

# **Dartford Development Policies Plan**

*Areas of Special Character*

*Overview Note*



**Submission June 2016**

## **Contents**

Introduction	1
Policy Background	1
Review of Areas during the preparation of the Development Policies Plan	3
Table 1: Overview of Areas of Special Character Autumn 2015	4
Table 2: Overview of Areas of Special Character Autumn 2015	7
Map of Proposed Areas	8
Conclusions	9

## **Introduction**

1.1 The Borough of Dartford Local Plan 1995 contains two policies still applicable requiring relevant proposals to have regard to account the character and attractiveness of identified areas of 'Special Character' (ASCs) and 'Special Residential Character' (ASRCs). Since adoption of the 1995 Plan, the Council approved Supplementary Planning Guides (SPG) for many of these areas.

1.2 Once the Dartford Development Policies Plan becomes part of the adopted development plan, these existing 'saved' policies will cease to exist. Therefore in taking forward a new Development Policies plan, consideration has been given to whether these 'special' areas warrant some continued specific policy focus. However this would be in updated form i.e. not replicating the current policy wording or necessarily continuing the separate classification of qualifying areas. Additionally it was important that it be established whether the areas identified in the existing Local Plan still meet the local criteria that make them 'special' (set in the process of approving the supplementary planning documentation).

1.3 The evaluation takes account of public consultation feedback and recent planning decisions.

## **Policy Background**

2.1 The existing (1995) Borough of Dartford Local Plan identifies 6 areas of Special Character and 12 areas of Special Residential Character within development management policies. The preamble to the policy states that 'some parts of the Borough's environment, whilst not meriting conservation area status are, nonetheless, of some character and attractiveness. Development proposals should reflect and take account of this'. With regard to the ASRC the plan states that some areas have established attractive residential character and quality of amenity which are especially vulnerable to proposals for infilling, backland development or redevelopment to a higher density.

2.2 Overall, 1995 Plan policies H9 and B10 require proposals to be ‘in keeping with the character of the area’ and resist development where the proposal would have an adverse impact on the local environment.

2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan, a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. It also states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application.<sup>1</sup>

2.4 ASCs and ASRCs do not represent a statutory designation but provided a means whereby areas, in some cases including areas with listed buildings, can be a focus of planning determination to help ensure proposals contribute to, and do not materially detract from, the beneficial setting. Alongside historic statutory designations e.g. conservation areas, they enabled the Dartford Local Plan to effectively manage the impact of development proposals to a range of different locally important or historic environments.

2.5 A number of ASC and ASRC area appraisals were adopted as SPG in September 2000 subsequent to the adoption of the 1995 Local Plan. Overall, the assessments set the prime consideration to be the quality and interest of the area, rather than that of individual buildings. Criteria includes factors such as the architectural and historic quality, character, and the origins and development of topographical features (such as medieval road pattern and other relationships in the built form) and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area. Additionally, for residential areas criteria includes high quality or sensitive environments, which may be represented by specific low density characteristics and determining features such as larger plot sizes, open spaces or mature vegetation. Further details can be found in each appraisal SPG document.

---

<sup>1</sup> NPPF section 12 para 126 and para 135

## **Review of Areas during the preparation of the Development Policies Plan**

3.1 'Development management' policies in Dartford are being reviewed to replacement those policies still in existence from 1995, to provide compliant policy guidance, particularly for the small/medium proposals not directly addressed through the Core Strategy.

3.2 Each ASC previously identified on the proposals map under saved Local Plan (1995) policy B10 together with an additional ASC formerly adopted through Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2000, has been reviewed. Table 1 below provides an overview of each ASC in terms of when and why it was identified. Additionally after taking into account development changes up to the present day, consultation responses to the Issues and Options Consultation Dec 2014 to Jan 2015), development management information and input from the Borough's conservation officer, each ASC has been assessed to establish as to whether there has been adverse change to the quality and interest of the area and to the specific areas of interest identified in the SPG within the criteria set.

3.3 Lastly the table identifies which ASCs have consequently been taken forward into the DP Plan policy and the Dartford Policies Plan. These are shown in the map below, with the reference number correlating to the first column of the Table.

Table 1: Overview of Areas of Special Character Autumn 2015 ( Y= yes N= no)

Name & ref. no.	Green Belt?	Included in 1994 Local Plan?	Included in Development Policies Plan Draft Plan & Options Consultation (2014)?	Adopted SPG?	Potential Change (since adoption of the SPG) in relation to ASC criteria that may affect current boundary and designation?	Draft Plan & Options Consultation (2014) feedback?	Recommended to be taken forward in DP Plan publication version and designated on draft Dartford Policies Plan?
11. Darenth Hill/Rd	Y	Y	Y – but shows LP boundary and not SPG extension	Y – area extended	N	N	Y - Boundary revised to SPG extent.
10. Broadditch Pond (formerly known as Red St/New Barn Road)	Y	Y	Y – but shown as 'Broadditch Farm'	Y – area has reduced to remove farm yard	N	N	Y - Boundary revised to SPG extent.
12. Westwood (formerly known as High Cross Road)	Y	Y	Y – but shows LP boundary. And not SPG extension	Y - extends boundary to include further areas of Westwood Farm trade area.	N – trade park contains a number of listed former farm buildings. Quality and interest of the Local Plan Extent area appears unchanged in terms of built form and contribution it makes to the character of the area in terms of coherence and historic quality. However, SPG extension appears not to	Area at Westwood Farm particularly to NE is of poor quality. Replacement of buildings to high quality may be unviable and unfeasible.	Y – Local Plan boundary retained.

# Areas of Special Character Overview Note

					meet criteria and there have been development changes since SPG in 2000.		
13.New Town	N	Y	Y	Y	Whilst changes to use of some buildings – layout and building form remains unchanged	N	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASCs NOT taken forward -</li> </ul>							
Green St Green	Y	Y	Y	N	Unable to assess change due to no baseline appraisal.	N	N – GB policies will provide some protection to retaining the open character of area.
Tower Road/Miskin Road	N	N	N	N –SPG not adopted due to limited objections	Unable to assess change due to no baseline appraisal.	N	N
St John's Jerusalem, Sutton – at - Hone	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N – GB policies and nature conservation policies (LWS) and Scheduled monument will provide protection to retain character of site.





3.4 Each former ASRC previously identified on the proposals map under saved Local Plan (1994) policy B10 has been reviewed. Table 2 below provides an overview of each ARSC in terms of when it was identified and if the area was later taken forward to adopted SPG. Additionally after taking into account development changes up to the present day, development management information and input from the Borough's conservation officer, each ASRC has been assessed as to whether there has been change within the boundary that would lead to criteria not now being met.

3.5 Lastly the table identifies which ARSCs have consequently been taken forward into the DP Plan policy and the Dartford Policies Plan. These are shown in the map below, with the reference number correlating to the first column of the Table.

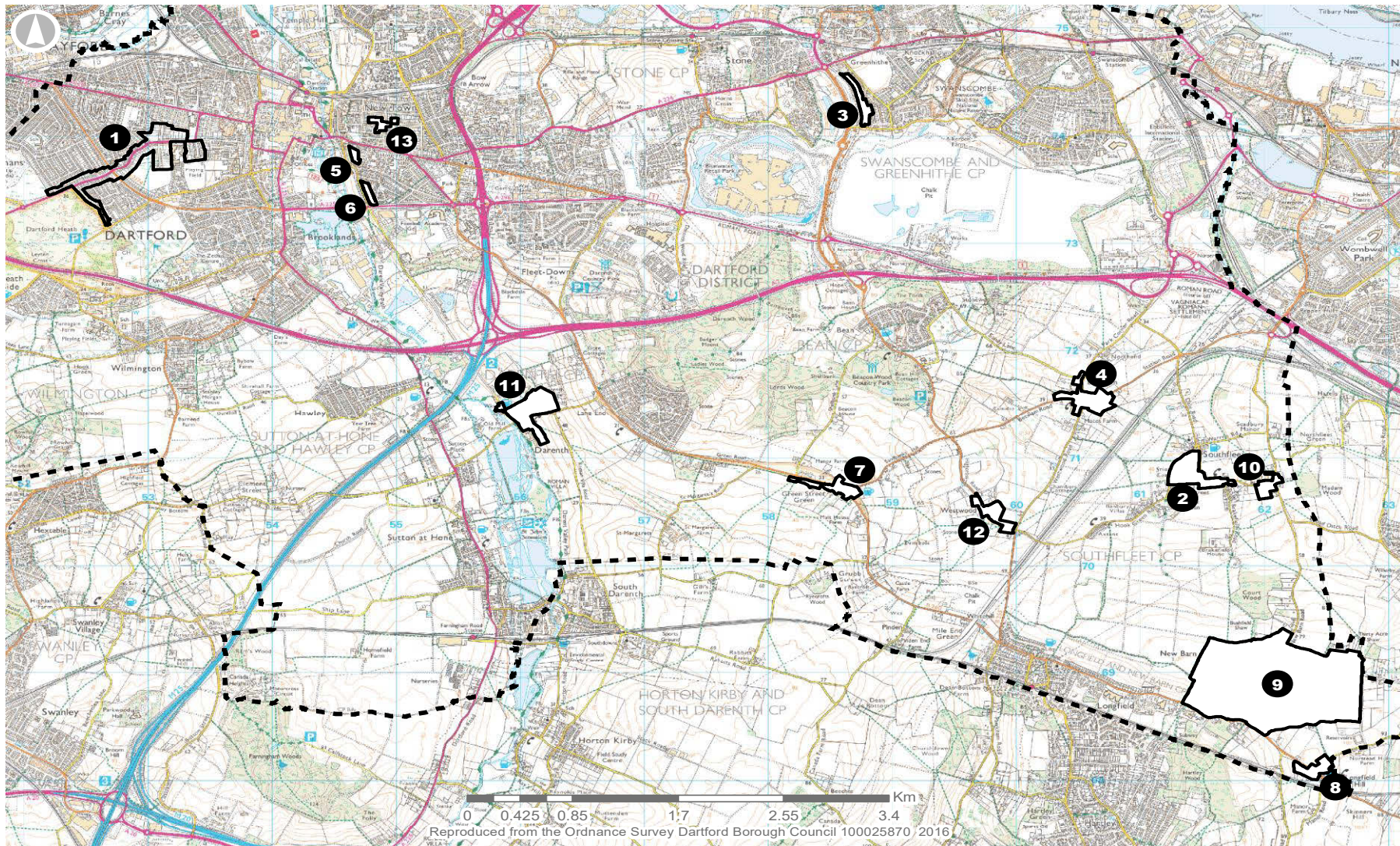
3.6 No consultation responses were received on ASRCs during the Issues and Options Consultation Dec 2014 to Jan 2015).

Table 2: Overview of Areas of Special Residential Character Autumn 2015 (Y= yes N= no)

Name & ref. no.	Green Belt?	Included in 1994 Local Plan?	Included in Development Policies Plan Draft Plan & Options Consultation (2014)?	Adopted SPG?	Potential Change (since adoption of the SPG) in relation to ASC criteria that may affect current boundary and designation?	Recommended to be taken forward in DP Plan publication version and designated on draft Dartford Policies Plan?
4. Betsham	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
5. Chaucer Park	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
3. Bean Road	N	Y	Y	Y	N – A limited number of rear sympathetic extensions have taken place. No other significant changes in the residential environment have occurred.	Y
6. Darenth Road	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
7. Green St Green	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
9. New Barn	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
8. Longfield Hill	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
1. Shepherds Lane	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
2. Southfleet	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
• ASRCs NOT taken forward-						
Oakfield Lane East and west	N	Y	N	N - SPG not adopted due to limited objections	Unable to assess change due to no baseline appraisal	N
Joydens Wood	N	Y	N	N – SPG reduced area but was not adopted due to (limited) objections	Unable to assess change due to no baseline appraisal	N
Church Hill, Wilmington	N	Y	N	N – SPG revised Local Plan boundary (omitted area to west of A2) due to new conservation area designation. SPG not adopted due to objections	Unable to assess change due to no baseline appraisal	N



Map of Proposed Areas (reference numbers in table above)



X:\Data\_Store\Departmental\_Data\Regeneration\_Directorate\Planning\_Policy\1995LP\_Updates\_20150916\01\_Project\_Files\01\_OV\_Areas\_of\_Special\_Character\_A4\_Land\_20151125.mxd



## Conclusions

4.1 All Areas that have adopted SPG are considered to be worthy of continuing to be identified as 'special character' areas in Dartford, as set out in Tables 1 and 2. In a limited number of cases boundaries should be revised to reflect changes set in adopted SPG.

4.2 Existing policy has helped in managing development proposals since 1995 in these areas, and the review indicates that required criteria can still successfully be met. The areas still provide the unique and historic special features identified in each area appraisal SPG. Therefore it would be beneficial that they continue to benefit from specific policy focus, in the new DP Plan, to guard against unsympathetic development that would detract on the 'specialness' of the area.

4.3 Unlike the 1995 Local Plan, the policies for identified areas of special character will therefore benefit from individual area appraisals, including details of the criteria used to assess that they are special. Taking this into account it would be appropriate for new planning policy to purely require development proposals to demonstrate that negative impacts are mitigated and the setting maintained or enhanced in these areas. The availability of the specific SPGs indicates that there is no longer a need to provide policy for the different types of special character areas.

4.4 Therefore it would be appropriate for areas to be identified as 'Areas of Special Character' collectively in the policy. This would enable an applicant bringing forward a proposal in a ASC to consider the specific criteria and character appraisal for the area in question and address specific issues accordingly.

4.5 No separate 'Area of Special Residential Character' designation is needed or beneficial in these circumstances. One generic set of areas should be shown.

4.6 Ensuring policy focus to ensure sympathetic development in unique character areas in Dartford will enable planning determinations to apply considerations of conservation, heritage and local amenity in an appropriate manner according to their significance. In addition, other policies providing for good quality design and layout within the proposed plan set requirements with regard to issues such as infilling and garden development.

4.7 Overall in keeping with NPPF core planning principles, Local Plan policy focusing on both designated heritage assets, conservation areas and identified special character areas will enable assets and areas to continue to 'contribute to quality of life of this and future generations' in line with sustainable development principles.