

**DRAFT CONSERVATION
AREA APPRAISAL**

**HAMSEY (COOKSBRIDGE)
DESIGNATED: 10.02.1976
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’ Designation is the principal means by which local authorities apply conservation policies to a particular area. It introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve and enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define the special interest of an area.

Section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas within the District. Section 72 requires that in considering applications for development in a Conservation Area, attention shall be paid to the desirability of conserving or enhancing the character of that area.

1.2 The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal

Conservation Area Appraisals are an important part of the process of enhancing and conserving the character and appearance of designated areas. They play a role in making informed and sustainable decisions about the future of the area. This appraisal offers the opportunity to reassess the designated area and to evaluate and record its special interest. It has been carried out in accordance with guidelines set out in the English Heritage publication, *Guidance on conservation area appraisals (2006)*.

Features such as listed buildings, unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution, trees and important views have been recorded and indicated on a Townscape Appraisal Map. It should be noted that the omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Adopted Lewes District Council Local Plan (2003) contains detailed policies relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. In particular, the policies detailed in Chapter 8 'The Historic Environment' are applied to development in or affecting conservation areas and planning decisions will be determined with consideration given to them. For this reason, anyone considering making an application for consent within a conservation area should consult these policies. The Local Plan is available from Lewes District Council offices or online at www.lewes.gov.uk. Pre-application advice can also be sought from Development Control and Design & Conservation Officers.

The Local Plan is currently under review and will be replaced with a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will consist of a portfolio of local development documents that set out the spatial planning strategy for the District Council area. Until this is in place, the Local Plan remains the statutory planning document.

In addition, broad policies relating to the consideration of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are detailed in the South East Plan (2009). National planning policy guidance also covers these areas. In particular, Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) – Planning and the Historic Environment, should be consulted.

3. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

3.1 Key Positive Characteristics

The key features which contribute to the special interest of the area are as follows:

- The historic and traditional buildings, both listed and unlisted, which both individually and as a group contribute to the attractive nature of the conservation area
- The historic layout of the conservation area, which is largely preserved; and its historic uses which are identifiable
- The setting of the conservation area within an attractive rural landscape
- A wide range of local materials, which adds interest and variety

3.2 Recommendations

- That the quality of new development, particularly residential alterations and extensions, be better controlled through the planning process. It is suggested that an Article 4 Direction, removing permitted development rights, would allow the Local Planning Authority to have greater control over minor development
- That the boundary of the conservation area is extended to include the site of the former Cooksbridge Brewery, with the remaining Victorian cottages

4. ASSESSING SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1 Location and Setting

Location and context

The Hamsey (Cooksbridge) Conservation Area is located approximately 3 miles north of the County Town of Lewes, East Sussex, at the junction of the busy A275 road, known as Cooksbridge Road/Resting Oak, which runs between Lewes and North Chailey; and Deadmantree Hill, leading to the nearby settlements of Barcombe and Newick to the north east. The conservation area straddles the border of the parishes of Hamsey and

Barcombe, with the parish boundary running north-south roughly along the line of Deadmantree Hill. The conservation area covers the older part of the settlement of Cooksbridge, with more recent development a short distance to the south.

The conservation area is largely residential; however, there is also a Public House, the Rainbow Inn, and farm buildings to the south west.

General character and plan form

The conservation area is set within a rural landscape and covers an area of 13.88 hectares. It is irregular in form; the buildings mainly line either side of Deadmantree Hill and, to the west, the extensive grounds of the large house of Coneyboro are included. The plan form is fairly dispersed, with the densest area of settlement being at the southern end of Deadmantree Hill, where it meets Cooksbridge Road. The centre of the conservation area is much more domestic in character than the outer reaches where there is the transition to the open countryside.

Landscape setting

The conservation area is situated just north of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It occupies fairly low-lying land at its southernmost point, rising along a gentle incline up Deadmantree Hill.

Whilst the developed centre of the conservation area feels fairly enclosed, views out towards the open countryside, particularly from the northern and southern ends of the conservation area, reinforce its rural setting. A particularly prominent view looks northwards towards an imposing listed building, Shelleys Folly, situated outside the conservation area.

To the south of the conservation area is a small stream, a tributary of the River Ouse known as North End Stream. The bridge across it, Cook's Bridge, gives the name to the settlement.



