

CLIFFTOP CONSERVATION AREA, CLINTONVILLE, MARGATE



CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

October 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cliftonville in east Margate is a well preserved Victorian seaside resort, and most of the original streets, spaces and buildings remain relatively unaltered. Built to high standards of design and construction from the 1860s onwards, the buildings provide a fine example of historic seaside architecture which is compatible in quality to similarly dated seaside developments elsewhere in England. Against this remarkable survival must be balanced the fact that today, the Margate Central and Cliftonville West wards are amongst the most deprived wards in the south east (as defined by the Indices of Deprivation October 2015).

In their report following a visit to Margate in 2010, the Urban Panel of the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) stated that "Cliftonville could, by a different fluke of social history and demographics, be one of the most desirable parts of the country to live". For the past few years, the District Council and its partners have been taking a strategic approach towards the social and economic regeneration of Margate Central and West Cliftonville, as evidenced by the designation of new conservation areas, the provision of grant aid, and the provision of new planning policies and guidance. A successful future can often be secured by keeping and improving that which is best from the past.

Cliftonville has also been identified as important part of the local heritage by officers of the District Council, by Historic England (this Appraisal was in the main grant funded by Historic England), and by the local community, which has been consulted on initial drafts of this document.



Second Avenue

Conservation Area designation is not intended to prevent change or adaptation but simply to ensure that any proposals for change are properly considered. Restoration of the historic built environment will not impede its regeneration, and, indeed, designation will enable the District Council as the planning authority to incrementally improve the appearance of the buildings and the spaces between them, providing an impetus for private investment. Further work is being done by the District Council under separate initiatives to encourage larger residential units and the creation of more owner-occupied property.

This document provides a detailed analysis of the special interest of the Clifftop Conservation Area and records those features which make the Conservation Area worthy of designation (the 'Character Appraisal'). It also provides proposals for enhancements (the 'Management Plan'). All of the recommendations will, of course, be subject to funding and staff resources being made available.

The production of up-to-date Character Appraisals assists the Council in making decisions on planning applications within or on the edges of the Conservation Area. Character Appraisals also help the local community understand what is 'special' about their area and encourages local involvement in the planning process. Whilst some of the recommendations in the Management Plan will have to remain aspirational for the time being, it is considered good practice to identify where improvements are needed so that actions can be taken promptly if, and when, funding becomes available.

Subject to public consultation, it is anticipated that the Clifftop Conservation Area could be designated during 2016 by Thanet District Council. Other conservation areas may be designated in Cliftonville as part of a review of the Cliftonville area which commenced in the summer of 2010. This Character Appraisal and Management Plan will be subject to an eight week public consultation between 11 January 2016 to 7 March 2016 after which any necessary amendments will be made to the document and the accompanying mapping. The final Appraisal and Management Plan will be approved by the Council in due course as a material document for development management purposes.

This Clifftop Conservation Area Character Appraisal with its attendant Management Plan has been produced for the Council by The Conservation Studio. The survey work and background research were undertaken between August 2010 and March 2011. The general format of these documents follows guidance produced by Historic England on the effective management of conservation areas.

Conservation Area Designation

Despite what some people think, conservation area designation is not a bureaucratic way of preventing property owners from exercising their rights to alter their buildings as they wish. Conservation areas designation does not preclude development, but seeks to ensure recognition of the area's historical value in planning that development. Conservation area designation is aimed at managing change so that positive qualities of an area are protected and opportunities for improvement identified. Designation of a conservation area therefore, has a number of benefits that a wider community can enjoy including:

- The positive identification of an area is designed to focus attention on its qualities, which may include the historic layout and development of the area, scale and detailing of their individual buildings and spaces between them, construction materials, open spaces and trees, walls etc. The interaction of the buildings and spaces within designated areas create unique environments that contribute irreplaceable components of our local, regional and national heritage.
- Conservation area designation brings the advantage of living, working and socialising in an attractive area with a unique sense of place and where local identity and architectural and historical distinctiveness are fostered and maintained.
- People value conservation areas for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character and research by the London School of Economics and Historic England has found that this value is reflected in the price of properties in conservation areas and overall there is no negative attitude toward planning regulations.
- The planning controls that come with conservation area designation are more limited than many people imagine and are designed to benefit the wider community.
- The designation of a conservation area is intended to encourage a sensitive approach to proposals for development. The legislative duty that designation brings provides a framework to achieve higher quality of development and promote more sensitive improvements in conservation areas.

- Conservation area designation brings the requirement to apply for planning permission to demolish most buildings. Outside a conservation area, planning permission is not required for the demolition of buildings leaving many buildings not protected and vulnerable to removal. Designation provides a framework to protect buildings that make a significant contribution to the character of an area.
- Additional benefits of conservation area designation include the possibility of accessing grant schemes. Where appropriate it may provide the basis for the local planning authority to make bids under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme such as the one which operates within Dalby Square Conservation Area. This scheme provides financial assistance to property owners with works to the fabric of their buildings or to restore derelict properties. THI is a grant programme administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the repair and regeneration of historic buildings. Projects are generally led by local partnerships.
- The local authority is under a general duty to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area when determining planning applications affecting the area.

