built up part of the settlement.

6.4 There is an alternative route up from the south which is South Lane. This route veers away from Headcorn Road to the east. This is not the main route into Sutton Valence and not how most people arrive. It is a more gentle experience as the slope is generally less steep and there are interesting views of the village from various points along its length as it passes through the recently

developed part of Sutton Valence, with its modest and modern houses, on the lower slopes of the ridge. Although the lane ends at the Green with Holdgate House on the right there is little sense of arrival.



Tumblers Hill view looking west into the conservation area

6.5 That is certainly not the case in arriving from the east or west. From the east East Sutton Road and then Tumblers Hill, though always a narrow lane, travels through open countryside and then past individual modern houses until it dips down steeply and the banks rise on either side. The route at this point seems very narrow but ahead are views of Broad Street with the diverse but picturesque sequence of small listed houses that line its northern side. To the left is the site of the likely outer defences of the Norman castle (which could be one explanation for the sunken nature of the road) and to the right beyond the raised pavement and high dense hedging the open fields of Bloody Mountain.

6.6 Almost as charming is the approach from the west along Chart Road. Initially the route into the village has a similar character to East Sutton Road – a country lane lined with individual modern houses but here as the road takes a swoop to the left the church of St Mary comes into view which with its graceful landscaped frontage and lych gate absorbs the attention.

7.0 AUDIT OF ASSETS

7.1 A detailed description of the main buildings and sites within the conservation area follows. These descriptions are based on examination from the street and historic map analysis. Buildings have not been examined internally or from non-public viewpoints.

7.2 Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:

- Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
- Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily
- Neutral - buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary.
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area's character where re-development would be advantageous.



Holdgate House

Address	Listing	Description	Value
St Mary's Church Chart Road ME17 3AW	Grade II 1060905	Built in 1823-8 to designs by W. Ashenden, incorporating medieval remains. Alterations of 1866, and of 1874 by G.M. Hills.	Essential
Table tomb about 10 metres sw of Church of St Mary Chart Road	Grade II 1060906	Table tomb from early C18. Stone, on stepped stone base with moulded plinth and side panels and a corniced lid. Inscription to east end illegible. Date of death 1730's	Essential
Tomb to E Crispe about 25 metres south of church of St Mary Chart Road	Grade II 1052319	Table tomb from late C18. Stone base with a moulded plinth and corniced lid. Raised inscribed panels flanked by fluted pilasters with gadrooned bases. To Elizabeth Crispe with date of death 1796	Essential
Tomb about 28 metres south of church of St Mary Chart Road	Grade II 1052281	Table tomb from early C19. Stepped stone base with moulded plinth and corniced lid. Oval inscribed panel to each side on fluted ground, flanked on each long side by draped urns and to each end by sanctuary lamps in low relief. Inscription largely illegible. Date of death 1808	Essential
Manor Farmhouse Chart Road	Grade II 1051680	Substantial C17 farmhouse possibly earlier with C19 red brick façade and stone dressings. Original building is timber framed. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys on stone plinth.	Essential
The Old Forge Chart Road	Unlisted	C 18 or older core to this heavily adapted house. Chequer pattern brickwork with more recent plain brickwork and some Rag stone remnants. Modern white painted weatherboarding to upper storey under a double hipped plain tile roof	Essential
The Old Forge 'annex' chart road	Unlisted	C 20 cottage raised on much earlier Rag stone walls. Slated duo pitch roof to upper storey. Very discreetly designed almost hidden emphasising the Rag stone element on the back edge of the road.	Neutral
1 – 5 Church Cottages Chart Road	Unlisted	Late C 18 (probably) simple cottages in terrace but much altered on the facades. No 1 extended in semi matching brick but contrasting bond. Nos 2, 3 & 5 at least partially rebuilt and No 4 rendered. Stepped gable roof with no parapets	Positive
Roundelle Chart Road	Unlisted	Late C 20 addition to terrace with extension to front to mimic an oast house conversion. Mix of stretcher and Flemish bond brickwork with light grey window frames and doors	Neutral
Hillside House Headcorn Road	Grade II 1052252	This is a house of C17 or earlier. The ground floor is red brick. First floor tile-hung with banded plain and fish scale tiles. Plain tile roof.	Essential
Belringham Headcorn Road	Grade II 1060908	Early-to-mid C19 house in red brick in Flemish bond. Lower 2 storeys of rear elevation chequered red and grey brick. Slate roof.	Essential
Appin Mor Lower Road	Grade II 1367117	C15 or early C16 with late C16/early C17 alterations, and alterations and extensions of C1900 and C1930. Timber framed. Ground floor of main range clad with chequered red and grey brick.	Essential

