



Rother District Council

CONSERVATION + DESIGN ADVICE

Conservation Area Appraisal : BATTLE





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Conservation Area Appraisal : BATTLE

Adopted by Council
6th February 2006

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Definition of Conservation Areas
- 1.2 Purpose of Appraisals

2.0 Battle Conservation Area

- 2.1 Description
- 2.2 Location & Geographical Context
- 2.3 Historical Development

3.0 Character Appraisal

- 3.1 Setting of the Town
- 3.2 Approaches to the Town
- 3.3 Streetscape & Architectural Character
- 3.4 Architectural & Historic Value
- 3.5 Materials & Architectural Details
- 3.6 Shopfronts & Advertisements
- 3.7 Boundary Treatments
- 3.8 Paving Treatments
- 3.9 Permeability
- 3.10 Landscape Features

4.0 Conservation Area Management

- 4.1 Development Plan Policies
- 4.2 Design Guidance
- 4.3 Highways & Public Realm

Annex 1 Location Plan of Battle

Annex 2 Boundary Map of Conservation Area

Annex 3 Character Map of Conservation Area

Annex 4 Development Plan Policies

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Definition of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as

“areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (section 69(1)(a).)

It is the responsibility of individual Local Planning Authorities to designate and review Conservation Areas, using local criteria to determine and assess their special qualities and local distinctiveness. Once designated, Local Planning Authorities have a duty

“to formulate and publish from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and submit them for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate” (section 71)

and

“in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area” (section 72)

Conservation Area status also places a statutory control, with certain exemptions, over demolition, works to trees and advertisement display.

1.2 Purpose of Appraisals

A Conservation Area Appraisal is a written and pictorial assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of a particular Conservation Area.

Adopted by the Council, an Appraisal serves as a basis for both the formulation and evaluation of Development Plan policies and as a material consideration in the making of development control decisions, also providing additional and specific support at appeal stage for such decisions. It can also heighten private sector awareness of the special character of place to help inform the planning and design choices of private and commercial owners.

The Appraisal itself is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to enable the sustaining of the wider qualities of distinctiveness of place by defining and protecting those physical elements that contribute to the special character. It should be noted, however, that the Appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Additionally, an Appraisal can include management proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of an area by means of policies, action points, design guidance and site-specific design statements where appropriate.

In accordance with the aforementioned legislation, this Appraisal represents a review of the existing designated Battle Conservation Area, taking into account the changes in the legislative, social and environmental context since the previous Appraisal was prepared in 1971.

2.0 Battle Conservation Area

Battle Conservation Area was designated in June 1971 by East Sussex County Council.

2.1 Description

Battle is a small market town of considerable character. The town centre forms the historic core, and consists of a long central street, High Street, with the Abbey Gate House at its south-eastern end and the medieval precincts wall beyond it. The High Street is continued to the south-east in Upper Lake and Lower Lake while to the north west end of the High Street there is a Y-fork formed by High Street itself and Mount Street. Almost all the buildings in these four streets date from the eighteenth century or earlier.

It is this part of Battle which is contained within the designated Conservation Area.

The most northerly section of the Conservation Area is formed by the group of properties No.s 17 to 21 (the Old Court House) together with No. 72 in Mount Street. The boundary then takes the rear line of the properties on the east side of Mount Street to the footpath which runs parallel with the north side of the High Street. St. Mary's Church, Deanery and the Church Hall, together with the properties to the east are then included. The field boundary to the north and the hedge and tree belt to the east are then taken as the boundary, to Marley Lane. At the junction of Marley Lane with Lower Lake, the property Lake House is included. The boundary then follows a south easterly direction to the immediate rear of No.s 1 to 22 Lower Lake before turning across the road and down to include Lake Cottage. The whole of Abbey Grounds and the Battlefield is then included in the Conservation Area. From the Western edge of the Long Plantation the boundary then runs parallel to the High Street in a north West direction along the existing footpaths as far as Western Avenue. The properties on either side of the High Street as far as No. 37 on the south side and No. 39 on the north side form the north-western boundary of the Conservation area, together with the rear of the properties on Mount Street.

The analysis contained in Section 3 of this Appraisal supports that the existing boundary be largely maintained, with minor augmentation to reflect the location of two recent developments which span the boundary line. *Annex 2 – Boundary Map of Conservation Area* defines the revised designated Conservation Area.

2.2 Location & Geographical Context

The town is situated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, some 6 miles north of Bexhill and 6 miles north-west of Hastings. (see Annex 1)

Being situated astride one of the principal High Weald east-west ridges, the town has grown up in a linear fashion. The land either side of the ridge falls away sharply and so development has extended over time along this ridge and the spurs, creating a ribbon of development mostly just one building deep, with a 'dumb-bell' effect of more sprawling development at either end of the ridge.

Battle's geographic position contributed to its early development as an important communication centre with good road connections; in the 16th century the town was served by post horse from Rye, and later it became a stop for mail coaches travelling between London and Hastings. Today Battle lies on the A2100 approximately 3 miles from the A21 London-Hastings road.

The railway came to Battle in 1852, again improving connections and economic opportunities, and today Battle station remains on the main Hastings-London Railway line.

2.3 Historical Development

The initial development of the town of Battle may be attributed to the foundation of the Abbey by William I on the site of the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The first buildings would have been simple huts for the craftsmen engaged in the construction of the Abbey. During the twelfth to fourteenth centuries more important buildings were erected, most notably the Gatehouse in 1338 when Abbot de Ketling was granted a licence from Edward III to crenellate the Abbey. The Gatehouse still stands today as the dominant architectural feature of the town, while many of the Abbey Buildings were destroyed following the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. The siting of the market place directly in front on the Gatehouse demonstrates how the town grew out of the abbey, and during the Medieval period the weekly markets and cattle markets were a major component of the town's social and economic structure.