The Cook's Bridge, and the rural approach to the conservation area from the south

4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology

The origins and historic development of the area

The conservation area comprises the centre of the old settlement of Cooksbridge; with more recent settlement (intermingled with a few historic buildings) located a short distance to the south near Cooksbridge station.

Historic maps show that the layout of the settlement is historic and largely preserved.

In 1724 Richard Budgen produced the first large scale map of Sussex, which does not go in to great detail but shows 'the Resting Oak', depicts the road

junction and a building on site of The Rainbow Inn, 'Cooks Bridg' [sic] and a large house, 'Coneyburrows', to the east.

Yeakell & Gardner produced a map of Sussex between 1778-1783. This shows a cluster of buildings around the junction of the roads, and depicts 'Coneyburrows' set in extensive grounds. The 'Cook's Bridge', is also shown across the stream to the south of the conservation area. The area of Cooksbridge's to the south of the conservation area at this time consisted of a scattering of buildings at the entrance to Beechwood Lane.

The Tithe Maps for Hamsey and Barcombe of 1840 show that the pattern of settlement remained largely the same, although it shows development south of Cooksbridge House in the form of farm buildings, and a brewery to north west, the site of which is just outside the conservation area. A blacksmith's shop and yard is also specified on the site of Forge Cottage and Wheelwrights.

Early Ordnance Survey maps of 1875/1878 show the Smithy, a post office (now a house, the Old Post Office), the Rainbow Inn, which has remained of the same name, Garden Cottages and Upper Morley Cottage, and shows Cooksbridge Farm, consisting of Cooksbridge House and farm buildings to the south. The picture is largely unchanged by 1911.

Development in more recent years has generally been of a minor nature, and therefore the historic development of the layout remains largely preserved.

Archaeology, including scheduled monuments

There are no scheduled ancient monuments or designated areas of archaeological interest within the conservation area.

4.3 Spatial Analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The general spatial character of the area is that of public space, i.e. roadway and pavements, flanked by enclosed private spaces. Many properties are largely screened from view by hedges, but private gardens where well-maintained make a contribution to the appearance of the area. The large grounds of Conyboro historically form part of the settlement, but these are not prominent from the public realm.

A grassed triangular area at the main road junction, south of the Rainbow Inn, gives the impression of once perhaps being a small village green and makes a contribution to the area.

Key views and vistas (both out of and into the area; view points)

There are a number of key views which are significant to the character of the conservation area; these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

Within the conservation area itself, the character of the area along Deadmantree Hill is fairly enclosed, with views out to the surrounding landscape being limited by heavy tree screening. At the northern end of the conservation area there are, however, significant views out across the open fields and up to the imposing listed building, Shelley's Folly, to the north west.

From the south of the conservation area, in particular Cooksbridge Farm, there are stunning views across the open landscape to the south, and the Cook's Bridge itself is set within much more open countryside.

There are also views out across fields to the south from the footpath running east of the Manor House.



The view northeast towards Shelley's Folly

4.4 Character Analysis

Activity and prevailing or former uses and their influence on plan forms and buildings

The main focus of development is around the junction of the two main roads, which reflects the historic commercial heart of the village, where the public house, and former forge and post office are located. The buildings cluster here; whilst other residential development northwards along Deadmantree Hill is more scattered in comparison.

Other buildings are set apart, such as Cooksbridge House, previously a farmhouse, and the farm buildings of Cooksbridge Farm, and Coneyboro, set apart as befitting a country house within large grounds.

Just outside the conservation area, is the site of the former Cooksbridge Brewery which was destroyed by fire in 1912. Brewing had taken place here since at least 1798, according to a drawing of a house on the site with an attached brewhouse, belonging to John Cheeseman. Some Victorian cottages remain on the site, The Old Brewery, Old Brewery Cottage, and 1 & 2 Brewery Cottages.

The qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area

There are nine entries on the statutory list ('listed' buildings) within the conservation area. All the listed buildings within the conservation area are listed Grade II.

Upper Morley Cottage is a well-proportioned house of likely early 19th century date. It has a symmetrical façade with sash windows with glazing bars and a panelled door with a simple semi-circular fanlight above. The walls are clad with painted weatherboarding and the hipped roof with slate. Two prominent brick chimneys are situated at either end of the building.