		Ground floor of left wing coursed galletted stone. Rest exposed close-studding with plaster infilling. 2 arch-braces to hall range. Plain tile roof.	
Clothworkers Arms Lower Road	Unlisted	Late C 19 or later Victorian style public house roughcast over masonry with wood detailing and plain tiled roof	Positive
Clothworkers Cottage Lower Road	Unlisted	Plain brick built C19 single bay cottage with tiled roof. Balances brick element of Clothmakers Arms	Positive
Bennett House High Street	Unlisted	Mid Victorian brick built property with slated roof originally a seminary but now accommodation for Sutton Valence School. Fine restored Rag stone wall to boundary.	Neutral
The Queens Head public house High Street	Grade II 1372286	C17, with mid-to-late C19 facade. Timber framed. Front elevation rendered brick or stone, left gable hung with plain and fish scale tiles. Plain tile roof.	Essential
Helsing House and The Vines High Street	Unlisted	Mid and late Victorian houses built on the site of a successful apothecary premises. Helsing House symmetrical brick built property with stone dressings to opening – now painted white. The Vines brick and tile hanging facades in picturesque style with timber framed asymmetrical bays and conservatory to side	Positive
Milstead House Lower Road	Unlisted	Mid Victorian house with some attempt at Georgian proportions and appearance. Painted brick facades with 'dentil' detail at eaves and plain tiled roof	Neutral
Motto Cottages 1 and 2 Lower Road	Grade II 1060911	Originally a C17 (or earlier single house now divided into 2 cottages, Has mid-to-late C19 alterations. Ground floor rendered, first floor hung with banded plain and fish scale tiles. Plain tile roof. Main range with short (probably later) wing projecting forwards to right end. 2 storeys. Roof half-hipped to left.	Essential
Motto House Lower Road	Unlisted	Small late C 19 house with painted brick ground floor and tiled upper storey and tiled roof. Links visually with Motto Cottages	Positive
Candy Cottage & Townwell Cottage Lower Road	Grade II 1060870	House, now 2 cottages. Early C17 or earlier with C19 facade. Ground floor painted brick, first floor tile-hung. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys on stone plinth. Hipped roof.	Essential
1 & 2 Spring Cottages, Lower Road	Unlisted	Mid 19C pair of villas constructed with red brick facades with cream brick dressings in a sub Georgian style. Concrete Roof tiles.	Neutral
Valence Green Cottage Lower Road	Grade II 1060871	Early C19. Timber framed, weather boarded with plain tile roof. 2 storeys and cellar. Hipped roof.	Essential
1 & 2 The Green Lower Road	Unlisted	C 20 brick cottages in stretcher bond with tile hanging to upper storey and plain tiled roof. Slightly discordant scale and design	Neutral
Prill Cottage Lower road	Unlisted	Appears to be an C 18 timber framed building on brick plinth. Modern white painted weatherboarding and windows in period style	Positive
Former alms houses	Unlisted	Late C 19 Re-provision of updated alms houses.	Positive

now Holdgate House South Lane		Outer walls uncoursed Rag stone with Portland or Clipsham stone dressings to openings. 6 bays with two centred arches over recessed openings giving the appearance of a unified arcade. Centre mullioned windows over in central stone gable of under expressed dormer roofs with finials. Highly decorative brick chimney stacks rise from ridge.	
Former Alms Houses, now part of Sutton Valence School High Street	Grade II 1060910	Row of 6 alms houses, now part of school. Founded 1574 by William Lambe, restored after fire 1909-1910. Small blocks of coursed rag stone, with plain tile roof. One storey and attic on moulded plinth.	Essential
Central Stores & Sutton Dene High street	Grade II 1367142	House, now shop and house. C16 or earlier with C19 facade. Timber framed. Ground floor clad with painted brick, first floor tile-hung. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys and attics.	Essential
Raised pavement between the Old Bakery (Broad Street) and main entrance to Lambes House (High Street) Broad Street	Grade II 1060902	Raised pavement about five feet broad, rising irregularly from a few inches to about one foot above road level. Stone setts of roughly regular size, roughly coursed	Essential
Ye Old Poste House High Street	Grade II 1344303	House, now tea-rooms and house. Late C16 or early C17 with late C18/early C19 facade. Timber framed, ground floor clad with painted brick, first floor tile-hung. Plain tiled roof. 2 storeys and attic.	Essential
Cygnat Cottage Broad Street	Unlisted	Complex array of connected properties with elements of weatherboarding and render with exposed dark painted timber frame. Cottage wraps corner into Malthouse Lane	Positive
Valence House Broad Street	Grade II 1060903	House, now part of school. 1596 with later additions to rear. Timber framed, rendered, with plain tile roof. Lobby entry plan. 2 storeys and attics. Symmetrical facade.	Essential
Linden House Broad Street	Grade II 1344296	House, formerly house and shop, now house. Early C18 with mid C19 alterations. Possibly timber-framed. Front elevation red and grey brick with red brick dressings. Left gable end tile-hung on both floors. Plain tile roof.	Essential
The White House Broad Street	Grade II 1356590	Later C18, possibly with earlier core, with mid C19 alterations. Red and grey brick with plain tile roof. 2 storeys garret and basement on brick plinth with rendered base. Giant brick pilaster towards each end, with moulded wooden eaves cornice carried round them.	Essential
Lady Mor & The Old Bakery Broad Street	Grade II 1060901	House, formerly bakery, now shop and house. C19/earlier. Ground floor of front elevation red brick in Flemish bond. First floor of front elevation and both floors of right side elevation weather boarded. Plain tile roof.	Essential
The Swan	Grade II	Possibly C14 Wealden house with C19 facade.	Essential