Of great significance in townscape terms within Battle is the survival of the original medieval property or 'burghage' plots. The plots, generally between 300 and 400 feet long and 20 to 40 feet wide were laid out either side of the High Street, and each consisted of a developed frontage with a long narrow strip of agricultural land to the rear. With population growth creating pressure for new land, the medieval core of the town expanded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century with relatively high-density development in the former plots' back gardens, creating courtyards accessed by narrow pasageways between the frontages buildings along the High Street. However, the historic plot structure remains clearly visable and sets a rhythm along the street scene, maintained by the fact that new development has largely taken place within, rather than across, the old boundary lines.

The 17th and 18th centuries were a prosperous period for the people of Battle due to a thriving iron industry, and at this time many houses were altered, refaced or rebuilt. By the end of the 19th century, the historic core was largely complete (see Figs 4&5), while in the late 19th and early/mid 20th centuries, less dense development took place along the approach roads into the town, creating the 'dumbell' effect in plan.

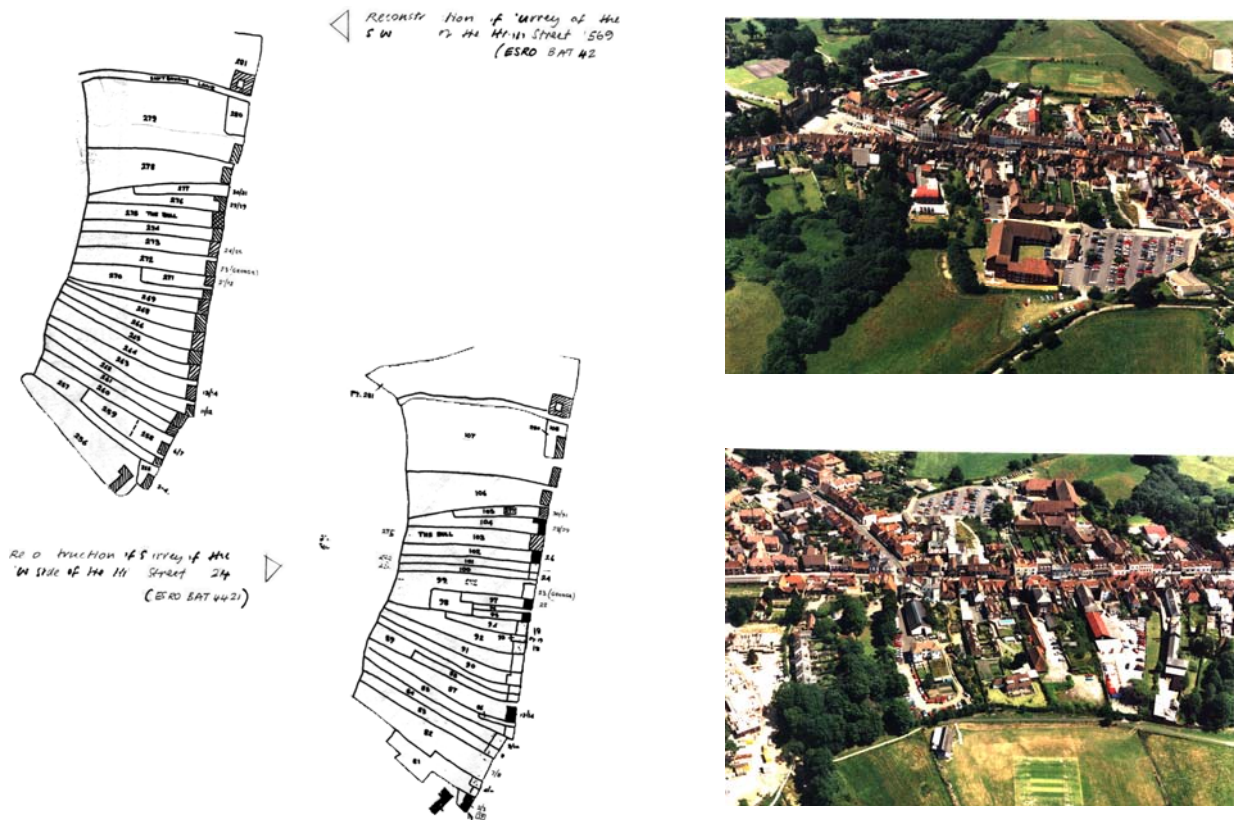


Fig 1: SW side of Battle High Street, 1524 (below) 1569 (above) Figs 2&3: Medieval plot pattern still clearly visible today

Fig 4: Plan of Battle, 1843



Fig 5: Plan of Battle, 1899

3.1 Setting of the Town

The topography of the landscape surrounding Battle is important in creating its setting, with the open valley to the northeast and southwest of the town retained, heightening awareness of the town standing on the higher ridge, with no foreground development to detract.

However, the compactness of development within Battle has resulted in a substantially introverted town centre, with much of the built fabric hidden from many long views across farmland and trees, towards the town. This rural setting, with a lack of encroachment on surrounding countryside is a key characteristic of the town, as is the joy of the ‘reveal’ of finding a town hidden on approach.

Significant views into the town are indicated in Annex 3 to this Appraisal, ‘*Character Map of Battle Conservation Area*’ and include that from Marley Lane, looking west, and from the Mount Street car park, looking south.

3.2 Approaches to the Town

The primary entrance to the town centre from the north starts with the roundabout junction of the A2100, North Trade Road and Market Road. From here, High Street tightens to the close-knit urban grain which continues for its entire length, and descends slowly southwards, drawing the eye gradually down towards the Abbey Gatehouse.

The Mount Street approach to the town centre from the north starts with a steep descent between high vegetation on the western side, and twentieth century development on the eastern side recessed by wide, open gardens. This provides a satisfying transition from the rural character of the outskirts of the town at Caldbec Hill, to the more intensely developed streetscene as High Street is neared.

From the south-east, Lower Lake provides a steep ascent to the town, initiating with development suburban in character, but as the road climbs towards Upper Lake, a long ‘wall’ of entrance into Battle is formed by the terraces of buildings sited tight on the roadside. The eye is drawn over the brow of the hill next to the church in Upper Lake towards the rich mix of clay tiled roofs and chimney stacks of the buildings of High Street beyond.

From each of these directions, the Conservation Area boundary is defined by the extent of the tight urban grain of the historic core.



view from Mount Street carpark towards High St



view from Marley Lane looking west towards High St



approach to town centre from the north



approach to town centre from Caldbec Hill



approach to town centre up Lower Lake and Upper Lake

3.3 Streetscape & Architectural Character

The historic core of Battle can be defined by a number of 'character areas', indicated in *Annex 3 – Character Map of Battle Conservation Area*.

The northern part of High Street contains several historic houses, and although the character is somewhat diluted by later buildings and lack of enclosure, it still forms an attractive entrance to the central area.

Mount Street has a variety of two-storey buildings of domestic scale. The southern portion has an attractive sense of enclosure, with buildings sited tight on the pavement, and the curve in the road is accentuated by the rail and post on the western side. It is a relatively quiet street, with limited commercial activity, but carries an amount of vehicular traffic.

High Street and Abbey Green are arguably the 'centre' of the historic core of Battle. High Street is visually interesting, having a high proportion of buildings of architectural and historic significance, of various ages, heights and styles, and predominantly in commercial use at ground floor level. The varying heights of buildings give a satisfying composition in skyline; an interesting jumble of roofslopes punctuated with mass chimneys. The buildings are mostly three storeys high, often with dormer windows in the roofslopes. However, the predominant height of buildings falls inversely with the topography, so that by the northern end, two storey buildings prevail, which make this end of High Street more intimate in character.

The buildings here are sited tight on the relatively narrow pavements, with a 'tunnel' effect created by the heights of the buildings in relation to the width of the road. The constricted width of the road and the high levels of vehicular traffic here contribute to a busy, noisy, sometimes oppressive quality of space, only relieved on arrival at Abbey Green. With few exceptions a domestic scale is maintained, and views into the courtyards and glimpses of countryside beyond give the High Street depth in character.

The 'backs' of these buildings provides a strong visual edge, i.e. a defined boundary between the developed High Street and the countryside on either side. This is accentuated by the high wall of mellowed brickwork found at the end of many of the long gardens.



Abbey Green with the Gatehouse at the southern end of the High Street is the focal point of Battle, providing strong visual termination and creating a foreshortening effect on High Street when viewed from the Northern end. The ground level, having fallen gently away down High Street to the South, rises to the Gatehouse itself, emphasising its prominence and adding to its commanding presence. However, here too is an important visual link by way of a glimpse through the open Gatehouse to countryside beyond.

Abbey Green itself is an opening of space which seems wider than it actually is due to the domestic scale of the surrounding buildings. The west side of Abbey Green is fronted by two-storey buildings which have in the main retained their older historic elevations, with clay-tiled roofs sloping down to low eaves, the steep pitches punctuated with small dormer windows. Though in commercial use at ground floor level, advertisements and signage have, with the exception of Boots, been kept appropriately to a minimum, which suits the almost cottage-like character of the buildings.

Meanwhile the east side of Abbey Green is dominated by the relatively grandiose structure of Battle Memorial Halls, which sits alongside a series of rendered, refaced buildings, though still two storeys, their dormer windows obscured from street level view by high parapets. The signage here is generally more vulgar in design and materials, and ill-proportioned.

Upper Lake joins High Street just south of Abbey Green where the massive and imposing surviving section of the original C14 Abbey wall and the high pavement on the south side takes the eye over the slight rise in ground and curve beyond. There is a change of character here to a quieter, more residential area, and of more open space, with views of St Mary's Church. The churchyard itself is a very inward-looking, self-contained space, peaceful and leafy, enclosed by trees and a number of good historic buildings.

The eastern part of Upper Lake feels detached, both physically and in character, from the main High Street area of town. The group of buildings here, simple two storey terraces, dating mainly from the 15th to 17th centuries, again provide a sense of enclosure, forming a tight building line to the pavement, before the view terminates with Lake House to the east, and the street reveals the open countryside beyond on the north side.



At the junction of Upper Lake and Marley Lane, the main road turns south into Lower Lake, at the Chequers Inn, an important focal point here.

Lower Lake is more domestic in scale and the largely residential buildings are of mixed character. This area is of a later period than much of the rest of the town centre, with a number of Victorian and Edwardian cottages and terraces still intact and possessing a high degree of visual and architectural integrity.

The buildings and roofscape fall away to the south with the underlying topography here, creating a satisfying and uninterrupted view down out of the Conservation Area. The high ground level on either side of the road means that front doors are reached up short flights of steps out of low retaining walls. The positioning of the buildings, slightly recessed from the pavement, creates a greater feeling of spaciousness than within other streets in the Conservation Area.

3.4 Architectural & Historic Value

The architecture of the individual buildings of Battle is a key contributor to the character of the Conservation Area as a whole. Much of the architecture in the Conservation Area itself is medieval in origin, with a substantial amount of Georgian and even Victorian refacing to reflect changing tastes in a prosperous market town, and later shopfronts in many of the High Street buildings.

The main concentration of architectural and historic interest in Battle occurs in the High Street, Mount Street and Upper Lake including the Abbey. The importance of many of the buildings in this area is recognised by their inclusion in the Statutory Lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Of particular note are the Abbey Gatehouse and Precinct Wall, and the Church of St Mary, all listed Grade I, and No's 1, 17 & 18, High Street, Lewins Croft, Mount Street, and The Deanery, Upper Lake, all listed Grade II*.

Annex 3 to this Appraisal, 'Character Map of Battle Conservation Area' highlights the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area as well as those buildings which it is felt play a particularly strong role in informing the character of the street scene, identified as key un-listed buildings.



3.5 Materials & Architectural Detail

Building materials within the Conservation Area are a successful mix of local vernacular; tile-hung first floor elevations over brick ground floors or shopfronts, a small number of exposed timber frames, and a larger number of rendered or painted brick elevations, usually on those buildings once of higher status, refaced or rebuilt in the Georgian or Victorian periods. Roofs are almost exclusively handmade clay tile, with slate being the occasional exception.

Whilst a number of the historic buildings within the Conservation Area possess fine individual architectural detailing, there are several elements that form a common theme throughout the streetscape, with subtle variations between the different streets that make up the Conservation Area.

High Street

Dormer windows are a recurring feature on the street-facing roofslopes, reflecting later conversion and re-use of the extensive roof-space under expansive clay-tiled slopes. The proportions of the individual dormer structures are important, and there are a few examples of too-large dormers having an over-dominant bearing on the elevational character of a particular building. Dormer roofs themselves are a mixture of hipped and gabled tiled roofs, and flat lead roofs.

Parapet wall structures again are common and reflect the large number of medieval timber-framed buildings in the High Street which have been refaced with a brick or stone skin to reflect changing fashions in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. These tend to be the buildings with rendered elevations.

Those buildings without parapet wall re-facings often have **ornamental cornices** with highly visible **dentil courses** at eaves level.

Windows are almost solely timber construction, the predominant style being white-painted multi-pane sliding sash, the fine detail of which gives good visual relief to the street scene, particularly from oblique angles. Windows within dormers are usually simple timber sashes, reflecting the proportions and subordinate nature of this storey to the main elevation, while in a number of elevations, good historic metal windows have been retained, reducing framing bulk where inserted between timber or stone mullions.

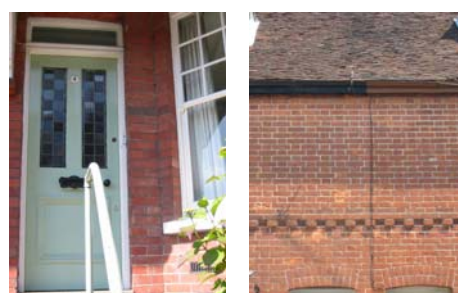


Mount Street

The predominance of residential properties in Mount Street has necessitated fewer inserted shopfronts here.

Though of cottage proportions, a number of the buildings here possess grander styles of timber **doorcases**, often pedimented, and substantial sash **windows**, again single-glazed and of timber construction.

The building **materials** used in this street contribute to its distinctive character; there is a high concentration of white weatherboarded and white painted buildings which provide a strong contribution to the streetscene. Again the predominant roofing material is handmade clay tile, and **roofs** almost exclusively present their hipped slope to the street, terminating at a simple eaves detail.



Upper & Lower Lake

The simple Georgian-faced medieval terraces of Upper Lake have front elevations of pale-coloured painted, rendered, or bare **brickwork**. A number of the timber sash **windows** are painted to give visual contrast against the painted wall finish, while those in plain brick elevations are painted white. Simple but attractively detailed timber **canopies**, lead-covered, sit over a number of the front doors, adding elevational interest.

The long, sweeping, clay-tiled **roofslopes** here are largely uninterrupted, and punctuated by a rhythm of **chimneystacks**.

The later construction period of the majority of Lower Lake is reflected in the rich red **brickwork** and timber sash **windows** of the Victorian Terraces.

A number of good original features have been retained here, though an unfortunate crop of PVCu windows, with their inelegantly proportioned framing members and glazing bars, have compromised the elevational character of a terrace on the north-western side of the street.

3.6 Shopfronts & Advertisements

Shopfronts are an important part of the streetscape character of Battle; and a large number of buildings in the High Street in particular have had shopfronts inserted over time.

In broader social terms, the concentration of retail provision largely within the High Street and almost solely within the Conservation Area contributes to the vibrancy and bustle of the place.

In aesthetic terms, the prevalence of shopfronts adds to visual interest and articulation of the street scene at ground floor level, whilst the mixture of shops, houses and offices avoids the monotony at street level of continuous display windows. However, some shopfronts have responded more successfully than others, to the scale, architectural character and detailing of the building as a whole.

The most successful shopfronts in Battle have windows which are only slightly larger than domestic scale, with sufficient mullions and transoms to reduce the glass to approximately the same width of nearby house windows. Those buildings in Upper Lake, in particular, that are in commercial use at ground floor level, have almost no inserted shopfronts, which helps retain the more residential character to this part of the Conservation Area.

Advertisements on shops within the Conservation Area largely take the form of fascia boards, and in the main are appropriately sized and positioned so as not to compromise the elevational character or architectural detailing of the individual building, nor to dominate in the street scene as a whole. Buildings without inserted shopfronts have successfully deployed individual fret-cut lettering fixed directly to the façade, or letters painted directly onto rendered elevations or even etched onto glazing.

In High Street, a plethora of traditional slim hanging signs draws the eye along the street, and again add visual interest to the street. However, the view is marred and interrupted occasionally by the bulk of a projecting box sign.

A number of national companies have successfully amended their corporate advertising imagery on premises within the Conservation Area in order to better respond to the architecture of the building itself or to the wider streetscene, while elsewhere corporate branding has resulted in ugly and inappropriate signage. In a number of situations the clutter of cumulative advertisements and signage detracts from the architecture of the buildings, or of the character and quality of wider streetscape views.



3.7 Boundary Treatments

The singular most prominent boundary work within the Conservation Area is the surviving length of medieval wall in Upper Lake, the Precinct Wall, enclosing part of the Abbey grounds beyond. It dominates the streetscape here by virtue of its sheer mass, informed by both its scale and height, materiality, and retention of its historic integrity through substantial lack of puncturing.



With the building line tight against the pavement in the High Street, there are few occurrences of private boundary treatments within the Conservation Area.



However, the south side of Mount Street uses metal post-and-railing of traditional and ornate design to protect the footpath from the highway here, a treatment which is both visually attractive and which responds well to the domestic scale and character of the street here.



At the southern end of the High Street, around Abbey Green, small private front curtilages are enclosed by low metal railings and picket fences, which allow a high degree of visual permeability.

In Lower Lake, small planted front gardens provide welcome greenery in a previously hard landscape.

3.8 Paving Treatments

The most spatially and visually significant paved area within the Conservation Area is Abbey Green, which has been rid of its previous car-park function and resurfaced in a buff-coloured resin bonded gravel. The Green now operates as a useful public open space as well as contributing positively in aesthetic terms to the setting of the Abbey Gatehouse in particular.



Elsewhere, of particular local interest is the raised pavement to the west side of the High Street, accessed by a long continuous run of two steps, and a similarly high pavement which runs down Upper Lake alongside the medieval wall.



3.9 Permeability

A number of narrow lanes lead off both High Street and Mount Street, drawing the eye and adding depth and interest to the street scene. Several modern development schemes have successfully retained and reinforced these routes, increasing pedestrian movement through them by the provision of additional commercial and residential accommodation along and behind the lanes.



3.10 Landscape Features

The Abbey grounds and Battlefield are the most important historic landscape feature within the Conservation Area boundary, having both aesthetic and archaeological significance; indeed, the space is historically integral to the very existence of the town. As a reflection of their national importance, the grounds are listed as Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Parks & Gardens, while the Battlefield is included on the English Heritage Register of Battlefields, and the Abbey site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. More detailed description and analysis of these areas is included under the relevant entry in these Registers.

The Abbey is situated on the crest of the south-facing ridge here, consequently the 54ha park slopes away to the south and south-west of the Abbey. It is laid to pasture, with the site of the Battlefield lying beneath the Abbey and the parkland immediately to its south. The character of the park is that of a largely open landscape with groupings of mainly deciduous trees. Towards the south-eastern boundary lies a historic series of linked ponds, thought to have originated as monastic stew ponds.

A number of trees and bushes have grown up on the Abbey grounds side of the high monastic wall which extends east and west from the gatehouse itself. These trees serve to provide a backdrop setting for the Gatehouse when viewed from the north, their presence offsetting the harder urban fabric of the High Street.

A further area of green relief within the Conservation Area is provided at the churchyard of St Mary, in Upper Lake, with a number of good, mature trees providing a leafy enclosure here.

The large number of trees to the rear of the plots lining the High Street are an important characteristic in long views towards the town.

At the south-eastern end of Upper Lake, the wide view of an expanse of surrounding countryside which opens out over Lake Field and beyond, provides a powerful reminder of the rural character of the setting of the Conservation Area and helps define the built confines and historic form of the town centre.

In High Street, the view to the north is terminated by the immature but attractive tree planting around the roundabout.



4.0 Conservation Area Management

Conservation Area status is by no means intended to imply prohibition of development, and Conservation Area Management is therefore largely the management of change, to ensure that local distinctiveness and the special character of place are respected and responded to in a positive manner.

4.1 Development Plan Policies

The primary means by which the Council ensures the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area is through the application of policies in the Development Plan, which comprises the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan (adopted December 1999), and in the Rother District Local Plan (revised deposit draft). These policies generally seek to ensure that, in the granting of any planning permissions, the special character and appearance of the area will be maintained.

The East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan outlines the County's aims in Chapter 9 – The Environment, and generally seeks to protect the Plan area's stock of historic buildings, parks and gardens, from development or change that would damage them, as well as highlighting the importance of protection of the setting of historic sites, conservation areas and historic towns. The Plan also contains Policy EN1, which relates to design in the environment, Policy EN23, which relates specifically to development affecting sites and features of historical or archaeological importance, including Conservation Areas, and Policy S26 which relates specifically to development in and around Battle.

The Rother District Local Plan (revised deposit draft) recognises that the District is fortunate in the legacy that exists in terms of the quality of the built environment, and that the pattern, form and appearance and use of buildings and spaces are peculiar to each location and contribute to the unique sense of place and cultural identity. It advises that good design should respect the character of its setting, whether urban or rural, and can make a positive contribution to reinforcing local distinctiveness. This should still allow room for imaginative design solutions that respond sensitively to the site and setting. Where an area has a well-defined and distinctive character, particular care should be taken to maintain it. The Revised Deposit Plan also contains Policy GD1, section (viii) of which relates to development affecting Conservation Areas, and Policy DS5 (ii) which seeks to maintain the open character of the strategic gap between Battle and Hastings. All the above policies are included in Annex 4 to this Appraisal.

In addition, the Revised Deposit Plan includes the following policy specific to Battle:

Policy BT1 **Proposals for development and change in Battle should be compatible with and, wherever practicable, contribute positively to the following objectives:**

- (i) to maintain its historic, small town character;**
- (ii) to protect the historic core and its setting;**
- (iii) to conserve the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape setting;**
- (iv) to enhance the commercial and tourism attractiveness of the town centre;**
- (v) to minimise the demand for cross-town vehicular traffic;**
- (vi) to maintain a substantial open countryside gap to Hastings.**

And includes the following advice on new development:

- 11.11** **The location of development should respect the town's close relationship to landform and landscape setting. To the south-west, south of Hastings Road, lies the strategic gap between St. Leonards and Battle. If developed, much of the land that surrounds it would severely detract from the fine setting of historic Battle within the attractive landscape of the High Weald, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are critical factors constraining further growth. Any extension of the ribbon development needs to be resisted, although the development boundary is drawn to include the consolidated built-up frontage along Hastings Road (A2100).**
- 11.12** **It is concluded that, notwithstanding the relatively good services and facilities, because of the topography and other over-riding constraints, the growth potential of the town is fairly limited.**

4.2 Design Guidance

The Rother District Council Planning Handbook contains generic design advice which recognises that the inherent underlying character and visual qualities of the District as a whole should not be spoiled by inappropriate development, and highlights the need for good design and appropriate materials. It specifically contains guidance on *The Basic Principles of Traditional Design in Rother District* and *A Guide to Householder Development* as well as generic guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

In addition, the Council is in the process of preparing additional guidance on Shopfront Design and Advertisements in Conservation Areas, to be adopted and used as material considerations in the Development Control process.

4.3 Highways and the Public Realm

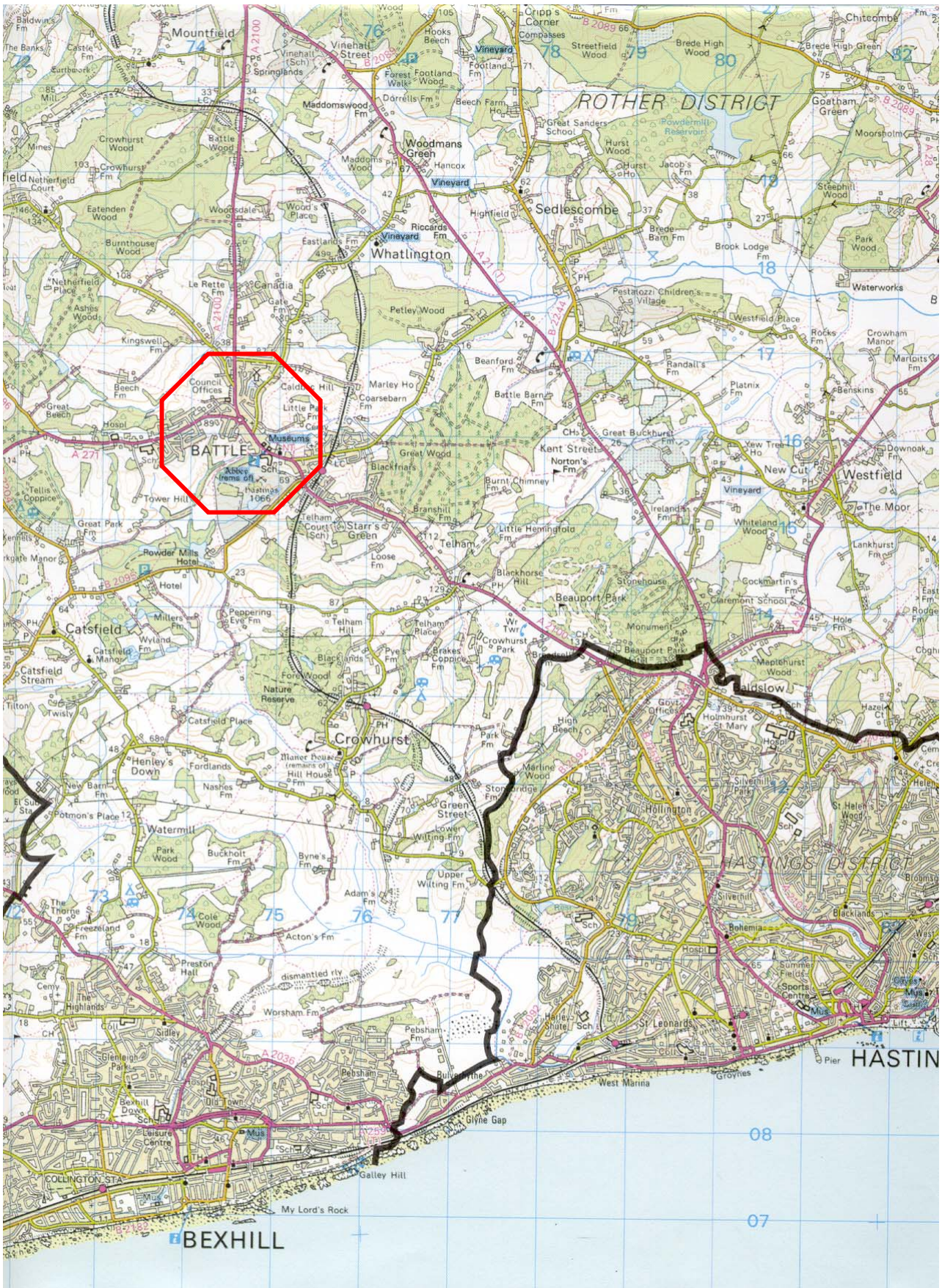
Whilst over-arching responsibility for works to the highway and public realm lies with the County Council, the District Council is actively engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of the Conservation Area.

At a strategic level, in July 2005, East Sussex County Council adopted the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy. The Strategy aims to establish a framework within which to improve transport for the people of the Battle area, to respond to the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, and enable the town's economy to flourish.

Meanwhile at a more detailed level, the Council is considering the guidance manual 'Streets for All – South East' published jointly by English Heritage and the Department for Transport, which seeks to promote good practice in the designing and maintaining of the public realm, with particular reference to the historic environment, and addresses issues including street surfaces, highways lighting, signage, furniture and street clutter.

Alongside this, the Council is currently assisting East Sussex County Council in preparing a Highways Handbook to set out standards for designing and maintaining highways and the public realm throughout the District.

Annex 1 – Location Plan of Battle

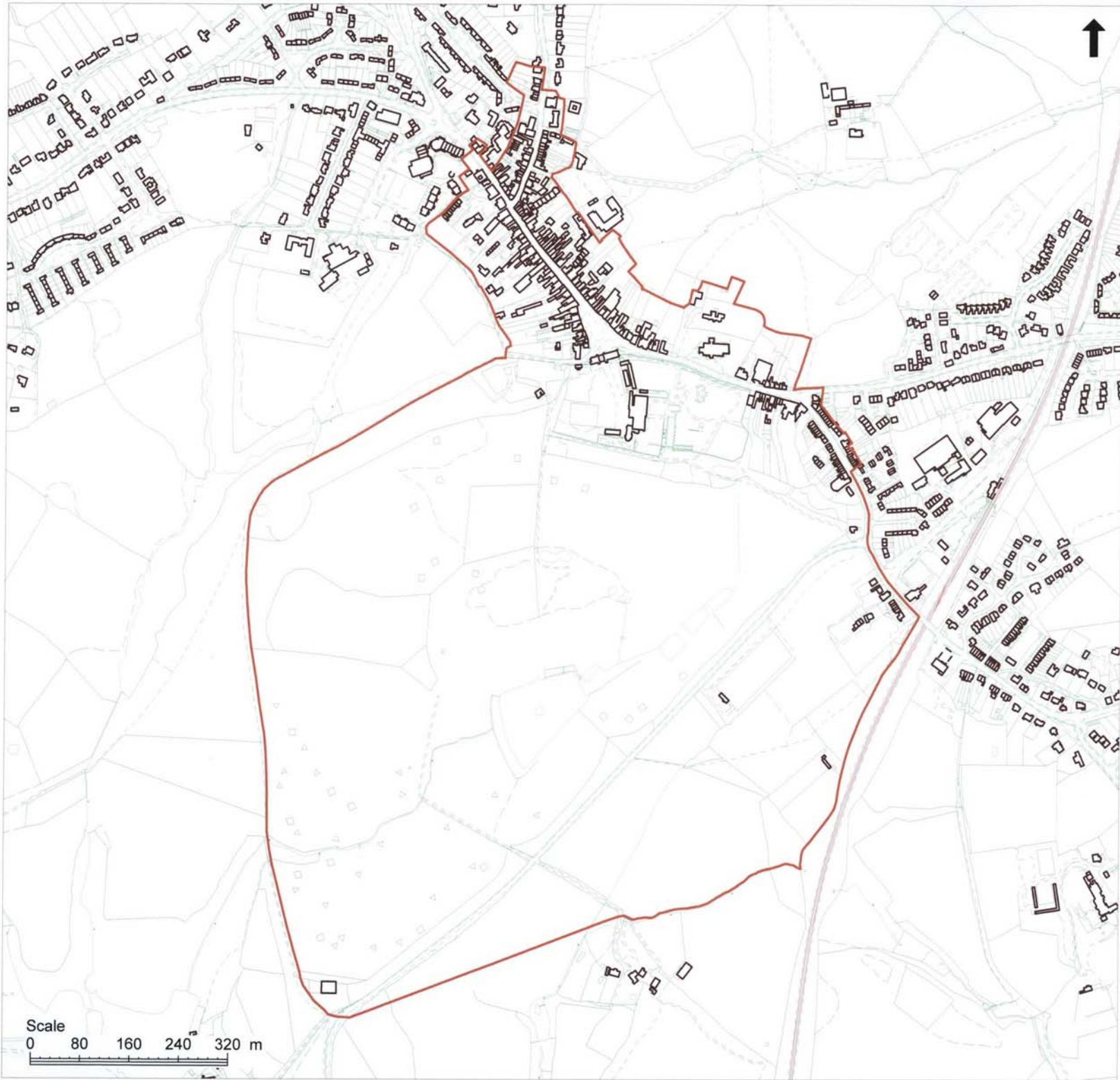


Battle Conservation Area Appraisal

Annex 2 - Boundary Map

Key

- Conservation Area Boundary



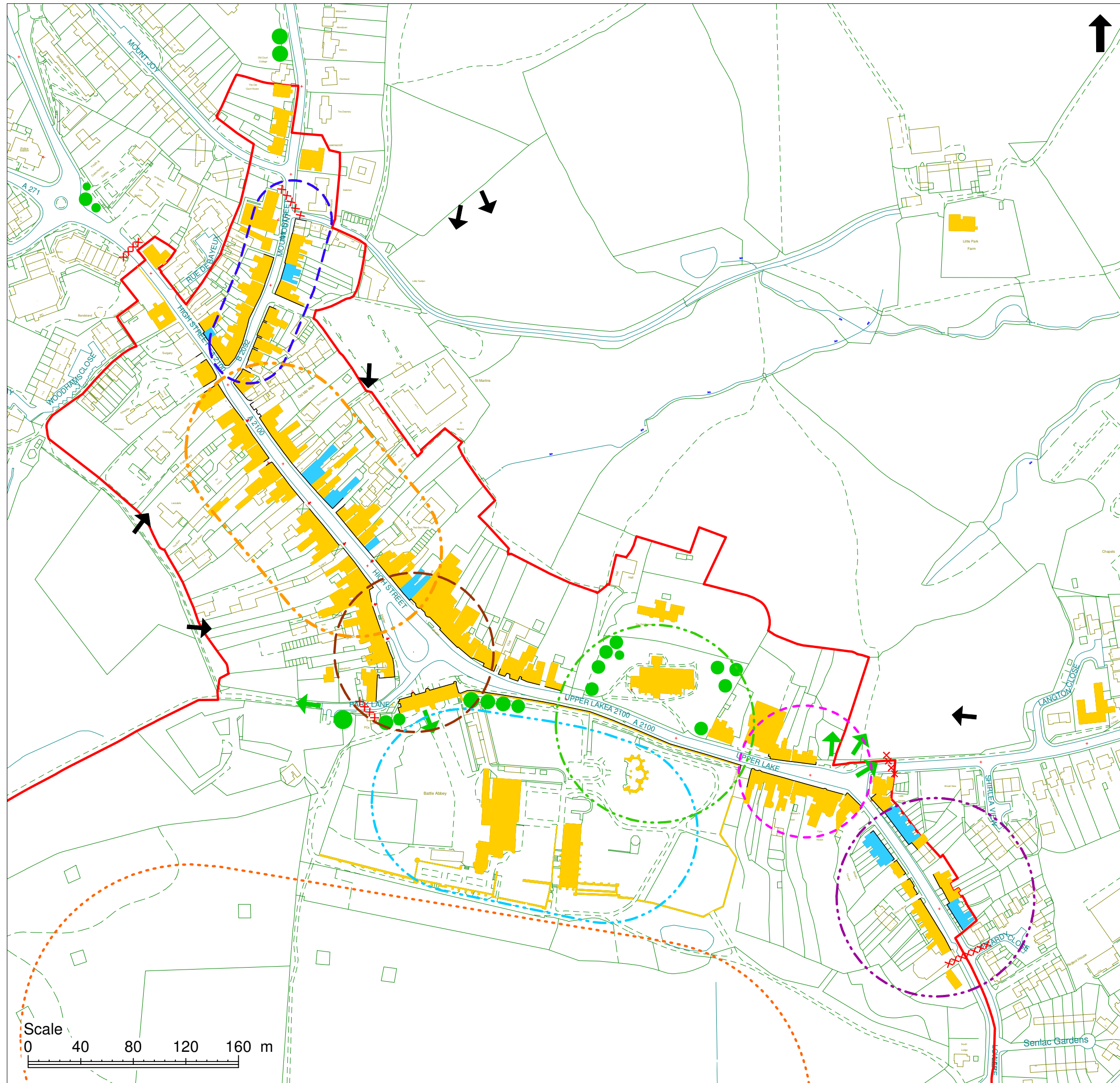
Scale
0 80 160 240 320 m



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Battle Conservation Area Appraisal

Annex 3 - Character Map



Key

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Unlisted Buildings of Architectural Interest
- Hard Edge Created by Buildings
- Countryside Views out of Town
- Long Views into Town
- Courtyard Views
- ✗ End of Built Enclosure
- Trees

Battle Character Area

- Mount Street
- Length of High Street
- Abbey Great Gatehouse
- Upper Lake (Transitional Stretch)
- Upper Lake Buildings
- Lower Lake
- Battle Abbey Schedule Ancient Monument
- Abbey Grounds and Battlefield



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Annex 4 Development Plan Policies

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan

- Policy EN1 Development and change will be required to sustain, conserve and, where possible, enhance the character, local diversity and quality of the landscape and natural and built environment of the plan area including, where appropriate, the creation of new, equally good and distinctive local character. Features contributing to landscape character will be protected. A landscape assessment of the plan area will be carried out and advice provided as supplementary planning guidance for use in local plans.
- Policy EN23 Sites and features of demonstrable historical or archaeological importance and their settings, including ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, battlefields and other historic features will be protected from inappropriate change and development.
- Policy S26 The role of Battle as a residential, local shopping and service center will be maintained. Its employment centre and major tourist functions should be developed as far as is compatible with its historic character and setting within the High Weald AONB. Particular attention will be given to managing access to the tourist attractions within the town and managing traffic so as to maintain and enhance its environment

Rother District Local Plan (revised deposit draft)

- Policy GD1 All development should meet the following criteria:
- (i) it meets the needs of future occupiers, including providing appropriate amenities;
 - (ii) it is in keeping with and does not unreasonably harm the amenities of adjoining properties;
 - (iii) it provides for adequate and safe access by all modes of transport, including appropriate parking provision;
 - (iv) it respects and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality;
 - (v) it is compatible with the conservation of the natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - (vi) it respects the topography, important views to and from the site and retains site features that contribute to the character or amenities of the area;
 - (vii) it protects habitats of ecological value and incorporates, wherever practicable, features that enhance the ecological value of the site, with particular regard to wildlife refuges or corridors, or fully compensates for any necessary loss;
 - (viii) it does not prejudice the character, appearance or setting of heritage features, notably scheduled ancient monuments and sites of archaeological importance, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, the registered battlefield at Battle, or other buildings and spaces of historic importance;
 - (ix) the infrastructure and facilities necessary to serve the development are available, or suitable provision is made as part of the development, in accordance with Policy GD2;
 - (x) it provides adequate and appropriate means for foul and surface water drainage, with suitable alleviation and mitigation measures where necessary;
 - (xi) it is compatible with deterring crime, including maximising opportunities for natural surveillance of public places;
 - (xii) it promotes the efficient use of energy and water through the layout and design of buildings.
- Policy DS5 Development in the following strategic gaps will be carefully controlled and only in exceptional circumstances will development be permitted therein. Any development must be unobtrusive and not detract from the openness of the area. The gaps are identified on the Proposals Map between the following areas:-
- (i) Bexhill and St. Leonards;
 - (ii) Battle and Hastings;
 - (iii) Fairlight and Hastings;
 - (iv) Crowhurst and Hastings;
 - (v) Rye and Rye Harbour.