The Yews is an 18th century red brick cottage with a stringcourse of grey brick headers running between the ground and first floors. It has a small single storey extension attached to the north with a pantiled roof. It has simple casement windows with a single horizontal glazing bar dividing each light into two. The attractive panelled door has a flat hood on brackets above it which adds presence to the simple façade. The roof is covered with traditional hand made clay tiles and there is a modillion cornice at the eaves. A very small casement window at attic level in the tile hung southern gable is an attractive feature.

Adjoining The Yews to the south is Yew Tree Cottage, faced in red brick with grey headers, and tile hung at first floor level to the front façade only. The roof is clay tiled. A two storey wing projects from the rear of the building. The windows are casements with glazing bars. Like The Yews it has a flat door

hood on brackets above the door.



Listed buildings along Deadmantree Hill

Woodbine Cottage is set down from the road and has a quaint appearance, with white weatherboarding above a brick plinth, casement windows and dormers with arched heads. The door hood on brackets is also curved to match this detail. The bay to the north is a later extension, well-detailed in closely matching materials.

The Old Post Office close by is listed as Cobbler's Cottage. The building is dated 1713 on its chimney, but this may well relate to the refacing of an earlier timber framed building in brick. The building is red brick with grey headers, and has a mixture of window types, including a small shop window, no longer in use. It has a half-hipped, clay tiled roof. An old post box is set into the wall of an adjoining outbuilding to the north.

Forge Cottage and Wheelwrights is a pair of houses with an attached shed to the north, which was formerly the wheelwright's workshop. The shed is faced

with weatherboarding with traditional timber double doors and painted white, and has a pantiled roof. The cottages are constructed from red bricks with grey headers and have casement windows and tiled roofs. Wheelwrights has a projecting stringcourse. Both have modern timber porches with simple gables. Forge Cottage was once two dwellings, evidence of which can be seen in the vertical joint running between the southern and central bays.

The Rainbow Inn is located in a prominent position at the junction of the two main roads. It is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins and has a tiled roof. The window surrounds are now painted. A sundial and decorative plaque above the door has the initials IM and the date 1749. IM stands for James Marwick who was the owner in 1749.



The Rainbow Inn

The Manor House is an attractive building faced with flints with brick banding. The building is unusual in that half of the façade is knapped flint, whilst the other (southern) half is knapped and squared flint, suggesting that the building was extended, in materials that were not an exact match. The windows to the

front are sashes with glazing bars and the roof is tiled. The building also has stone quoins, and the southern gable is tile hung above cement render with a prominent external brick chimney stack. The rear of the building also shows a corresponding contrast in materials, the half to the north being flint, brick and stone, and the southern half being red brick.



The Manor House, displaying contrasting flintwork

Cooksbridge House is a large building set back and screened from the road. The majority of the front façade is tile hung, apart from the southernmost window bay, which is faced in red brick with grey headers, and is a later alteration. The roof is tiled and there is a very prominent central brick chimney stack. The building has an impressive 18th century door with a prominent architrave and pediment.

Unlisted buildings (including any recommendations for locally listed buildings)

A number of unlisted buildings also contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, by virtue of their architecture and materials. These have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map (See Appendix 1).

Of particular note are:

Garden Cottages, a pair of Victorian brick cottages, simple in appearance, but constructed from quality materials with attractive margin light sash windows.

Conyboro was built between 1867-69, on the site of an earlier house, by John George Dodson MP (later Lord Monk Bretton). It is rather hidden away from public view, set far back from the main road and screened by trees. However, it is constructed from high quality materials with attractive detailing.



Conyboro

A number of outbuildings (often used as garages) are simple, vernacular structures which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

To the south of the conservation area there is a group of traditional farm buildings, constructed in a typical vernacular manner in traditional materials, which, although somewhat dilapidated, make a contribution to the conservation area and reinforce the rural location and historic use of the settlement. Close by to the south west are New Cottages, a simple pair of Victorian cottages set well back from the road, constructed from brick, with slate roof and casement windows.