Broad Street	1356585	Timber framed. Ground floor clad with painted brick, left end of ground floor rendered. First floor weather boarded. Plain tile roof.	
Waggs Cottage Broad Street	Grade II 1344297	House, formerly cottages. C16 or earlier, with C19 facade. Timber framed, weather boarded to front, tile-hung to rear. Exposed framing to right gable end. Plain tile roof. Built at right-angles to street.	Essential
Parish Council Offices & Shop Broad Street	Grade II 1356587	House, now shop and offices. C17 or earlier. Timber framed. Front elevation partly rendered, partly painted brick. Painted post and arch-brace to left end of first floor. Exposed close-studding to rear. Plain tile roof.	Essential
Aylmer House & house adjoining to left Broad Street	Grade II 1344325	House, now part of school. Early C16 or earlier. Timber framed, rendered, with plain tile roof. Wealden with single hall bay, storeyed bay to each end and narrow bay, possibly added, to right end. 2 storeys and cellar.	Essential
former Congregational chapel now part of Sutton Valence School	Unlisted	Late C 19 by Sulman and Rhodes. Gothic style in uncoursed Rag stone and limestone dressings. Plain west front except for pointed arch window with quatrefoil tracery and a slightly lop sided tower with insignificant spire to southwest corner	Positive
Cheyne House & The Cheynes Broad Street	Grade II 1344298	House row, formerly with shop. C18 and C19. Left section (The Cheynes) timber framed weather boarded, with plain tile roof. Right section (Cheyne House) red brick in Flemish bond to ground floor, weather boarded above, with slate roof.	Essential
Cross Cottage Broad Street	Unlisted	Mid Victorian 2 storey house. Off centre entrance and painted brick or render facades	Positive
Sun Cottages Tumblers Hill	Grade II 1187140	House, now house row. Early C16 or earlier, with C19 facade. Timber framed. Front elevation clad with red brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys and attics on brick plinth. Roof half-hipped to right.	Essential
Gwyn Cottage & Newlyn Tumblers Hill	Grade II 1060881	House, now house row. Early C16 or earlier. Timber framed. Projecting left end, and ground floor of rest clad with buff brick in Flemish bond, with base of wall-post exposed on ground floor towards right end. First floor of rest clad to left with applied studs and rendered infilling and to right with weatherboarding. 2 storeys and attics on stepped stone plinth.	Essential
2 and 3 Tumblers Hill	Grade II 1060882	Early C16 or earlier. Timber framed. Front elevation clad with buff brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. 1½ storeys.	Essential
4 Tumblers Hill	Grade II 1187155	Mid C19, possibly with earlier core. Front elevation buff brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys on stone plinth with higher eaves than house to left.	Essential
Shirley House Tumblers Hill	Grade II 1344326	Early-to-mid C19. Red brick with occasional grey headers in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. Double depth. 2 storeys, with dentilled brick eaves cornice.	Essential

House next to Congregational Chapel Chapel Road	Unlisted	C 19 early Georgian style house but with oversailing plain eaves. Brick built with facing brick arched window heads and Georgian proportioned windows with horns. Heavy timber canopy to off centre solid door with plain lights above. The large bow window may be explained by an earlier use as a temperance coffee house in the late 19C and then a tea room into the C 20 Somewhat discordant late C 20 annexe to garden fronting Chapel Road with near vertical dominant slated roof, brick elevations with single large window to each floor	Positive (neutral annexe)
Laurel Cottage Chapel Road	Grade II 1051673	Early-to-mid C19 with later alterations. Ground floor rendered, first floor weather boarded. Plain tile roof. Built at right-angles to street. 2 storeys. Hipped roof. Ridge stack towards centre. Irregular fenestration of two 12-pane glazing-bar-sashes. 2 half-glazed doors, one towards each end	Essential
Jasmine Cottage Chapel Road	Grade II 1344299	Mid C19. Timber framed, weather boarded, with slate roof. 2 storeys on brick plinth. Rendered brick gable end stacks. Regular 3-window front of 16-pane glazing-bar-sashes. Central panelled door with top light and flat bracketed hood, under shallow trellised porch	Essential
Walnut Tree Cottages 1, 2 and 3 Chapel Road	Grade II 1060904	House, now house row. Early C17 or earlier. Timber framed, rendered, with plain tile roof. 2 storeys and garret on stone plinth.	Essential
Un-Named Cottage Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Late C 19 modest cottage – possibly timber framed with weather boarded front elevation on rendered ground floor and brick returns. Slightly hooded windows to upper floor, modern windows to ground floor.	Positive
Lockes Rectory Lane	Unlisted	C 20 house. Multi facing brick in stretcher bond with T & G boarding to upper storey. Concrete tiled roof. Set back from road	Neutral
Dick's Cottage Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Mid Victorian cottage – white painted brickwork. Simple brick arches to windows with added shutters. Butts onto street.	Positive
1,2 & 3 School Cottages Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Late C19 masonry construction with white painted render. Ashlar tooling. Plain tile roof and modern uPVC windows. Courtyard to front	Neutral
Barn South of Valence House Rectory Lane	Grade II 1342738	Barn or semi-industrial building – former brewery.. Probably early C17 or earlier. Ground floor galletted stone. First floor timber framed, west of elevation cement-rendered, south gable end tile-hung. Plain tile roof.	Positive
The Elders Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Late C 20 infill scheme of 2 houses. Non vernacular facing brick in stretcher bond to ground storey with dark stained weatherboarding over. Plain tiles (concrete?) to roof with deep over sailing eaves	Neutral
Carters Barn Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Undated building – possibly concealed earlier structure. Painted Flemish bond brickwork to	Neutral

