

ANNEX A

MEDWAY GAP CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL SPD - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

General Comments

Respondent	Representation	Response
P Dawson New Hythe Lane	You have produced a very good and workmanlike document.	Noted.
Annon.	More trees and landscaping are needed generally and it should be more prominent, and not destroyed.	Noted. The Appraisal identifies wherever trees are important to the character of the area.
Adrian Harrison Priory Grove, Ditton	A very useful and comprehensive document. It seems to be an accurate record of the existing situation. Well done.	Noted.

Aylesford Parish

Respondent	Representation	Response
Mrs Marion Cole	Area F12 is known locally as Holtwood. The heading "Gorse Crescent Area" should be replaced as "Holtwood Area".	Agree - REVISE HEADING TO READ: <i>"F12 - Holtwood Area"</i> .

Respondent	Representation	Response
Mr J Brooks	The residential properties in Mill Hall are included as part of the industrial area. They should be part of their own character area.	Agree. ADD NEW CHARACTER AREA FOR MILL HALL (See Appendix A1)

Ditton Parish

Respondent	Representation	Response
Gary Millen	Planting shrubs or trees on grass verges along parts of the A20 London Road would enhance the area while at the same time discourage parking of vehicles on the verges.	This issue will be drawn to the attention of the Highway Authority.
Mrs Carole Yearsley	Area L6: The Stream. The 15 th century property adjacent to the ford is most noteworthy and needs to be included.	<p>This property lies within the adjacent Ditton Conservation Area and is outside of Area L6. However, this noteworthy building is visible from the south eastern boundary of the character area and impacts upon its character. REVISE THIRD SENTENCE OF INTRODUCTORY PARA TO READ:</p> <p><i>“Views into the conservation are a key feature and there are views of the ford from The Stream and Bradbourne Lane”.</i></p> <p>INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF LISTED BUILDING with annotation to read:</p>

Respondent	Representation	Response
		<p><i>“Listed buildings within the adjoining conservation area are visible from the edge of the character area and contribute to the visual variety of buildings in this mixed area”.</i></p>
<p>Mrs Carole Yearsley</p>	<p>Area L6: The Stream - The ford on Bradbourne Lane is completely blocked to through traffic by concrete bollards that are a negative feature, especially as this causes the stream to stagnate.</p>	<p>The concrete blocks in the ford are a temporary feature and are the responsibility of the Highway Authority. An improvement scheme for the ford is under consideration by the Highway Authority. However, the blocks are visible from parts of the character area and currently adversely affect its character. REVISE BULLET POINT UNDER NEGATIVE FEATURES TO READ:</p> <p><i>“views of the unsightly concrete blocks at both ends of the ford currently detract from the character of the area”.</i></p>
<p>Mrs Carole Yearsley</p>	<p>Area L6: The Stream Page 263 describes Bradbourne Lane as having “limited vehicular through traffic as there is a ford at the eastern edge...”. The ford is permanently blocked by very ugly concrete bollards, making it inaccessible to through traffic.</p>	<p>AMEND ANNOTATION TO BOTTOM PHOTOGRAPH ON PAGE 263 TO READ:</p> <p><i>“Bradbourne Lane has limited vehicular traffic as there is a ford at the eastern end and the road has been formally stopped-up at this point. It therefore has a tranquil character with very little traffic noise”.</i></p>

Respondent	Representation	Response
Liz Day Ditton	Area G1 Downderry Way - The higgledy-piggledy way in which development is strung out in Downderry Way is unusual and worthy of special mention.	Downderry has its own character type already in the document which recognises the irregular and varied properties along it.
Liz Day Ditton	Area G1 Downderry Way - The housing on the south side of Downderry Way has large orchard –like gardens which provide homes for English birds such as woodpeckers, chaffinches and sparrow, and small bats and the nature of this almost rural area should be protected.	ADD THE FOLLOWING TO THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH: <i>“The large gardens, trees and hedges lend themselves to encouraging wildlife, which contributes to the spacious and verdant character of the area”.</i>
Liz Day Ditton	Area B2 (West) - In New Road, further down from Bell Cottages is another row of 19 th C terraced properties with an unusual crowned and bearded head as a feature which should be retained.	ADD A PHOTOGRAPH OF THIS FEATURE AT THE TOP OF PAGE 59 AND REVISE ANNOTATION TO READ: <i>“Despite personalisation of the properties, some historic features are still evident, such as decorative lintels, string courses and other features that enhance the elevations and add interest to the street scene”</i>
Liz Day Ditton	Cobdown Sports Field should be protected.	This area is a protected open space and its development for other uses is not permitted under current planning policies.
Liz Day Ditton	The appraisal does not mention the condition of the ford at Ditton as a negative feature and it should be highlighted.	See above.