*Traditional farm buildings, alongside more modern structures,
south of the conservation area*

Local details

Interesting local features include:

- a traditional post box, set in to the wall of the Old Post Office
- the sundial and date plaque above the door of the Rainbow Inn
- brick stringcourses, which are a particular feature of the 18th century cottages lining Deadmantree Hill
- an attractive weathervane on garage/outbuilding south of Forge Cottage
- Glass tiles laid in diamond pattern, provide a subtle and attractive 'rooflight' to one of the farm buildings south of Cooksbridge House
- the Cook's Bridge over North End Stream, constructed in traditional local brick, from which the name of the settlement derives



The sundial above the Rainbow Inn is an interesting local feature

Prevalent local and traditional building materials and the public realm

The buildings of the conservation area display a range of traditional materials. Brick is a prominent feature. This is usually a typical, local brick, textured and a warm red colour, occasionally used with grey/blue headers to decorative effect (a good example being Wheelwrights). Brick stringcourses are also a particular feature of the conservation area. The Manor House shows another decorative use of brick, in the form of brick and flint banding.

Weatherboarding is also seen, typically white painted, e.g. Woodbine Cottage, but occasionally left natural or tarred as can be seen on farm buildings south of Cooksbridge House. There is also some use of traditional hand made clay hanging tiles as a cladding material, e.g. The Yews and Yew Tree Cottage. Stone is not common in the conservation area, but there is some use of flint, at the Rainbow Inn, which has knapped flint facing, and The Manor House, which displays both knapped and squared flints, as well as sandstone at the rear and as decorative quoins. Although a local material, the relative infrequency of the use of flint in the conservation area may set these buildings apart as more high status houses.



Woodbine Cottage, with its sympathetic extension, clad with white painted weatherboarding

Roofs are typically hand made clay tiles or slate. There is some use of pantiles, such as the outbuilding attached to the north of Wheelwrights.

Windows are largely timber, sash or casements, both plain glazed and with glazing bars.

Boundary walls are typically constructed from red brick, or, occasionally, a darker mottled brown brick, often with attractive curved or triangular shaped brick copings. Brick on edge, laid at an angle to create a diamond pattern, is seen on the boundary wall of the Manor House. Other characteristic boundary treatments include hedges and picket fences.

At the northern end of the conservation area, there is a general absence of pavements and road markings, the road being edged by grass verges, appropriate to the rural setting. At the more closely built up 'centre' of the settlement, a narrow pavement edged with granite setts runs along the eastern side of Deadmantree Hill. A pavement with concrete setts runs along the eastern side of Cooksbridge Road and Resting Oak Hill. There are also the inevitable road markings and modern sign posts at the junction of Deadmantree Hill with the busy A275.

The contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces; and its biodiversity value

A number of trees within the conservation area make a contribution to its character. All trees within the conservation area are protected, and prior to the commencement of any tree work the District Council's Tree and Landscape Officer needs to be notified.

Some trees are protected by specific Tree Preservation Orders, and are identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

Prominent in the public realm is a group of protected trees south of Lower Morley Cottage and to the rear of The Yews and Yew Tree Cottage, comprising predominantly Ash, Sycamore, Scots Pine and Horse Chestnut.

Horse Chestnut trees in front of the Rainbow Inn are specifically protected.

The northern part of Deadmantree Hill is lined by trees which make a significant contribution to its rural character.

The boundary of the conservation area includes two prominent groups of mature trees to the southern end. Within the grounds of Conyboro there are also a large number of trees and the grounds are included within the conservation area boundary. There are also two prominent yew trees in front of The Yews and Yew Tree Cottage.

The extent of intrusion of damage (negative factors)

Although a traditional boundary treatment, the picket fence in front of Wheelwrights subdivides and impacts on the otherwise open frontage to the two attached cottages and workshop building to the north, and as such is a prominent and rather incongruous feature. The adjacent two frontages are being used for car parking which is leading to the grass areas becoming eroded.

The storage and parking area to the rear and eastern side of the Rainbow Inn is open to the road and prominent, with a number of waste and recycling bins on clear view, and could benefit from some appropriate screening.

There are some examples of satellite dishes on prominent elevations. It would benefit the character and appearance of the conservation area if such items could be located less obtrusively.

The existence of any neutral areas

There are a number of modern farm buildings to the south of Cooksbridge House, constructed in non-traditional materials and situated alongside traditional farm buildings. These include large metal framed barns, and a silo tower, which are rather utilitarian in appearance, and may be considered unattractive, however they are typical of the agricultural use of the area and it could therefore also be argued that they have a neutral impact on the character of the area.