		ground storey with modern softwood weatherboarding to upper storey	
1 & 2 Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Probably early C 20 pair of small houses. Brick multi to all elevations with mix of arched and flat brick lintels. Plain tiled (concrete) roof	Neutral
Brancaster Rectory Lane	Unlisted	Late 20C large brick built house with attendant style and detailing unrelated to conservation area. Relatively well secluded.	Neutral
Court House Rectory Lane	Grade II 1060880	C15 or early C16 with mid-to-late C16 alterations. Timber framed, rendered, with plain tile roof. Open wall of 2 roughly equal bays with storeyed bay to right. 2-bay cross-wing, possibly integral, projecting forwards slightly to left.	Essential
Sutton Castle Rectory Lane	Grade II 1186956 SAM	Ruins of castle. Late C12 or early C13. Stone. Ruins of keep about 12 metres square, walls standing in places to height of about 7 metres. Fragment of smaller block about 2 metres to north	Essential
Len's Cottage Gurr's Cottage Malthouse Lane	Unlisted	Pair of mid Victorian cottages. 2 storey with painted brick ground floor and tile hung upper storey with plain tiled roofs	Positive
The Kings Arms North Street	Unlisted	Victorian Public House brick built with mix of English and Flemish bond. Some Rag stone to rear of building which may be the remnants of an earlier public house building	Positive
Coach House North Street	Unlisted	Date unknown heavily restored or new single house built using uncoursed Rag stone with red multi brick detailing. Natural slate roof. Windows are modern and stained light brown, fence to south is waney edge boarding – partly stained	Positive
Bower House & Upper Bower North Street	Unlisted	Victorian built as a 2 separate buildings much modified – now and possibly originally commercial use at ground floor (Bower House) and now residential (Upper Bower). Dentilled brick eaves course below plain tiled roofs	Neutral
Heaven Cottage North Street	Grade II 1344323	Timber framed house of C16 - C17. Ground floor has painted brick infilling to broadly-spaced studding, first floor rendered. Plain tile roof.	Essential
16 & 17 North Street	Unlisted	Mid Victorian pair of rendered houses with bracketed hoods to ground floor windows, string course incorporating first floor window cills. Bracketed over sailing eaves to slated roofs. Previously incorporated retail function at ground floor (now fully residential)	Positive
15 North Street & The Cottage North Street	Unlisted	Possibly C 18 now subdivided. Retained Georgian details with later modifications evident. Plain tiled roof.	Positive
Sutton Valence 'New' School Block School Lane	Grade II 1060872	1910-14 by Adams, Holden and Pearson. Red brick in English bond. South ends of wings stone on ground floor, tile- hung above. Plain tile roofs. Courtyard plan, open to south, with outward-turning south ends to side ranges and assembly room projecting north from centre of north range.	Essential

		Landscaped gardens	
Sutton House School Lane	Unlisted	C 20 Semi vernacular school building but with horizontal lines emphasised. Recessed brick ground floor with tile hung upper floor under a steeply pitched plain tiled roof with unusual half hip/gable end	Negative
Sutton House Lower Building School Lane	Unlisted	C 20 Pavilion style semi vernacular sanatorium (now school) building. Brick built with large window openings and mix of hipped and half hipped roofs with large dormers to central section. Commanding view and visible from many parts of the village	Neutral
Birch Tree Cottage School Lane	Unlisted	C 19 heavily modified large Victorian House with double gable, curved corner brickwork and plain tiled roof	Neutral
Mona House, Alma Villa & Weald View School Lane	Unlisted	Early C 19, probably, plain rendered houses. Weald View more substantial with two large dormers to west roof slope	Neutral
Wells Cottage School Lane	Unlisted	C 20 house with mix of styles but basically brick to ground floor with tile hanging over and exposed timber framing to gabled roof. Plain tiles to all slopes	Neutral
Ivy Mead House School Lane	Unlisted	C19 large house. Elevations brick, tile hung or Rag stone to slated multi gabled roof. Unusual window in substantial chimney stack.	Positive



Sutton Valence Castle

8.0 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

8.1 The character of conservation areas can suffer significantly from the cumulative impact of 'minor alterations' which can be carried out to single dwelling houses as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order without the need for planning permission. Such alterations can include replacement windows and doors and re-roofing using inappropriate non-traditional materials.