Respondent	Representation	Response
Liz Day Ditton	Area D2 – Fernleigh Rise – This area could be enhanced if small parking bays were created with the grass verges that are a feature on either side, to alleviate the street parking and reduce the further destruction of the grass verges in general.	The grass verges are an important characteristic of the area but are acknowledged to be in a poor state of repair in places. However, parking bays would harm this character. The condition of the verges will be drawn to the attention of the Highway Authority.
Adrian Harrison Priory Grove, Ditton	There is no description as such of the open space between areas H9, F10, F8, F4 and O2. This open space, the recreation ground and local nature reserve are important features and should be identified. It would be helpful to distinguish between the recreation ground and the local nature reserve.	The Local Nature Reserve falls outside of the urban confines and is not specifically mentioned in the document because it is not visible from the surrounding character areas. Areas H9, F10, F8, F4 and O2 make specific reference to the open space where it is visible and impacts on the character of these areas.

East Malling and Larkfield Parish

Respondent	Representation	Response
P Dawson New Hythe Lane	Area A2 - New Hythe Lane Traffic noise is a serious problem on New Hythe Lane. Reduction of speeds on a permanent basis would help.	This issue will be drawn to the attention of the Highway Authority.
P Dawson New Hythe Lane	Area A2 - New Hythe Lane any industrial development should be required NOT to use New Hythe Lane.	This response will be drawn to the attention of the Highway Authority. There is already a weight restriction on the bridge over the motorway.

Respondent	Representation	Response
Margaret Crowhurst Larkfield Road	Area C1: Larkfield Close. Should have noted the parking problems caused by the banks on the London Road. Traffic noise from the A20 is nothing in comparison with the noise and inconvenience caused by customers of the banks. The litter they leave behind is an ongoing problem.	It is recognised that the area can have busy periods and this should be reflected in the table of Negative Features. ADD BULLET POINT TO READ: <i>“During busy periods, car parking and commercial activity can detract from the residential character of the area”.</i>
Alan Bramley Reeves Court East Malling	H7 Bradbourne - Parkway Area - Entrance road to Bradbourne Fields is called Bradbourne Park Road.	REVISE REFERENCES TO “Bradbourne Parkway” to read: “Bradbourne Park Road” and REVISE NAME OF AREA H7 to: “Bradbourne Fields”.
Alan Bramley Reeves Court East Malling	H7 Bradbourne - Parkway Area there is no mention of the social housing area contained within the development of Bradbourne Fields.	The social housing area within the development is constructed in a similar style to the rest of the houses and in the same materials and does not warrant a specific mention in the appraisal. The tenure of property does not impact on the visual character of this area.
David Thornewell Betjeman Close Larkfield	Area A1.2 London Road (Larkfield) For the sake of completeness, reference should be made to the milestone just west of Tesco Express. This was recently listed at the request of the Parish Council.	INCLUDE ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPH of the milestone and description in the listed building table.

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David Thornewell Betjeman Close Larkfield	Area A1.2 London Road (Larkfield) - Reference should be made to the hotel as this is a distinctive building with its trees although the extension is not great. The trees are covered by a TPO and the old original entrance when it was a house is marked by the avenue of lime trees.	Reference to the hotel and its impact on the local character is made on page 26 of the document.
David Thornewell Betjeman Close Larkfield	Area A1.2 London Road (Larkfield) - The replacement building for the old “Spotted Cow PH” site is now nearing completion.	Noted.
David Thornewell Betjeman Close Larkfield	Area A1.2 London Road (Larkfield) - Opposite the site of the old Spotted Cow, the buildings have a lower length of ragstone wall along the frontage and this should be retained and perhaps shown on the map.	This is noted in the locally distinctive contextual features table as a predominant boundary treatment in this character area. ADD THIS SPECIFIC WALL TO THE MAP
Dr Simon Eden-Green Lunsford Lane Larkfield	<p>Area L4 – Leybourne Lakes - Disagrees that Area L4 was planned as a single development.</p> <p>It is unwise to establish that views from the built development of L4 into Leybourne Lakes and the North Downs are a characteristic feature of this area, when it conflicts with an agreed planning objective for the Leybourne Lakes Country Park.</p> <p>Disagrees with townscape analysis map for L4 as views from housing into the sounding lakes should not be accepted as a characteristic because this conflicts with an approved characteristic of the sounding lake area that was to minimise</p>	<p>Although developed in phases, the entire site was planned as a single entity and was developed by one developer.</p> <p>There are established views from the public areas of this development as set out in L4. However, in order to balance the needs of the development with the management needs of the country park, the landscaping will alter from year to year through management practices such as coppicing etc. This will be reflected in the final version of the document by the inclusion of an additional sentence on page 254. See below.</p>