General condition (of the area and built fabric, identification of buildings at risk – BARs)

Cooksbridge is clearly a desirable place in which to live and generally the buildings of the conservation area and their surroundings are in a good state of repair.

As noted above, the farm buildings to the south of the conservation area are in a rather dilapidated state and the yard area is untidy. This could benefit from some sympathetic repairs and improvements to enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

Problems, pressures and the capacity for change

Many of the buildings within the conservation area are listed and therefore have a high degree of protection from potential future alterations. Damage to the appearance of traditional unlisted buildings, such as unsympathetic window replacements, is not currently a major issue in this conservation area. Therefore, owners are encouraged to consider repair of historic windows and doors rather than their replacement, or if beyond repair, sympathetic replacement in timber. It should be noted that UPVC is not an appropriate material for a conservation area.

As noted above, there are some incidences of satellite dishes positioned on prominent elevations. It is important that items such as such as this are positioned sensitively in discreet locations so as to preserve the appearance of the area.

Additional control, in the form of an Article 4 direction, which would further restrict permitted development in the conservation area, would offer increased protection against undesirable minor alterations and further erosion of the area's special interest. This would be particularly effective in controlling alterations to buildings which are not listed. For example, it would prevent the replacement of original windows with inappropriate modern versions in non-listed buildings.

The setting of the village and the existing largely historic layout are intrinsic to its character therefore it is important this is protected. The conservation area is located outside district planning boundaries (the nearest being located in the area of Cooksbridge south of the conservation area) and there is a presumption against residential development outside the planning boundaries (see Local Plan policy RES 6). There are Local Plan polices specifically for Cooksbridge, notably:

22.3 In order to protect the rural setting of the village, it is important to resist outward encroachment of development into the surrounding open countryside

A major issue that detracts from the ambience and atmosphere of the conservation area is the busy traffic which passes through along the main roads, often at high speeds. This may in time lead to pressure for additional signs or speed control methods, and it will be important that any such methods are mindful of the potential effects on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This initial draft of the Hamsey (Cooksbridge) Conservation Area Appraisal was produced following a meeting in March 2009 with the area's District and

Parish Councillors. The draft will be posted on the Council's website and a press release sent to local newspapers to publicise the appraisal. Copies will also be provided to the relevant District Councillors, and Hamsey Parish Council. A consultation period of two months will be given in order for comments on the draft to be submitted. All comments received will then be considered and any necessary alterations made in preparation for adoption of the document.

6. SUGGESTED BOUNDARY REVISIONS

It is suggested that boundary of the conservation area is revised to include the site of the former Cooksbridge Brewery, with the remaining Victorian cottages. The cottages are attractively built in traditional materials and the site has historical interest for the settlement of Cooksbridge.



Brewery Cottages

7. LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

Advice for owners of properties in conservation areas on the relevant planning legislation which affects them can be found in the leaflet Planning Controls in Conservation Areas, available online at:

<http://www.lewes.gov.uk/environment/708.asp>

Further information on Listed Buildings can be found in the leaflet Listed Buildings: An owner's guide to alteration and repairs, available online at <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/environment/935.asp>

Further information on trees in conservation areas can be found online at:

<http://www.lewes.gov.uk/environment/5925.asp>

The above information is also available from the Planning and Environmental Services Department of Lewes District Council.

8. USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

For further information and advice, please contact the Design and Conservation department at Lewes District Council:

Planning and Environmental Services

PO Box 166

Lewes

East Sussex

BN7 9EY

Tel: 01273 471600

This is one of a series of leaflets about the 35 Conservation Areas in the Lewes District. A full list can be obtained by contacting the above officers, or by visiting the Council's website (www.lewes.gov.uk).

Historic records and Ordnance Survey maps of the area can be viewed at:

East Sussex Records Office

The Maltings

Castle Precincts

Lewes

East Sussex

BN7 1YT

Tel: 01273 482349

9. FURTHER READING

The Barcombe and Hamsey Project runs a website which provides information on historic maps, census, historic photographs, archaeology and buildings. www.bandhpast.co.uk

Guidance on conservation area appraisals, English Heritage, 2006.

10. TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP