

EASTBOURNE

Borough Council



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CONSERVATION AREAS IN EASTBOURNE

Companion Document

January 2011



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1 Introduction

- 1.1** This document has been compiled primarily to provide an overview of the history of Eastbourne and to set out information on the provision for the protection of the historic environment in the form of conservation area designation. The Borough has 12 designated conservation areas, and the Council is currently preparing appraisals for each. This document provides a historical background for these more detailed conservation area appraisals.
- 1.2** For a more detailed guide on the historic character of Eastbourne, please refer to the *Eastbourne Historic Character Assessment Report, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey*, prepared for East Sussex County Council (ESCC), West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), and Brighton and Hove City Council, 2008.



Picture 1 All Saints

2 Historic Development

- 2.1** Eastbourne is located on the lower slopes of the South Downs. To the south-west the South Downs form chalk cliffs, the highest point of which is known as Beachy Head. Old Town (originally known as Bourne) was the principal medieval settlement and is located c.1.8km from the modern seafront. The historic hamlet of South Bourne was located c.850m inland, the hamlet of Meads c.500m inland and only the hamlet of Sea Houses lay directly on the seafront.



Picture 2 Extract from Tithe Map, 1841.

- 2.2** The name *Eastbourne* represents an expansion of the earlier form of the place-name, which was derived from the name of the Bourne stream, (*burna* in Old English), that flows from St Mary's Church, Old Town, to the sea. In the Domesday Book (1086) the name *Bourne* was applied to the area, and *Eastbourne* is recorded from the early 14th century: the prefix was arguably adopted to distinguish the place from *Bourne* in the west of Sussex.
- 2.3** There have been many archaeological surveys in the Eastbourne area, which have uncovered evidence of prehistoric settlement activity, these include the Star Brewery site, Old Town⁽¹⁾, which recovered Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery sherds, most of which dated to the Middle Iron Age. An excavation in Meads Street⁽²⁾ uncovered Neolithic (4000 BC to 2351 BC) finds and an excavation on Shinewater Marsh⁽³⁾ revealed a timber

1 Excavated in 1980

2 Excavated in 1846

3 Excavated in 1995

occupation platform of national importance, dating from c.900-800 BC. This was connected to higher land to the south-west by a timber track or causeway.

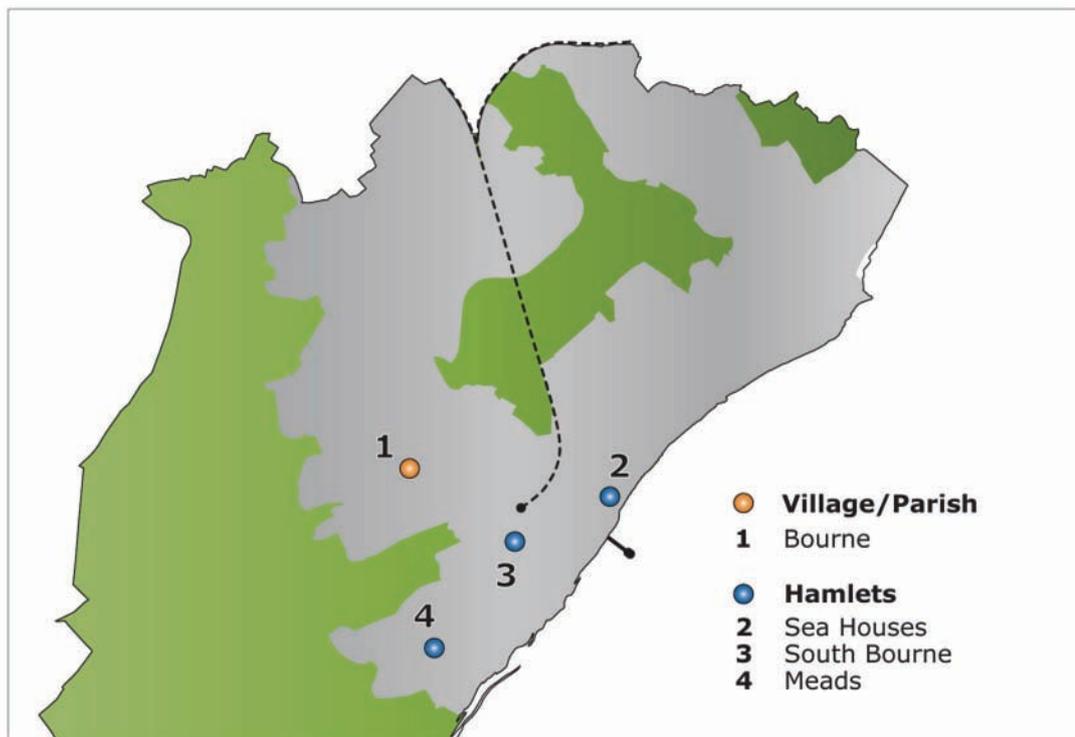
- 2.4** There is significant evidence of Romano-British settlement in Eastbourne. Excavations close to Cavendish Place and Queens Gardens, undertaken in 1712 and 1848-53, revealed evidence of a large early Roman villa with extensive rooms of various sizes. Other significant finds have included coins, bones and animal horns, roof tiles, bricks and pottery. In the Seaside Road and Elms Road area Roman coins of Postumus were found in 1709 and of Constantine in 1710.
- 2.5** During the Saxon period (c. 400 - 1066) it is believed that a nucleated settlement developed around the source of the Bourne Stream (now Motcombe Gardens). At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 the Manor of Bourne belonged to William the Conqueror's half-brother, the Count of Mortain. A water mill, (almost certainly the Goffs upper mill) church and 16 saltpans were recorded. Domesday Bourne, grew into a substantial parish, around what is now St. Mary's Parish Church, which was built between 1165 and 1185. This settlement was the centre of administration of both the Hundred and Parish until the 1850s.



Picture 3 Motcombe Gardens.

- 2.6** By the sixteenth century there were three small hamlets,⁽⁴⁾ South Bourne (Grove Road), Meads and Sea Houses (Marine Parade), which were all under the jurisdiction of the parish and village of Bourne.

⁴ A hamlet is defined as a small group of houses, usually without a church, under the jurisdiction of and in the same parish as another village or town



Picture 4 Historic village and hamlets of Eastbourne.

- 2.7** A major influence on Eastbourne's subsequent development was the second Earl of Rutland's decision to sell the manor of Eastbourne in 1555. It was sold in separate parts to three local men, James Burton, John Selwyn and Thomas Gildredge.
- 2.8** Burton took the south west portion, including Meads and what is now the town centre, setting up his manor house at Bourne Place (now Compton Place). This was sold on and eventually passed into the hands of the Hon. Spencer Compton, one of whose female heirs married the third son of the Duke of Devonshire in 1782.
- 2.9** Gildredge took Upperton and the eastern part of the parish with his manor house in The Goffs. The ownership passed through the female line to the Gilbert family. In 1782 one of the Gilberts moved to the house in Borough Lane which until recently was the Towner Art Gallery.



- 2.10** Selwyn took the northern part. His grand-daughter married Thomas Parker of Ratton and they moved to Ratton Manor.
- 2.11** In 1752 Dr Richard Russell of Lewes had published his Dissertation on the Use of Sea Water, which encouraged people to visit the seaside to improve their health. This was also to have a bearing on Eastbourne's subsequent popularity as a resort.
- 2.12** In the early nineteenth century, when England was threatened by Napoleon, the Wish Tower was built to protect the western end of Eastbourne Bay. This was part of a series of Martello Towers (there were 103 in total and another two are located within Sovereign Harbour) which stretched from Seaford, East Sussex to Slaghden near Aldeburgh in Norfolk. The Redoubt fort was added in 1806, protecting the eastern end of the Bay and used as a supply depot for the nearby Martello towers.
- 2.13** An important event of the mid-nineteenth century was the extension of the railway to Eastbourne in 1849, a branch of the Brighton to Hastings Line. This extension was to provide the impetus for much of the later nineteenth century development in Eastbourne.

3 Later Development

- 3.1** In 1838 Decimus Burton drew up proposals for a new town for the then Earl of Burlington, but these plans were not implemented apart from the building of Trinity Chapel (now Holy Trinity Church) in Trinity Trees. In 1847 a local surveyor, James Berry, was appointed by the Earl of Burlington to set out and survey the first portion of Eastbourne, but the scheme was unable to proceed until 1849, when the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway built the branch line to Eastbourne.
- 3.2** Eastbourne today is largely the creation of William Cavendish, who became the 7th Duke of Devonshire following the death of his cousin in 1858. The Duke had a vision of a seaside resort "built by a gentleman for gentlemen" and in 1859 he commissioned a development plan from Henry Currey, which has become a famous example of inspired town planning, with spacious streets, fine public buildings and sweeping promenades facing the sea. Currey was the son of the chief agent to the sixth Duke of Devonshire and was apprenticed to Decimus Burton, who at that time was working with Joseph Paxton on the great conservatory at Chatsworth.



Picture 5 Marine Parade, c. 1910.

- 3.3** Currey was an eminent London architect and was Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, of which his best known building is St Thomas' Hospital. In Eastbourne, he designed the Queen's Hotel, Winter Gardens and Devonshire Park Theatre.
- 3.4** In the mid-nineteenth century, four-fifths of the land in Eastbourne was owned by two major landowners - the Cavendish and the Gilbert families. William Cavendish, who became the seventh Duke of Devonshire in 1858, had inherited Compton Place and other lands in Eastbourne in 1834 when he was still the 2nd Earl of Burlington.

- 3.5** The second major landowner was Carew Davies Gilbert, his grandfather, Davies (Giddy) Gilbert had come from Cornwall and was a well-known scientist and one-time President of the Royal Society. The main part of the Gilbert estate, on the eastern side of Upperton Road, was laid out by Nicholas Whitley of Truro who produced major plans in 1862, 1870 and 1883.
- 3.6** A new greensand wall was built by Berry to protect the central seafront in 1848 and the foundation stone of the new town was laid in 1851. Originally three main thoroughfares were built, Cavendish Place, Victoria Place (now part of Terminus Road) and Cornfield Terrace. Victoria Place (and possibly Cavendish Place) transpired to be disastrous development projects for the builders involved, and as a result, the 2nd Earl of Burlington felt obliged to bail out the builders to a tune of £37,000. Cornfield Terrace is unusual in that it was not developed by either of the two major landowners but by John Gosden, during the years 1848-1852. Tenants, however, proved slow to arrive.



- 3.7** In 1864 George Ambrose Wallis, an engineer who later came to dominate the late Victorian development of Eastbourne, joined the seventh Duke and Currey to provide technical expertise and advice, notably on the town's drainage. Currey produced a second plan for the area of Meads in 1872, as well as the area now known as Grand Parade.
- 3.8** In the five years from 1871 to 1876, the population of the town doubled to over 21,000. Between 1880 and 1884 the Local Board spent £50,000 on the construction of Royal Parade whilst, simultaneously, the Duke funded the creation of the Western Parades (designed by Ambrose Wallis) in Meads.



Picture 6 View of Meads, c. 1970.

- 3.9** In 1883 the Local Board was granted a charter of Incorporation and George Wallis became the town's first Mayor. His name appears on the foundation stone of the town hall. With his brother he ran the firm of Wallis & Wallis, surveyors, engineers, builders and auctioneers, who were awarded all the major ducal contracts in the town and carried out much of the speculative housing development. They shared their offices at No.14 Seaside Road (now part of Trinity Trees) with the Compton Estate office.
- 3.10** Rapid expansion continued until a building recession in the late 1880s, when many local builders went bankrupt. The death of the seventh Duke in 1891, followed by that of G A Wallis in 1895, temporarily slowed development. However, the new 8th Duke was a close friend of Edward VII and this royal connection continued into the reign of George V, who stayed at Compton Place. The 8th Duke became mayor of Eastbourne in 1897 and under his guidance many improvements were carried out, including the construction of a new waterworks at Friston. At the same time the Gilbert family developed new housing in Upperton Road, Prideaux Road and Green Street.
- 3.11** Hampden Park was purchased by the Council in 1901 and in 1903 the first municipal buses were brought into service to link the different parts of the growing town. The Technical Institute was built in Grove Road in 1904 as a museum, school, art school and library. In 1909 the 9th Duke also became mayor of Eastbourne and in 1911 the town received County Borough status. By the beginning of World War I, Eastbourne was numbered among the largest, most exclusive and successful holiday resorts in the country.
- 3.12** Edwardian suburbs surround the town centre, providing a variety of terraced, semi-detached and much larger detached houses. 20th century development has stretched up the valleys of the South Downs to the

west. Large housing estates have been built to the east and north of central Eastbourne, industrial estates and a new marina have also been added to the east of the town.

4 Local Criteria for Conservation

- 4.1** Much of the centre of Eastbourne is laid out in accordance with Victorian town planning principles and was developed by wealthy or aristocratic landowners. A large proportion of this historic townscape is a valuable representation of our cultural heritage and national identity.
- 4.2** Eastbourne evolved from the small, dispersed historic settlements of Bourne, South Bourne, Meads and Sea Houses, to a large seaside resort with Victorian and Edwardian villas, terraces, and shops. Large areas of Eastbourne are therefore of archaeological, architectural and historic interest.
- 4.3** Part of the character of Eastbourne is created by the use of local materials. The earliest surviving buildings were made of timber from the weald, flints from the downs and beaches and later bricks made of local clay. Materials from further afield, such as Horsham roof slabs, slate from north Cornwall, floor tiles from the Netherlands and Caen Stone (imported from France) etc., were often brought in by sea and were often reserved for the most prestigious buildings such as churches.



- 4.4** The heritage significance of historic areas comes not just from their physical presence, but also from other attributes, such as their relationship with their surroundings, in particular, their setting. Significance is an important concept in relation to heritage assets such as conservation areas.
- 4.5** Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) defines significance as its value 'to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic' (CLG 2010). Setting as a concept in relation to conservation areas is also of great importance. PPS5 defines setting as: 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'.
- 4.6** Only the best preserved representation of this rich townscape have been selected for conservation area status and each boundary has been carefully assessed and drawn around a set of coherent elements which

define each area's individual character. These are areas, often with developments from different periods, the special character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

- 4.7** English Heritage recommends that conservation areas should be assessed against local criteria in order to ensure that a consistent, objective approach is used throughout the Borough. The Council has adopted a set of locally tailored criteria as measures against which current and future conservation areas in Eastbourne are objectively selected (or not) and their boundaries defined. These tests (Appendix 6.3) are set out in the Council's Guidance Manual for the Designation and Review of Conservation Areas, which is available to download on the Council's website.
- 4.8** Many individual buildings within the Conservation Areas are listed. A schedule of all listed buildings is contained in the Eastbourne Townscape Guide, which is also available to download on the Council's website.



5 The History of Designation in Eastbourne

5.1 Conservation areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and the principle has continued in a series of Acts ever since. Eastbourne has 12 designated conservation areas and they cover a total of 249.06 ha, which is approximately 5.25% of the Borough.

Year of Designation	Name	Amendments	Area (ha)
1969	Old Town	Extended 1984	15.7
1969	Meads	Extended 1982, 1988	111.8
1969	Willingdon		2.2
1969	Town Centre and Seafront	Extended 1975, 1979, 1986, 1992	84.3
1974	Ratton		0.86
1986	Saffrons		2.2
1986	Warrior Square	*Boundary Review 2010. No boundary changes proposed.	0.4
1986	College		13.8
1991	Torfield		1.5
1991	South Lynn Drive		1.1
1991	The Park Close		1.3
1994	Upperton Gardens*	*Boundary Review 2009/10. Extended 2010 and the conservation area renamed 'Upperton' to reflect these changes.	13.9

Table 1 Designation of Conservation Areas (correct at date of publication)

6 Appendix

6.1 Planning Policy Framework

6.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act provides a definition of a conservation area and sets out local planning authorities' duties regarding designating and monitoring them. It also provides statutory control on certain forms of development within conservation areas.

6.2 Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. March 2010.

Under PPS 5, conservation areas are recognised as designated heritage assets, as are the buildings within the conservation area boundaries. As such the process of designation has identified them as having a level of significance that justifies special protection measures. Conservation areas are designated if they are of special historic or architectural interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. All of these criteria have two components: the nature of the interest or significance that defines the designation and the relative importance of that interest or significance. Significance, as defined in the PPS, encompasses all of the different interests that might be grounds for designating a heritage asset.

Nothing in PPS 5 changes the existing legal framework for the designation of scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens or protected wrecks. Existing law also sets out the basis on which scheduled monument consent, listed building consent, conservation area consent or licences to deal with protected wrecks may be required. Nothing in the PPS changes those requirements and the interpretation of the words and phrases used.

6.3 Article 4 Directions: The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (1995) as amended

Article 4 directions increase the powers of local planning authorities to withdraw "permitted development" rights where it is expedient to do so. Directions under Article 4 (2) can be used to remove permitted development rights within all or part of a conservation area, so that an application for planning permission has to be made. If permission is refused the applicant may be entitled to compensation.

An Article 4 direction could limit the permitted development rights of single private dwelling houses by controlling such things as the painting of buildings and the use of materials.

6.4 The Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011)

The saved Urban Heritage and Townscape (UHT) policies of the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001 - 2011 are now part of the Local Development Framework and apply to development in conservation areas. They seek to interpret national policy for local requirements and to protect the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of Eastbourne's buildings and townscape.

They will be replaced in due course by a core strategy and a portfolio of documents which informs this, including Supplementary Planning Guidance such as the Eastbourne Townscape Guide.

6.5 Eastbourne Local Development Framework (LDF)

This portfolio of development documents, currently under preparation, will supersede the local plan and provide a spatial planning strategy for the Borough.

6.6 Eastbourne Townscape Guide: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2004

The Townscape Guide has been formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It expands on the Borough Plan's policies and contains a list of the Borough's listed buildings, locally listed buildings, plans of the conservation areas and of the Areas of High Townscape Value.

The individual conservation area appraisals and this companion document should be read in conjunction with the Townscape Guide, which links them to the Council's statutory planning policy.

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6.3 Criteria for Assessing the Special Interest & Boundaries

Guidance Manual for Designation and Review of Conservation Areas in Eastbourne.

The following tests will be applied in reviewing the boundary of Eastbourne's Conservation Areas:

1 Test 1 Architectural Quality and Historic Relevance

The majority of buildings must have some strong intrinsic architectural or historic merit by virtue of age, design, materials and/or whether they were designed by a known architect or by the same developer etc. The following criteria should be considered;

- does the area reflect the architectural style and details present within substantial parts of the Conservation Area?
- does the area represent an important phase in the historic development of the town/village?
- is the development of similar massing, bulk, height and scale to a significant proportion of the development within the Conservation Area?
- does the area represent a notable piece of town/village planning?
- does the area include good examples of the work of well known architects?
- does the development within the area date from a similar period to substantial parts of the Conservation Area?
- is the development the work of the same architect or developer active elsewhere within significant parts of the Conservation Area?
- do the current uses within the area reflect prevailing or former uses of substantial parts of the Conservation Area?

2 Test 2 Townscape/Public Realm Quality

Consideration is also given to the townscape quality of the area and whether there is sufficient justification for the introduction of additional controls. In particular; the proportion of the buildings within the area which would be defined as positive contributors if located within the Conservation Area. Issues to consider are;

- does the street/area substantially retain its original fabric and appearance relating to features including front gardens/soft landscaping (if relevant);
- front boundary walls/railings (if relevant);
- do the buildings in the street/area retain original features (doors, windows, porches, stucco detailing; decorative panelling, chimney stacks, survival of brickwork or stonework that has not been rendered or painted etc.), which overall remain predominantly intact;
- is the original roofscape of the street/area predominantly intact;
- are there any original shop fronts (if relevant);
- are there few instances overall of inappropriate alterations and extensions

- (introduction of inappropriate dormers; infilling between properties; over prominent rear extensions)?
- It is necessary to take into account the extent of any uncharacteristic alterations or other damage to the buildings within the area in order to assess the suitability of the area for designation.

3 Test 3 Boundaries:

In establishing the boundaries of Conservation Areas a number of factors (as well as the criteria set out in Tests 1 and 2) must be considered. Many of the Conservation Areas in Eastbourne are surrounded or bordered by Areas of High Townscape Value (AHTV); these areas usually form part of the setting of Conservation Areas but generally have a less defined historic relevance, townscape/public realm quality or architectural quality.

All areas, including AHTVs surrounding Conservation Areas will be reviewed as part of the Conservation Area boundary review and their significance reassessed. The result could be that the boundary of the Conservation Area remains unchanged, areas are deleted from the designation or part of the surrounding area may be included in the Conservation Area designation. When assessing the boundaries of Conservation Areas it is important to consider the following;

- does the area under consideration retain its original boundary lines, including historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares?
- when reviewing the boundary of the Conservation Area and its relationship to neighbouring areas, it is important to consider the following factors;
 1. are there discernible and distinct changes in the character and quality of the adjoining open spaces and/or landscaping between the two areas?
 2. is there a particular 'mix' of uses common to the Conservation Area and surrounding area?
 3. are there topographical townscape and/or landscape features common to both areas which form an integral part of the setting of the historic built environment?