8.2 The Local Authority can seek to bring such minor alterations under planning control by the use of Directions under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order. Article 4 directions can increase the public protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. They are not necessary for works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments as listed building consent and scheduled monument consent would cover all potentially harmful works that would otherwise be permitted development under the planning regime. However, article 4 directions might assist in the protection of all other heritage assets (particularly conservation areas) and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets, including listed buildings

8.3 There are no Article 4 Directions currently in force in the Sutton Valence conservation area.



View from Lower Road

9.0 PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE

9.1 The Sutton Valence conservation area represents a good example of a traditional Kentish village which has retained a high proportion of its historic development with many listed buildings. It is given its particular character by its siting on the Greensand escarpment which has resulted in groups of buildings nestling together in a densely 'urban' way. A large number of unlisted buildings make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation areas and in some cases are essential to it. Within the conservation areas modern developments and redevelopments have not resulted in any serious loss of character, most being discretely sited or of inoffensive design and largely built of appropriate materials. In fact, the major agent of character loss has not been redevelopment but the cumulative impact of individual relatively minor alterations such as replacement windows and doors and changes of roofing materials.

9.2 Sutton Valence is a well cared for environment and problems of dereliction; dilapidation and disuse are very rare. The detailed analysis carried out in Sections 3 to 6 of this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for works and development for which the scope appears to be very limited. Those buildings or sites which are assessed as 'essential' or 'positive' will not normally be considered appropriate for demolition or redevelopment. Proposals for the redevelopment of 'neutral' sites will be required to match or to enhance the existing condition. No sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are not many where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There is little scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of, and view lines across, the conservation area.

9.3 Current character is set by the mix of a generally limited range of materials used on mostly small scale buildings. It is important that any future proposals for development or works should respect this. There are a few single storey buildings – even fewer with three storeys and accordingly developments of less or more than two storeys will generally be considered to be inappropriate while there will be a base line of high quality and contextually positive design. Conversion/extension of single storey ancillary buildings may be considered acceptable.

9.4 Also important to the character of the conservation area is the significant presence of many well established trees and shrubs mainly on private land. It is particularly important that this element is maintained into the future as pressure increase to find more and more development sites.

9.5 This appraisal has raised a number of areas recommended for further investigation and action to ensure the continuation and improvement of the conservation area. These are:

- A programme of reinstatement of original features especially windows, doors, roof coverings and rain water goods. Avoidance of new examples of the above.
- Steps to control the volume and speed of traffic on the A274
- Maintenance and protection of Rag stone paving, kerbs and boundary walls
- Avoidance of suburban features, e.g. close boarded fencing
- Enhancement of the public realm, e.g. war memorial, the Green
- Minor adjustments to the boundary of the conservation area to include the whole site which is likely to have been contained within the outer defences of the Norman castle

Sutton Valence Conservation Area Management Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69 of the 1990 Act also imposes the duty on the local authority to determine from time to time whether any further parts of the borough should be included within a conservation area.

1.2 Recent guidance from English Heritage (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016) suggests that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas should take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy setting objectives for addressing issues and recommendations for action arising from a previously published conservation area appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for their implementation. Such a strategy is generally given the title of a conservation area management plan.

1.3 It is important to note that a conservation area management plan cannot introduce entirely new planning objectives. Instead it will need to refer to the original legislation; to government guidance (mainly National Planning Policy Framework for listed buildings); to the adopted local plan policies; and to the emerging Local Development Framework. It can interpret established legislative provisions and planning policies and explain how they will be applied within the conservation area to ensure its preservation and/or enhancement. If any particular issues are identified which do require new policies to be drawn up, the management plan can indicate these and set a programme for their development as part of the Local Development Framework process



Central Stores & Sutton Dene High street

1.4 This Management Plan for the Sutton Valence conservation area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in Section 09 of the above Conservation Area Appraisal, and outlines the proposals for boundary changes as also suggested by the Appraisal.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 National policy and advice regarding conservation area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is available to at the link given below

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf).

2.1.2 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF points out that the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. Paragraph 185 sets out the benefits that accrue from preserving the historic environment whether it be the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental advantages, the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution or the opportunities arising from an understanding of the intrinsic character of a place.

2.1.3 The Historic England guidance document ([Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016](#)) refers to the importance of keeping the boundaries of existing conservation areas under periodic review to ascertain whether any changes are required.

2.1.4 The document suggests that designation of a conservation area in itself is unlikely to be effective without the formulation of specific policy guidance, and reminds local planning authorities of the duty imposed on them by Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and for these to be submitted to a 'public meeting' in the area. Paragraph 4.16 points out that such proposals cannot realistically seek to prevent all new development and should instead concentrate on the controlled and positive management of change; indeed, it is suggested that there may be instances where redevelopment will be a means of enhancing character.

2.2 Local Policy

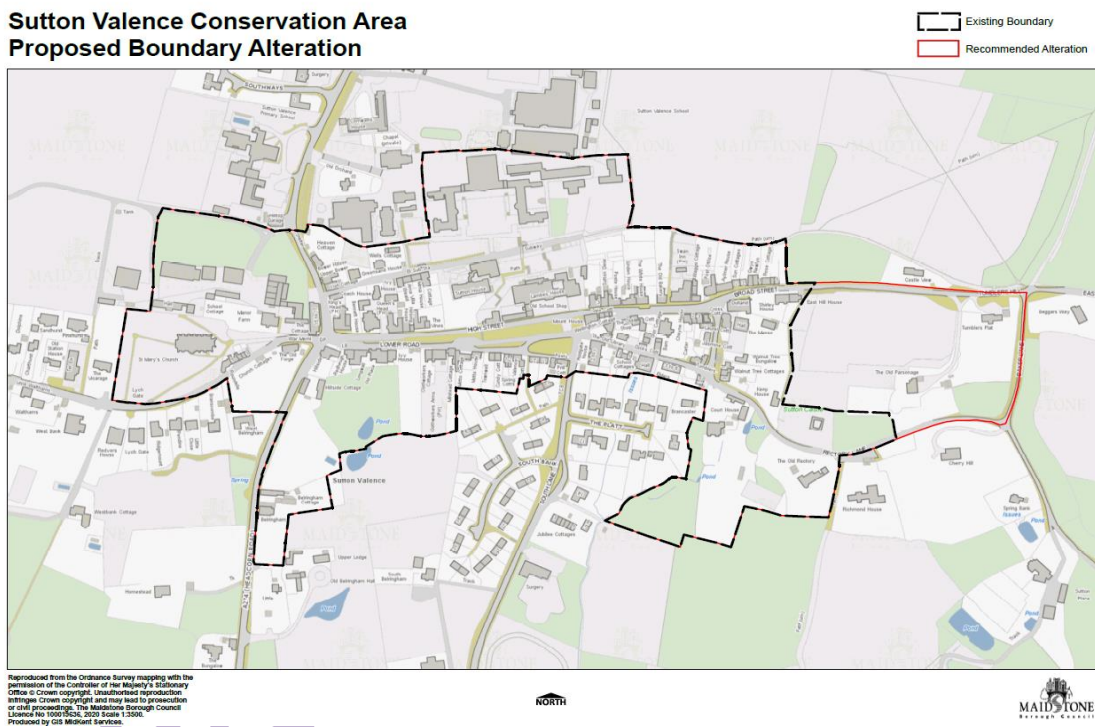
2.2.1 Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2017. (<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/local-plan-information>) A supplementary planning document to cover conservation areas has not yet been produced but there will be specific reference to heritage assets in the reviewed Local Plan due to be published in 2022. While this Management Plan indicates how national and local policies will be applied in the on-going management of the conservation area, it is not in itself a planning policy document but Local Plan policy DM4 refers to conservation area appraisals and management plans as supporting documents so they are material to planning considerations.

2.2.2 Local Plan policy SP15 deals with a residential enlargement of the village but the proposal is well outside the conservation area.

3.0 PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

3.1 The Appraisal above records that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the historic urban settlement which is compact and constrained. Recent developments have tended to be outside the settlement – they do not share the characteristics which identify the conservation area and therefore could not form a part of it. There is, however, a significant extension to be considered which would bring into the conservation area the site of the Norman castle as defined by the probable line of its enclosing curtain wall. This area has not yet been fully researched and explored for its archaeology and historic value. It is also suggested that the adjacent sections of Tumblers Hill and Baker Lane should be included. Both are at significantly lower level than the surrounding land - which may have been the source of building stone for the defences or have been lowered to enhance the security of those outer defences. Drawing this area into the conservation area would be an expression of its archaeological and historical significance to the village and would be a material consideration should any planning applications be presented affecting the castle site.

**Sutton Valence Conservation Area
Proposed Boundary Alteration**



Plan of possible extension to conservation area

4.0 PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Planning Considerations

4.1.1 Sensitive and responsive management of development pressure is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas. To this end, the Council will adopt the following principles when dealing with planning applications within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting:-

4.1.2 The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the further guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and any subsequent revisions, additions or replacement government guidance.

4.1.3 The Council will apply the relevant policies from the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2017 until such time as these policies are replaced by a future Local Plan or by policies in the emerging Local Development Framework.

4.1.4 The Council will require all planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough document setting out the reasons for the development, explaining how the design has been evolved and showing how it will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area; it should also cover any access issues which exist. There is guidance on preparing a Design and Access Statement produced by CABE (CABE was merged with the Design Council in 2011)

(<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-and-access-statements-how-write-read-and-use-them>). In some cases a separate Heritage Statement will also be required. Historic England have published guidance on this aspect in 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>). The Maidstone web site gives advice on the content of a planning application – see [validations checklist](#).

4.1.5 Applications must be accompanied by clear and accurate drawings showing the proposed development in detail and illustrating how it fits in to its context. Drawings should clearly indicate materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of proposed buildings. Site plans should accurately depict the positions of trees on or adjacent to the site and show clearly those which will need to be removed and those which will be retained. Where trees are affected by the proposals the application should include a survey by a professional arboriculturist to comply with current British Standard BS5837, 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations'. It should also include details of any proposed works to, and methods for protecting, any retained tree. Photographs and other illustrative media are encouraged. Any applications which fail to provide adequate detail will not be registered.

4.1.6 Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.

4.1.7 The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications within the conservation area or affecting its setting.

4.1.8 The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether or not it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused. The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high quality contemporary design, subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail and materials of local tradition. The council encourages the use of the pre-application process which ensures that planning officers are aware of a proposal at an early stage and can give advice to ensure the appropriateness and quality of any design. See [pre application guidance](#).

4.1.9 In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and in this

Management Plan. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being 'essential' to the character of the conservation area, and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as 'positive'; buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstances; the redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context. Conservation Area Consent will not normally be granted to demolish buildings in the absence of an approved scheme of redevelopment.

4.1.10 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 states that the conservation area is appropriate for minor residential development as set out in Policy H27 – normally this would be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that it is appropriate within the context of the conservation area and will not harm its special character. It is considered that the scope for new developments within the conservation area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the following considerations in addition to those set out in point 8 above:-

4.1.11 Development should respect the differing spatial forms of different streets and parts of streets in the conservation area. Space between buildings as well as the character of the buildings themselves and the views of the countryside discovered thanks to the gaps in built form is an important factor contributing to the overall character of the conservation area, and it should be borne in mind as a general rule that the larger the building the larger the open space around it needs to be in order to provide it with an appropriate setting.

4.1.12 New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the conservation area – these are:-

Red stock bricks.

Painted brick.

Rag stone

White lime render

Dark-stained or white-painted feather-edged weatherboarding.

Clay plain tiles for roofs or tile-hanging.

Painted timber windows.

4.1.13 In the case of red stock bricks and tiles it will be important for them to be made of Wealden clays or clays of similar geological formation. Any material selected will be required to be demonstrably used widely on nearby buildings.

4.1.14 Buildings should respect the predominant scale of village buildings, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 2 storeys in height (although attic accommodation may be acceptable). Bungalows will not be considered to be appropriate to the character of the conservation area.

4.1.15 Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, whether or not they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

4.1.16 The Council will seek to protect the attractive open setting of the conservation area, particularly to its southern and western sides and protect views towards the Weald.

4.1.17 In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:-

4.1.18 Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See [Extensions SPD](#).

4.1.19 Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale and design. No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Depending on circumstances, dormers should either be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof or, in the case of smaller or shallower roofs, a flat lead roof above a traditionally-detailed cornice. They should not appear crowded together or be located too close to hip or gable lines. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.

4.1.20 Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same provisos as dormers in relation to numbers, position and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used.

4.1.21 Porches can have a disruptive effect on the appearance of regularly designed terraces and semi-detached buildings, and on all buildings if too large or poorly designed. The Council will consider all proposals for porches carefully and where necessary will resist them. Where appropriate in principle, porches should be of modest size and be of appropriate design for the building to which they are to be attached.

4.1.22 Garden outbuildings and garages should be small-scale and discretely sited. They should be built of materials appropriate to the conservation area as set out above. The siting of garages in positions in advance of the front walls of houses will not be appropriate. Garage doors should ideally be of traditional timber framed, ledged and braced design, but up-and-over doors of vertically-grooved design may be acceptable in certain locations; double garages should preferably be accessed by two single doors. Elaborate door designs of spurious historical detail (e.g. neo Tudor) should be avoided.

4.1.23 Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.

4.1.24 Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be hedges, walls of brick or Rag stone, or picket fences. Close-boarded fences have an unfortunate suburban character and will not normally be considered appropriate except in rear gardens where they are not readily visible from the streets or other public spaces.



Former Alms Houses High Street

4.2 Enforcement Strategy

4.2.1 Unauthorised development may seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area as well as causing other problems. The Council is therefore fully committed to using its powers under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to serve enforcement notices, where expedient, to allay breaches of planning control. [Section 9](#) of the Act sets out the relevant offences. Parallel powers to serve listed building enforcement notices regarding unauthorised works to listed buildings also exist by virtue of Section 38 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and these too will be used to their full. In suitable cases the Council may also exercise the legal provision to seek a prosecution for unauthorised works to a listed building or the unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building.

5.0 ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

5.1 Buildings in Disrepair

5.1.1 This is currently not a significant issue in Sutton Valence Conservation Area. However, there are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to significantly adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area or to endanger the future of a listed building. These powers are:

5.1.2 Urgent Works Notices (Section 54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such notices can be served in respect of any vacant building or, with the prior approval of the Secretary of State, a vacant unlisted building whose preservation is considered important to the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Works specified can only be the minimum necessary to make the building wind and weathertight and are thus essentially temporary in nature. The owner must be given at least seven day's notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

5.1.3 Listed Building Repairs Notices (Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These can only be served in respect of listed buildings. Full and permanent repairs can be specified. If an owner fails to commence work on the specified works within 2 months of the service of a Repairs Notice, the Council may start compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to the building; no other recourse is made available by the legislation.

5.1.4 'Untidy Site' Notices (Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such a notice can be served in respect of any land (including a building) which the Council considers to adversely affect the amenity of the surroundings. The necessary steps to remedy the condition of the land and building need to be set out in the Notice and at least 28 days given for compliance. Failure to comply is deemed an offence and is punishable by a fine.

5.2 Trees

5.2.1 Trees are identified as important contributors to the character of the Conservation Area. All trees in a Conservation Area with a stem diameter generally above 75mm at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and six weeks formal prior notice to the Council is required for any proposal to cut down or carry out other work to such trees (a Section 211 Notice). Additionally some trees are already protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and the Council will endeavour to ensure that these are kept so long as they are healthy and pose no threat to life or property. The Council will make further TPOs where appropriate when determining Section 211 notices. If a tree is considered to be dead or dangerous the person proposing to remedy the problem is required to give the Council 5 days prior notice in writing to establish whether an application is required. New developments will be expected to retain existing trees of merit and, in most cases, suitable new tree planting will be required to mitigate any losses. A full planning permission which details works to protected trees overrides the requirement to give notice or obtain consent separately for such work. However, anyone who otherwise carries out unauthorised work to protected trees is likely to be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine. There may also be a duty to plant a replacement tree of appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as can reasonably be done. This duty may also apply if the tree has been removed because it was dead or dangerous.



View of Sutton Valence from Rectory Lane

5.3 Traffic Management

5.3.1 The intrusive impact of heavy traffic along Headcorn Road and North Street is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Given that the road forms part of the A274 it is unrealistic to seek the exclusion of through traffic. However, steps could be taken to try and reduce the speed of traffic through the village and the Council will liaise with the Highway Authority to identify suitable ways of achieving this which are appropriate in both highway safety terms and their visual impact on the character of the Conservation Area. These might include stronger visual 'signing' of the entrances to the village to reinforce the perception of 'gateways' which would define the importance of the 'place' being entered into, and which would indicate a change in highway priorities and driving attitudes. To the south and north the road is subject to a 40 mph speed limit with the 30 mph restriction not occurring until very close of the conservation area. This might be possible to review so that vehicles are more likely to be proceeding at 30 mph through the conservation area or it may be possible to reduce the speed limit from 30 to 20 mph.

5.4 Reinstatement of Original Features

5.4.1 There are examples, though thankfully not too many in Sutton Valence, of damage caused to the character of the conservation area caused by injudicious alterations to properties. Such alterations include re-roofing in inappropriate materials; replacement windows and doors of inappropriate design or materials (they are often in uPVC) or plastic rain water goods. The Council would like to see a process of reversal where this has happened though it can only be by persuasion as there are no provisions to enforce reinstatement where the alterations are covered by permitted development. Nevertheless the Council will encourage property owners to reinstate traditional forms and materials as part of ongoing maintenance.

5.5 Public Realm Improvements

5.5.1 It was noted during the appraisal that the War Memorial is in a location which makes ceremony and reflection very difficult. Solutions are not in any way straightforward but there are possibilities which would allow more space in front of the memorial.

5.5.2 The Green, which is the one public open space in the conservation area, appears to be underused and has no features which help to define its purpose. There are means by which the current situation could be changed.

5.5.3 Views into the village despite its elevated position are very limited but the views out, particularly to the south, are important in establishing the character of the conservation area. These views are often glimpsed between and framed by buildings. It is a feature of the conservation area that warrants protection from damaging infill developments.

5.5.4 The above items for action depend on there being a strong opinion, within the village, that the present arrangements could and should be improved. There needs also to be a will to take action. Maidstone Council will liaise with the Parish Council in the first instance to assess whether these are matters that have support.

5.6 Article 4 Directions

5.6.1 The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions to withdraw permitted development rights. The individual permitted development rights which can be removed are limited to specific classes of development.. Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is given in Department of the Environment Circular 9/95, which states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where firm evidence exists that damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area is likely to take place or is already taking place because of the exercise of such rights. Within Sutton Valence Conservation Area there are a large number of listed buildings which are protected from unsuitable alteration by listed building legislation. In addition, non-residential buildings enjoy little in the way of permitted development rights. Nevertheless, there are many unlisted single dwelling houses which could be vulnerable to out of character material alteration.

6.0 REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES

6.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed after an appropriate period of not less than five years and any required amendments will be incorporated.

7.0 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Boundary Changes	Research and propose appropriate changes to the boundary for approval of Cabinet Member for Regeneration. Conduct public consultation.	Heritage, Landscape and Design Team (HLD) Head of Planning Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Traffic Management	Liaise with Kent County Council to determine approach	HLD Kent County Council
Boundary Protection /Permitted Development Restrictions	Review level of risk and options for management	HLD Planning Policy Group Head of Planning
Enhancement of Public Realm	Consultation with Parish Council	HLD SV Parish Council Head of Planning



High Street – looking west

References and Contacts

The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent Edward Hasted (Canterbury, 1798)

Britain Express David Ross

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The History of Sutton Valence and its buildings David Wilson

The Buildings of England Kent: West and the Weald John Newman

A Tour of Sutton Valence Buildings – History on Show David Wilson (updated Michael Beaman)

Old Suttonian Newsletter July 2012

Historic England web site

Archaeologia Caniana Vol12 Harold Sands

The Medieval Houses of Kent – an historical analysis Sarah Pearson RCHM

Historic England Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA
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Kent County Council (Heritage Conservation Group) Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14

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Maidstone Borough Council (Heritage, Landscape & Design), Maidstone House, King Street,
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Professional Bodies

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The Institution of Structural Engineers, International HQ, 47-58 Bastwick Street, London, EC1V 3PS, United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)20 7235 4535

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) South East branch [SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@ihbc.org.uk)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37 Spital Square London E1 6DY info@spab.org.uk

Sutton Valence Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Parish Office, Sutton Valence Village Hall, North Street Sutton Valence ME17 3HS steeringgroup@suttonvalenceplan.org

Design and Access Statements

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101121172431/http://cabe.org.uk/>

files/design-and-access-statements.pdf