Respondent	Representation	Response
	<p>corresponding views into the built area.</p> <p>Disagrees with the first bullet point on p.255 that a strong cohesive character has been created by superficial features like cladding, design details and landscaping, when the layout and planning concepts demonstrate fundamental inconsistencies across the site. Amend to read “Superficially cohesive character created by inconsistency of materials, particularly the use of coloured weatherboarding, grey roof tiles, white wooden details and landscaping”.</p> <p>Add new bullet point in Negative Features: “Intrusiveness to natural landscape of Leybourne Lakes Country Park created by views of 3-4 storey properties on west and north-west margins of the built development, in conflict with the planning and landscape concept for Leybourne Lakes Country Park. Could be enhanced by augmentation and better management of natural screening”.</p>	<p>Disagreement noted, but the Council’s view is that the palette of materials and design details creates a strong sense of place and identity for the area, creating a cohesive character regardless of the variety of building heights.</p> <p>There is a balance to be struck between maintaining the high quality landscaping for the Leybourne Lakes residential area and meeting the management needs of the Country Park. ADD THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE TO THE THIRD PARA ON PAGE 254:</p> <p><i>“However, consideration also needs to be given to the management requirements of the Country Park and in particular the management of lakeside vegetation. Rotational coppicing of lakeside vegetation will therefore result in views to and from the housing altering from year to year.”</i></p>
<p>Dr Simon Eden-Green Lunsford Lane Larkfield</p>	<p>Area L5 – Lunsford Lane - Positive Feature. Reference to views down or from Lunsford Lane into Leybourne Lakes Country Park are incorrect, the views are of the fishing lakes area known locally as Alders Lakes.</p>	<p>Agree - REVISE FINAL BULLET POINT UNDER POSITIVE FEATURES TO READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Views of the North Downs and of the dense tree belt around Alders Lakes</i>

Respondent	Representation	Response
Dr Simon Eden-Green Lunsford Lane Larkfield	Area H5 – Priestly Drive Area The major source of traffic noise and negative features worthy of enhancement is from Leybourne Way, rather than Lunsford Lane	Agree - REVISE FIRST BULLET POINT UNDER NEGATIVE FEATURES TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Traffic noise from Leybourne Way”

Leybourne Parish

Respondent	Representation	Response
Leybourne Parish Council	Concerned about the absence of Park Road and Bridgewater Place from the document. These areas are not classed as ‘rural’ and should therefore be included in the plan.	Park Road is excluded because it falls outside the confines of the urban area. For the purposes of the Character Area Appraisals, the focus has been on the urban area as this is where the greatest pressure for development lies. Bridgewater Place is included in Character Area H2.
Leybourne Parish Council	Parking continues to be an issue in Leybourne with the majority of homes in Area H1 having only 1 parking space. The Parish Council wish to ensure that future development does not reduce the amount of parking allocated to a property.	Noted.
Mr J Davies 83 Rectory Lane North Leybourne	Origins and Development - Reference is made on page 13 to Glebe Farm in Rectory Lane North. Although new development took place on the same site, Glebe Farm was demolished over 30 years ago and should not be referred to.	REVISE SECOND PARA TO READ: “The remaining properties in the area were farm houses and related buildings, some of which still remain (e.g. Bridge House on Castle Way).”

L11 –MILLHALL

Comprising: Mill Hall

This area has a mixed character and contains three Victorian residential terraces and a number of large commercial premises nestled on flat, level land between the Medway Valley railway line and the River Medway. The area is accessed off Station Road over a level crossing and is a long curved road that provides access to Mill Hall Business Estate and other stand alone industrial premises.



The area has an industrial character at first glance with large commercial premises that face onto the main road. The River Medway is well shielded from the public realm due to a dense row of trees, buildings and walls or fences between the road and the River's edge. Tall single storey double height commercial buildings are prominent but vary in age and quality.

The line of trees along part of the river bank and along the southern boundary of the area with the railway line, provides some greenery and softens what would otherwise be a hard landscape.

The road surface is uneven and rough in some places with partial pavement and informal parking areas on rough uneven terrain creating a stark contrast with the modern, high quality housing development on the site adjacent.





The older commercial and industrial premises are tired and poorly maintained. This contrasts with the well kept newer development that is built around a cul-de-sac layout with herringbone paving and deliberate colour in the building frontages to create interest and a sense of unity for the buildings in that business park.



Although there is a significant amount of greenery in the area in the form of grassed areas and mature trees and hedgerows, the high boundary brick walls of some premises create a hard townscape, softened only by some informal, wild vegetation.

Within the area, there are three separate 'blocks' of residential development. All residential properties (with the exception of the white house in the above photo on the right) is Victorian.

The first block faces directly onto the Highway and personalisation of these properties has diluted the otherwise historic character of this row. Painted brickwork, replacement windows and doors and dormer windows in the roof have all contributed to this dilution. The other 'blocks' are well screened from the road due to their deep front gardens that sit behind a wall and tall hedge or the angle of the road creates privacy.





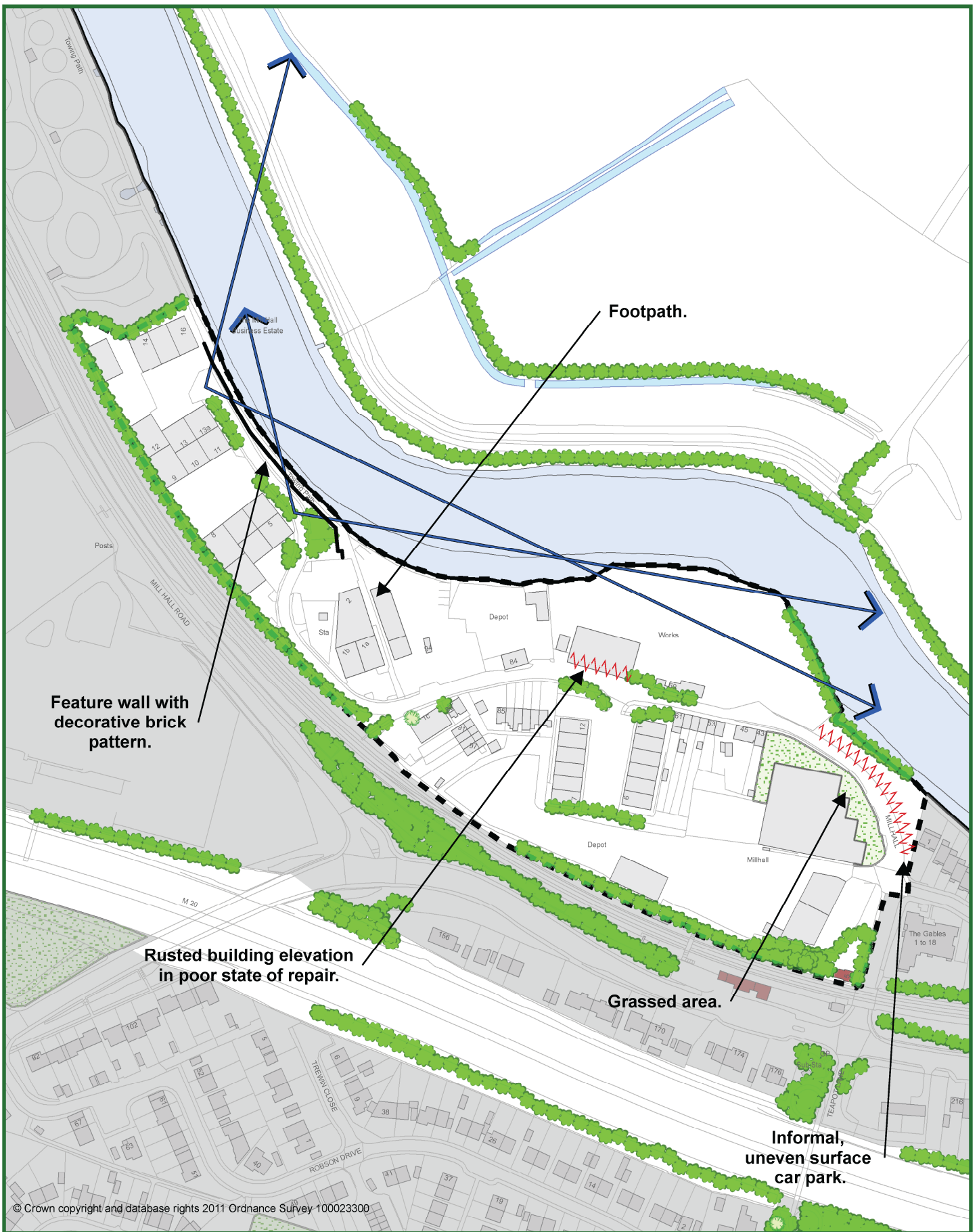
The industrial and commercial premises at the western end of the site are well kept and have a low brick wall with decorative pattern running along the edge of the site with the River. The brick wall contains the site and obscures views of the River. However, there are panoramic views across the River over to the North Downs and the open countryside on the opposite side of the bank.

Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Panoramic views of surrounding countryside and the North Down
- Individuality of buildings and groups of buildings create interest
- Quiet/tranquil character
- Mature trees, hedgerows and grassed areas

Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Some poor surfacing of roads and pavements
- Quality and condition of some of the older industrial premises



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Ref **L11**

Title **Mill Hall**

Medway Gap Character Area Appraisal