PART 1

CLIFFTOP CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of the special interest of the Clifftop Conservation Area

The special interest of Cliftonville Clifftop Conservation Area comes from its association with Cliftonville's development, its typical late Victorian and Edwardian architecture and its fine position on the cliff top overlooking the sea. Aspects contributing to its interest include its position towards the top of the cliff top, the straight alignment of its streets and the open cliff gardens that provide a fine setting with many views of out to sea, and its good examples of well-preserved Victorian and Edwardian buildings a number of which have been designed to make the best of the sea front aspect.

The long, thin Conservation Area lies between the chalk cliffs which face the North Sea and the mainly residential and commercial developments along and around Northdown Road, most of which were built between the 1860s and 1914. Between the late 19th century and the beginning of World War 2, this area was famous for its bathing beaches and pools, seaside promenades, open-air concerts, tennis courts and bowling greens, all linked to the adjoining hotels and guest houses which made Cliftonville a high class holiday destination. Whilst it therefore contains some notable examples of mainly Victorian and Edwardian houses, hotels, and houses (now largely converted into flats), it also contains large areas of open space associated with these various leisure activities. It also contains a substantial complex of modern apartments (Queens Court) which replaced the Queens Highcliffe Hotel next to Newgate Gap. On the western edge, immediately abutting the Margate Conservation Area, the Lido is a notable complex of 1920s buildings which was built over the historic Clifton Baths, one of the first (c1820) facilities provided for visitors to the town. At the eastern end, many of the buildings date to the 1920s, when the then Council purchased large areas of former farmland beyond Sackett's Gap and upgraded the whole of the seaside frontage.



Ethelbert Crescent



21-41 Eastern Esplanade

The Conservation Area is notable for its outstanding views over the rocks and sandy beaches at the base of the cliffs which are accessed by two cuts in the cliff face (Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap), originally used by local farmers who collected the seaweed from the beach and used it to fertilise their fields. It is linked by a long road which runs almost parallel to the sea (Cliff Terrace, Ethelbert Terrace, Ethelbert Crescent, Queens Parade and Eastern Esplanade) which also marks the southern boundary of the Conservation Area. The open spaces are punctuated by areas of

development – the Lido in the west, the large complex of modern apartments next to Newgate Gap (Queens Court), the Edwardian development around First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Third Avenue, and then, finally, 1920s development facing Fifth Avenue. The quality of the spaces which links these buildings is very varied – the most attractive being the four bowling greens between Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue (there is no Fourth Avenue), and the least attractive, and greatly in need of enhancement, being the public car park next to the Lido. The Oval is probably the most focal open space and was created from a former school cricket field in 1897, although virtually no historic features now remain and the present bandstand is modern. Linking these spaces is a wide cliff-top walk (Newgate Promenade and Queen’s Promenade) which joins the public car park next to the Lido to Hodge’s Gap and beyond.

Issues facing the Conservation Area include the need for an overall strategy to address both privately and publically owned land and buildings; the control of new development; the possibly enhancement of the open spaces and modern buildings; the poor condition and under-use of some of the buildings, particularly the Lido complex; a range of public realm enhancements to improve pavements, street furniture, and street lighting; possible additions to Thanet District Council’s list of locally significant buildings; the protection of important views; education and guidance; and monitoring and enforcement.

1.2 The control of conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. A conservation area is defined as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Clifftop Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with recently published Historic England guidance as set out in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas can be found in “National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012.

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Clifftop Conservation Area and identify the issues which threaten its special qualities (in the form of the ‘Character Appraisal’);
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and also achieve the enhancement of the Conservation Area (in the form of the ‘Management Proposals Plan’).

1.3 Community involvement

Informal consultations were carried out with the local community on the proposals for the new Cliftonville conservation area designations in October 2010, after which a Character Appraisal and Management Plan for each of the new conservation areas was prepared. Following this eight week public consultation on the Council’s website between 11 January 2016 to 7 March 2016 a Public Consultations Report will be prepared (copies may be obtained from the District Council) and amendments to the text and mapping will be made as appropriate. Finally, each Character

Appraisal and Management Plan will be approved by the Council as a material document for development management purposes.

2 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

2.1 Location and context

The Clifftop Conservation Area is located within the western part of Cliftonville, a 19th century expansion of the medieval port of Margate, which lies immediately to the west. Margate is located on the Isle of Thanet, a coastal district at the eastern extremity of the county of Kent in south east England. Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs are the principal settlements in Thanet District, and each is famous for its seaside setting and attractive historic town centres. Margate is approximately 76 miles south east of London by road and is accessed via the M2 and the A299, the Thanet Way. Railway routes lead to Canterbury, Dover and along the north coast via Herne Bay and Whitstable to London.

The Clifftop Conservation Area abuts the Margate Conservation Area to the west, and the Ethelbert Road and Athelstan Road Conservation Area, the Edgar Road and Sweyne Road Conservation Area, and the Norfolk, Road, Warwick Road and Surrey Road Conservation Area, to the south. The Dalby Square Conservation Area, which was designated in 2010, also lies to the south. The Conservation Area lies within the Cliftonville West Ward of Thanet District Council. The area of Cliftonville West Ward is in the region of 120 hectares and the population (at the 2011 census) was 7.608. Demographically, the population is predominantly white European.

2.2 Landscape setting, topography and geology

Margate is located over solid chalk, with high chalk cliffs rising to either side of the beach and harbour in the centre of the town. The Dane Valley rises gently southwards through the town from this beach. Cliftonville lies on roughly level ground on the eastern cliff tops above the town about 20 metres above sea level, although cuts have been made through the cliffs in previous centuries to allow access to the sandy beaches below. Two of these, Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap, lie within the Clifftop Conservation Area.



View from Queen's Promenade over the chalk cliffs



Newgate Gap cuts through the chalk cliffs

A slight south to north drop in ground level reinforces the opportunities for long views over the seascape to the north of these cliffs. To the south of Northdown Road, the land falls steeply – this is most evident in the Grotto Hill Conservation Area.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Archaeology

Archaeological remains are frequently found in the Cliftonville and Margate areas. The remains of all periods from the Neolithic to Modern are recorded within the area and consist of both burial and settlement archaeology.

Archaeological remains of Roman date have been recorded within the Dalby Square Conservation Area and there is a high potential for further remains of this and other periods to be present there.

Romano-British activity seems to cluster around both sides of the Dane valley leading up to the present harbour with most of the activity concentrated at the seaward end of the valley on both high ground and further down the valley sides. Activity is similarly recorded further inland, also along the valley sides. A Romano-British cremation burial dating to between 75 and 125 AD was found by workmen excavating a trench in Arthur Road, Cliftonville. The pit contained a carinated urn in Upchurch Ware filled with ashes and burnt human bone, and was accompanied by a stamped Samian platter. The burial is recorded by the workmen as having been truncated by former Victorian ground works and sealed by a floor. Other Roman burials are known from the Britannia Public House, Fort Hill site, located to the west of Cliftonville.

3.2 The development of Margate

Margate developed from a minor medieval port to a seaside resort from the mid-18th century onwards. By 1800 the town had assembly rooms, residential squares, bathing establishments, libraries and theatres, all designed to cater to the needs of aristocratic visitors – the only class of society to take ‘holidays’. In 1828 increased numbers resulted in Holy Trinity Church being built on what was then the eastern edge of the town, close to what was to become Ethelbert Road, as a chapel-of-ease to St John’s – it was soon extended to provide 800 rented pews and 1,200 free seats. In 1845 the land which was to later develop as Cliftonville was still fields with a Coastguard Station on the cut through the high cliffs which dropped down to the beach (now Hodges Gap). The arrival of the railway in 1846, and the addition of a further line and station in 1863, changed the type of visitor to the town from a limited number of wealthy long stay guests to a greater number of short stay visitors with less per capita income.

The town’s established place in public consciousness was a good foundation for creating a new resort in Cliftonville, a resort that reversed the popular perception that Margate was increasingly becoming an attraction to the pleasure-seeking working classes. Cliftonville’s distance from the town centre, and its open cliff-top walks, were promoted as part of its exclusivity – Cliftonville was a place where one stayed to improve one’s health and peace of mind, all year around if necessary. In 1824 Clifton Baths were built to provide an opportunity to bath in heated seawater ‘for the nobility and gentry’, and in 1855 Thomas Pettman leased the shoreline from the Marquis of Conyngham and he could access his Bathing Platform down one of the old gaps on the cliff face (Newgate Gap) which had been used by farmers collecting seaweed from the beach. At this time other major land-owners in Cliftonville included the Church Commissioners and charities such as the Bethlehem Hospital and the Ragged School Union.

The exclusivity of Cliftonville was bolstered by the area’s relative isolation. Until the building of a tramway in 1901 the only method of transport from Margate’s stations was by horse brake. Access was improved in the late 1880s by the building of Marine Drive which completed the seafront thoroughfare from Buenos Ayres to Eastern Esplanade. Between 1880 and 1899 the station of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company was known as ‘Margate and Cliftonville’ (it was later to be known as ‘Margate West’). Plans for a branch line from Margate to Cliftonville, with a terminus at the rear of Dalby Square, were first proposed in 1893 but were never implemented.

The association of the area with a 'better class of person' became the key selling point for the new resort. The entry for Cliftonville in the *Ward Locke Guide* of 1903 stated:

"It is the most exclusive and aristocratic part of Margate. It cannot be said too often that there are two Margate's and that Cliftonville has scarcely anything in common with the area frequented by the vulgar tripper. Cliftonville has magnificent hotels with their private orchestras and admirable cuisine catering for all types of continental clientele. It has been often said that on a Sunday morning between Newgate Gapway and Hodges Flagstaff one may see the prettiest and best dressed women in Europe".

The centrepiece of this 'Margate New Town' was Dalby Square, with a massive terrace of seven houses, Warrior Crescent, on the south side. This space had been laid out by the 1850s, and was originally called Ethelbert Square, the name being changed to Dalby Square in the 1870s after the then mayor (and local builder), Thomas Dalby Reeve, who also owned both the Clifton Baths and the Hall by the Sea. The Reeve family was one of the early developers of the Cliftonville estate, and Dalby Reeve's son Arthur, after whom Arthur Road is named, married George Sanger's daughter Harriet. George Sanger and his brother John Sanger, who are both buried in Margate Cemetery, were circus proprietors who were famous for their equestrian spectacles. They leased the Agricultural Hall at Islington and their show was eventually purchased in 1874 by the American showman P T Barnum.

In 1868 the Cliftonville Hotel, located at the eastward end of Dalby Square, was opened. It is noted that at that time it sat '*on an island site in the middle of corn fields*'. The hotel had 250 bedrooms, a dining room which could hold over 300 people, a ballroom, a palm court and facilities for croquet, tennis and archery amidst formal gardens along the cliff top. In all, the hotel provided the accommodation for about 50% of all hotel guests in Cliftonville, but by 1890 this figure had dropped to around 15% as so many other hotels had been built.

Another important contribution to the locality was provided by the large number of private schools. A resort guide of 1893 described Cliftonville as:

'The end of the town affected by visitors who like a good address, and also by ladies' schools, if one may judge by the endless chain of them travelling churchwards on Sundays.'

Northdown Road was developed from the 1870s onwards— it is shown as nearly completely built-up as far as Harold Road on the 1899 Map, although in 1900 less than 12 shops are recorded. However, by 1912 many of these new houses had been converted into commercial premises, no doubt assisted by the provision of the new tramway from Margate town centre in 1899. St Paul's Church was consecrated in 1873 and St Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist Church (now St Michael and St Bishoy's Church) was opened in 1876 – they are both in Northdown Road. St Anne's Roman Catholic Church was built on the Eastern Esplanade in 1926.

In 1900 the Cliftonville Hydro Hotel with 110 bedrooms was opened, later being renamed the Grand Hotel (from 1956 this formed part of Butlins). By 1900 a grid pattern of streets off Northdown Road had also been completed (Edgar, Sweyn, Godwin, Harold, Norfolk and Surrey Roads), all with a mixture of houses and guest houses along them. In 1913 'Bobby's' was opened as a department store in Northdown Road, it closed in 1973.

Along the seafront, the Oval, a former school cricket field, was excavated in 1897 and an amphitheatre created with a new bandstand being added in 1903. This area became the centre of Cliftonville's entertainments for the next 50 years with many concerts and other events taking place. In 1906 mixed sea bathing was finally allowed in Margate, and by 1913 donkey (or 'Jerusalem pony') rides were being provided by local gypsies along the sea shore.



View from the Oval to First Avenue



Amphitheatre and bandstand

After World War 1 the Borough of Margate was increasingly seeing Cliftonville as the prime attraction of the town and in 1920 the Council acquired the cliff top land from Sacketts Gap to the Borough's eastern boundary – 61 acres in all. This land was used to provide new public walks and pleasure grounds, continuing the 19th century concept of promoting Cliftonville as a health-giving place where the benefits of sea water and sea air were unparalleled.

The growth of Cliftonville during this period between the late 19th and the early part of the 20th century is demonstrated by the number of Cliftonville school children – around 2,000 in 1885 and about 5,000 in 1922.

Cliftonville continued to thrive until World War 2, and Dalby Square particularly was noted for the prestigious hotels, guest houses and convalescent homes which fronted it. However, the War saw the evacuation of schools to other parts of the country and most never returned. Warrier Crescent suffered bomb damage and was only partially reconstructed after the War – it was finally demolished in its entirety in 1988.

From the 1960s onwards the provision of cheap holidays to Spain and other exotic locations completed a process which had begun some 30 years earlier. Many of the bigger hotels closed or were converted into flats, the demolition of the Cliftonville Hotel in 1961 being particularly noticeable as it was replaced with a complex of buildings which are used as a café, public house, Bowls alley and other leisure-related facilities.

3.3 The development of the Clifftop Conservation Area

The map of 1872 confirms that the area had only been partially developed. Clifton Baths and an Artillery Hall in the west looked over landscaped gardens opposite the Cliftonville Hotel (opened in 1868), but the road was then truncated by Newgate Gap, with a Coastguard Station and Gun Platform beyond. Eastern Esplanade had been laid out, but only as far as Harold Road, and to the north, the oval shape of the original cricket field can be seen. Beyond this, to the east, were open fields.

Cliftonville reached the zenith of its popularity between 1890 and 1905, although surprisingly the map of 1899 confirms that what is now the Clifftop Conservation Area had still only been partially developed. The Clifton Baths and adjoining Artillery Hall are still evident, with an open space between them and the Queens Highcliffe Hotel which was located to the north of Queen's Parade. At this point the Oval appears to be called an 'Esplanade' and its shape reflects the earlier cricket field, which was converted into an amphitheatre in 1897. This amphitheatre was to become an important centre for open-air concerts and other events.

The adjoining tea rooms, still extant, are also shown to one side of the Oval in 1899, but beyond that there are hardly any buildings and the current streets (First Avenue to Firth Avenue) are shown as dotted lines (Fourth Avenue was in fact never developed). Below, the beach was called Walpole Bay and in 1899 was known as the 'Ladies Bathing Place', where strictly segregated bathing was allowed (this rule was relaxed in 1906). Pettman's Bathing Platform, at the bottom of the cliffs, provided both privacy and safety and was first built in 1855. In 1908 the platform consisted of a wooden catwalk supplying 150 bathing cabins which had incrementally replaced the old horse-drawn bathing machines. Above, the Bungalow Tea Rooms could be found next to Hodges Gap. At low tide sports and cricket matches would be held between the local hotels.

In the early 20th century the Queen's Highcliffe Hotel was created to the north of Queen's Parade. The map of 1907 shows two separate blocks of buildings, then used as small hotels and a ladies' college. To create the prestigious entrance required for the new hotel, the gap between them was filled in and an imposing central tower was built, below which were a banqueting hall and a ballroom. The hotel offered 150 bedrooms, and between the wars, evening dress and ballgowns were essential for the eight course gourmet dinners. The Butlin organisation took over the hotel in 1955 but with limited success and in 1980 the buildings were demolished to be replaced more recently by the Queen's Court flats. Although the Queen's Highcliffe Hotel was a substantial building, it was smaller than the Cliftonville Hotel, located just outside the Conservation Area on the east side of Dalby Square. The Grand Hotel and St George's Hotel were also added in the late 19th century (they are shown on the 1907 map) and although they survived until quite recently, they have now been demolished and their sites either redeveloped for flats (Dickens Court and Darwin Court) or left cleared and vacant. A further hotel, the Walpole Bay Hotel, was added in 1914.



The Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue

The Clifton Baths site was acquired by John Henry Iles, the promoter of Dreamland and Ramsgate Dog Track, in the early 1920s, and then built over and redeveloped by 1927 as the Cliftonville Bathing Pool – it later became known as the Lido. The development carefully re-used one of the two surviving chimneys as an illuminated beacon and this 'tower' remains a key focal point in the Conservation Area today. The attractions included a café, cinema, and concert hall as well as an open air seawater bathing pool on foreshore land which was leased from the Council – this could accommodate up to 1,000 bathers. The Walpole Bay Sea Bathing Pool (listed 2014) was created in 1937.

The 1940 map shows the area in its heyday, with the Lido with its semi-circular salt-water pool, at the extreme western end of Ethelbert Terrace, then a putting green, miniature golf course, tennis

courts, and a recreation ground before reaching Newgate Gap and the Queens Highcliffe Hotel. Beyond this, the Oval is a dominant feature, with the late 19th and early 20th century development of First Avenue, Second Avenue and Lewis Crescent beyond. A series of bowling greens and open spaces then lie between Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue, with the Walpole_Bay Hotel on the east side. More open space, a band stand, and some early 1920s buildings, still extant; complete the space which now lies within the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area.



View of the Lido (the grade II listed baths lie underneath)

The effect of World War 2 on the Clifftop area was immense. Pettman's Platform gradually rusted away and was finally removed in 1947, and most of the hotels or guest houses in the area were either closed or demolished. A storm surge of 1953 inflicted considerable damage on the seafront of the whole of Margate, and the bathing pavilions and cafes in Cliftonville Bay were completely destroyed. The outdoor pool at the Lido was eventually closed in 1977/8. The Cliftonville Hotel, the largest hotel in the area, was demolished in 1961 and the Queen's Highcliffe Hotel was demolished in 1980. Modern developments of no merit include the 1960s block of flats facing Third Avenue and the Thanet Indoors Bowls Centre, built in the 1980's. Queens Court, which replaced the very substantial Queens Highcliffe Hotel, does at least continue the sense of large scale buildings which is the predominant building type in this Conservation Area. Just outside the Conservation Area, on the south side of Eastern Esplanade) further large blocks of flats (Dickens Court and Darwin Court) have been built in the last few years, replacing the Grand Hotel and the Albemarle Hotel.

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

4.1 General character and plan form

The Conservation Area retains the character of a seaside resort despite the loss of nearly all of the historic hotels which were once common in the area. This is because a number of leisure-related uses remain, primarily the derelict Little Oasis Crazy Golf Course, the adjoining children's adventure playground, the Oval concert area, and the outside bowling green next to the Thanet Indoor Bowls Centre. The Florence Tea Rooms and the Tom Thumb Theatre add to the area's attractions. Access to the beach is limited to the two cuts in the cliff (Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap) and although not well used in the winter months, they are presumably more popular in warmer weather. There is also a lift in Walpole Bay, currently closed.

The open spaces are contained by the high chalk cliffs to the north, with the beaches below, and by a long road (Ethelbert Terrace, Ethelbert Crescent, Queen's Parade and Eastern Esplanade) to the south. This runs almost parallel to the cliffs. Newgate Promenade and Queen's Promenade is a long pedestrian-only footpath which runs at the top of the cliffs from the public car park next to the Lido to Hodges Gap and beyond. This thoroughfare appears to have existed by 1872 although it terminated just beyond the junction with Harold Road.



Views of the sea and beach from Queen's Promenade

Of note is the high quality of the Edwardian buildings which face First Avenue, Second Avenue, Fourth Avenue, Lewis Crescent and Eastern Esplanade. Less attractive are the modern buildings (the 1960s flats facing Third Avenue, and the Thanet Indoors Bowls Centre) which are regrettable features which is hoped in time may be redeveloped more sensitively.

4.2 Open spaces and trees

The Conservation Area is notable for its cliff-top location and its many wide open spaces – of all of the conservation areas in Cliftonville; the Clifftop _ Conservation Area is the only one with any notable open spaces apart from Dalby Square. Historic maps confirm that it was deliberately laid out to provide recreational facilities, the open spaces being interrupted by larger buildings – the Queen's Highcliffe Hotel in the middle, and the Edwardian and the 1920s houses and hotels to the east. To the west, the Lido was built at a lower level than the cliff top to relate to the seawater pool beyond, so only its roofs and the distinctive tower are visible from the road above. These historic open spaces largely remain, apart from to the west, where the landscaped gardens to the north of Ethelbert Crescent have now been turned into a public car park. Generally these open spaces are simply grassed, with few gardens, trees or shrubs, presumably to reduce maintenance. Wide grass verges, facing the main road, are also important landscape features.

The Oval is in fact a circular open-air theatre with a modern bandstand in the middle which lies at a lower level to provide sight lines. Whilst there are vestigial remains of historic light fittings, the majority of the features are modern, with tarmacadam, concrete paving and very utilitarian fencing and other boundaries.



View over The Oval to Queen's Court



Bowling Green

'Negative' spaces, where enhancements are urgently needed, include the car parks next to the Lido and the car park next to the Thanet Indoors Bowls Club, and further enhancements would also be welcome to the cliff-top promenades and to the beach-front walkways.

There are a few trees in the Conservation Area, mainly associated with the public open spaces, but none are of any maturity or have any great visual impact. The occasional palm tree adds a seaside feel. However, the neatly clipped hedges around the bowling greens, and the adjoining wide grass verge (with small areas of planting), do make a major contribution to the streetscape however. Further flower beds, with (at the time of survey) winter pansies; can be seen in the area around the Oval.

4.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

Focal points and focal buildings:

The long, thin shape of the Conservation Area, and the variety of open spaces, means that there are no particularly focal points although the Oval and its bandstand must stand out in the summer when events are taking place. A recently laid out garden with hard landscaping centres on the Bournier Memorial, which commemorates the son of a former Councillor who died in World War 1. The Memorial lies to the immediate north of Second Avenue and provides a focus to walkers passing along the Queen's Promenade.

Focal buildings include:

- The Lido and its tower
- All of the Edwardian buildings between First Avenue and Third Avenue
- The Walpole Bay Hotel, on the east side of Fifth Avenue
- St Anne's RC Church, Eastern Esplanade



The Bourner Memorial



View over Hodges Gap to Eastern Esplanade

Views and vistas

This Conservation Area is notable for its many views out to sea, down along the beaches, and across the various public open spaces. Views down each cliff-face cut (Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap) are also of interest. The most important of these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map but the omission of any particular view does not mean that it does not have any significance.

4.4 Boundaries

Most of the boundaries to the buildings in the Conservation Area are provided by low rendered walls painted white or by low red brick walls, but as many of the buildings sit either on the edge of the pavement, or just slightly set back, boundaries do not make a major contribution to the streetscape. Fairly unaltered examples can be seen in Second Avenue, where they front the Edwardian houses, and are typical of the period with white painted render infill panels on red brick walls, interrupted by taller red brick gate piers with coping stones. Close by, outside No. 10 Eastern Esplanade, some white painted decorative iron railings remain which is presumably historic. Ethelbert Terrace and Ethelbert Crescent both retain a large variety of original cast iron front area railings and first floor balcony railings, which all make a major contribution to the special interest of these buildings.

Hooped metal railings, probably dating to the 1920s, partially surround the four Bowls greens. Some neatly clipped hedging is more evident in the eastern end of the area, such as outside No. 14 Eastern Esplanade.



Cast iron railings on Ethelbert Crescent

Negative boundaries include:

- The vertically boarded timber fencing outside No. 6 Eastern Esplanade, which is somewhat out of place – a high red brick wall would have been more fitting
- The wire fence on concrete posts outside St Anne’s RC Church, Eastern Esplanade
- The damaged rendered wall outside the Lido

4.5 Public realm

The large amount of public open space in the Conservation Area means that the public realm, including pavements, roads, street lighting, street furniture, signage and other features of local significance, is extremely important. Most of them will be the responsibility of the District Council or the Highways Department of Kent County Council. In general, whilst some attempts have been made to standardise and simplify these features, the overall effect is somewhat disparate and low quality.



Well designed public realm features on Queen's Parade

Pavements are mainly covered in black tarmac, including the whole of Queen's Parade. Parts of these pavements have been adversely affected by trenching by the statutory undertakers. An area of brick paviors, arranged in a random pattern, is an odd feature outside Queen's Court. A more carefully planned landscaped area, using Tegula concrete blocks, can be seen around the Bourner Memorial at the northern end of Third Avenue, and close by another area has been enhanced with the addition of further areas of Tegula blocks, and the provision of simple stone and concrete seats and benches. The bridge over Hodges Gap and the immediate area appears to have been improved in 1993 (date plaque).

Street lighting along the main road is provided by modern slender black steel standards, with a number of 'heritage' lamps and white steel lights elsewhere. At various locations, domed lights, possibly dating to the 1930s or 1950s, add a 'seaside' sense of place. Along the promenades, modern white steel lamps have been carefully designed and fit in well. Black and rather menacing CCTV cameras can be seen in several locations. Along the seafront, the top of the cliffs are separated from Queen's Promenade by silver galvanised steel railings, robustly detailed for this seaside location. 'Heritage' seating (wooden slates on cast iron end frames) can be seen in many locations.

Other features include the public shelters which can be found along Queen's Promenade, most of which appear to be modern or perhaps 1930s (in part). A small 1930s lift (listed 2014) also remains close by, but was not in use at the time of survey.

5 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Building types and dates

Nearly all of the buildings in the Conservation Area were built as family houses or as hotels or guest houses in the late 19th and early 20th century. The eastern end of the Conservation Area, including the buildings around the Walpole Bay Hotel (which is earlier) date to the 1920s (one is dated 1926). The Lido complex was also built in 1926 over the 1820s Clifton Baths. St Anne's RC Church was also built in 1926.

5.2 Listed buildings

The listed buildings in the Conservation Area are the Walpole Bay Lift (Grade II), the Walpole Bay Tidal Pool (Grade II) and the remains of the Clifton Baths, which lie beneath the Lido and the Lift from western Undercliff to Royal Esplanade. They are also listed grade II. The Sea Bathing Baths were built between 1824 and 1828 by John Boys at a cost of £15,000. He excavated into the chalk cliffs to provide several chambers some of which were used to store bathing machines. He also provided a plunge pool for children and women. The Lido complex was built over these structures in the 1920s. All three listed structures are connected to the activity of salt water bathing.

A detailed description of the Baths can be found on Kent County Council's website: *Exploring Kent's Past*.

Nos. 14 and 15 Cliff Terrace (grade II) lie just outside the Conservation Area in the Margate Conservation Area but are important in that they form the corner building of a terrace of buildings which are currently in great need of improvement, as detailed in the Management Plan.

Newgate Gap Bridge was delisted in 2002 following substantial demolition. It dated to 1907 and was built by Doulton and Co. of Lambeth in London, using steel girders faced in faience tiles.

5.3 Locally listed buildings

There are currently no locally listed buildings in the Conservation Area, but the Management Plan includes a recommendation to add the following buildings to the emerging Local List:

- The Lido complex, Cliff Terrace
- The Florence Rose Tea Rooms, Eastern Esplanade
- The Tom Thumb Theatre, Eastern Esplanade
- The Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue
- St Anne's RC Church, Eastern Esplanade
- Nos. 1-9 consec. Ethelbert Crescent
- Nos. 18-28 consec. Ethelbert Crescent
- The Edwardian Shelter to the west of Newgate Gap



The Tom Thumb Theatre



St Anne's RC Church

5.4 Positive buildings

Most of the historic buildings in the Conservation Area have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map as being *positive* buildings of townscape merit. Buildings identified as being *positive* will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a *positive* contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. In the Clifftop Conservation Area, the earliest 'positive' buildings are Ethelbert Terrace and Ethelbert Crescent, which date to the 1860s, otherwise most of these buildings date to between the 1890s and 1910, although a few (in Eastern Esplanade) date to the 1920s.



Ethelbert Crescent

The identification of these 'positive' buildings follows advice provided within Historic England's *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. The guidance advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a 'positive' contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Proposals to demolish such buildings will therefore be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. This implies therefore that all buildings marked as 'positive'

on the Townscape Appraisal Map will be retained in some form in the future unless a special case can be made for demolition.

5.5 Building styles, materials and colours

Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are typical of the mid-19th to early 20th century, and are notable for their substantial, well detailed red brick or white stuccoed façades. They are largely arranged in terraced form, most commonly being three windows wide. They are usually too large to have been built as family houses and it can be assumed that most were built as small hotels or guests houses, and have been converted into flats since.

The earliest and most impressive are the three five storey terraces facing the sea at the western end of the Conservation Area in Ethelbert Crescent (Nos. 1-9 consec. and Nos. 18-28 consec.) and Ethelbert Terrace (Nos. 2-10). The Ethelbert Crescent properties retain more decoration to the front, with first floor balconies below curved roofs which are supported on cast iron columns. Canted bay windows to the basement and ground floors lie below, with the entrance to each house defined by Ionic columns at the top of each line of steps supporting the balcony above. By contrast, the houses in Ethelbert Terrace are much simpler with stuccoed elevations with slightly curved window architraves, channelled stucco ground and basements, and oriel bay windows to the ground floor. Above are balconies which are bounded by ornate cast iron railings. Roofs are concealed by very simple parapets.



Ethelbert Terrace

A further impressive group of buildings lie between First Avenue and Third Avenue. The block on the south west corner, including the Florence Rose Tea Rooms and the Tom Thumb Theatre, are shown on the 1899 map (the theatre is actually dated 1896) but the remaining buildings were added a few years later and are shown on the 1907 map. Some of these, namely the corner block between First Avenue and Lewis Crescent, and the corner of Lewis Crescent and Third Avenue, have been redeveloped, the first in recent years with a red brick building of similar height (though it lacks the fine detailing of its more historic neighbours) and the second, by a block of 1960s flats of no merit. The historic buildings are similarly detailed, though not matching, and are five storeys high (including a half basement and mansarded attic). Corner details, such as the copper-covered dome on the corner of Lewis Crescent and Second Avenue (which matches a similar dome on the opposite corner), are important, and the roof line is broken up by these corner details and by gables which are decorated with pargetting (external decorative plaster). More copper domes (four in all) can be seen on No. 18 Eastern Esplanade, dating to the 1920s. Of special note are the fine quality cast iron railings which can be seen at both ground and first floor levels on some of these buildings. Most of the buildings have sash windows, the original pattern being nine panes over one, and although many have been replaced in uPVC, this style has fortunately been largely maintained.



Lewis Crescent



Second Avenue (east side)

Similar terraces of buildings can also be seen on the south side of Eastern Esplanade (Nos. 25-39 and 75-85) although they are less well detailed and have been more heavily altered. No. 85 appears to be a 1920s building with neo-Tudor details and has fake timbered gables which face the street.



Eastern Esplanade

More unusual buildings within the Conservation Area include the Florence Rose Tea Rooms and the adjoining Tom Thumb Theatre, which was originally built as a stable. These are only two storeys high and much smaller in scale. The Tea Rooms are constructed in red brick which has been painted, and retains a distinctive first floor balcony with Chinoiserie railings and a corner turret with a steeply pointed tiled roof. The adjoining theatre has a similar balcony with matching railings and is dated 1896 on the wide brick gable which faces the street. The ground floor elevation appears to have been somewhat altered. It can be safely assumed that these were built as a pair as increasing visitor numbers generated the need for additional facilities.

Apart from Ethelbert Crescent and Ethelbert Terrace, where the roofs are hidden by parapets, the roofs of the buildings in the Conservation Area are relatively visible (due to long sight lines and a general lack of parapets) and are usually steeply pitched. Roof materials are quite mixed and include red clay tiles and natural slate. Tall chimney stacks survive in many locations, adding interest and variety to the roofline. Some original sash windows remain although many have been

replaced in uPVC. Various additions have been added to some of the buildings, such as the extensions to Grosvenor Court in First Avenue, where they presumably represent the infilling of earlier verandas.



The Florence Rose Tea Rooms



Tom Thumb Theatre

5.6 Activities and Uses

The Conservation Area is in a variety of uses with a mixture of leisure-related facilities and residential properties being evident. Part of the Lido is now a club (The Cliff Bar) but many of the other buildings on the site appear to be vacant. The adjoining sea water swimming pool is now silted up. The derelict Little Oasis Crazy Golf Course, a children’s adventure playground, the Oval concert area, and the Thanet Indoor Bowls Centre with its adjoining open-air bowling greens, take up much of the open space between the residential properties. These are focused in Queens Court, a development of blocks of flats which sits centrally in the long thin Conservation Area, and the other more historic residential properties facing First and Second Avenues. A further, and much larger complex of buildings, stands on the southern boundary of the Conservation Area on the site of the Cliftonville Hotel next to Dalby Square. This was built in the mid-1960s and also provides a variety of leisure uses.



View to the Thanet indoor Bowls Club



The 1960s leisure complex next to Dalby Square

The Walpole Bay Hotel, facing Fifth Avenue, and dating to 1914, is the sole survivor of the genteel type of hotel which once characterised Cliftonville. A further hotel (the Sherwood) appears to be trading in Ethelbert Crescent. More unusual uses can be seen in the small, late 19th century

buildings which face the Eastern Esplanade between First Avenue and Second Avenue – the Florence Rose Tea Rooms and the adjoining Tom Thumb Theatre, dating to 1896. Outside the summer months, many of these facilities are either closed or in partial use, and the area feels (unsurprisingly) somewhat windswept and neglected.

At the eastern end of the Conservation Area, St Anne's Roman Catholic Church was built in 1926, and it, and its adjoining presbytery, is still in use.

6 THE EXTENT OF INTRUSION OR DAMAGE

6.1 Key negative features

This Character Appraisal concludes that the most significant *negative* features of the Clifftop Conservation Area are:

Spatial:

- All of the public open spaces are in need of some improvement
- The street lighting is modern and where 'historic' street lights have been installed, these are to limited areas
- The existing shelters are modern, of a varied design, and are not in good condition
- Most of the properties have been sub-divided into small flats resulting in very high densities of population
- There is an issue with security and the public perception of the area
- There is little visitor information apart from tourist signs at the Oval and along the two promenades
- The former Little Oasis Crazy Golf Course and the adjacent Edwardian Shelter are derelict,
- Poor quality boundaries and a general feel of neglect
- There are very few trees and little obvious attempt to provide the type of attractive seaside planting which characterises resorts elsewhere in the south east
- The beach-side promenades at the foot of the cliffs appear somewhat remote and are not well presented – easier access from above would be advantageous
- There are several vacant sites awaiting redevelopment just outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area, which add to the feeling of neglect

Buildings:

- Two 20th century buildings (the 1960s flats next to Third Avenue, and the Thanet Indoor Bowls Centre, which was built in the 1980s) make a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- A small single garage facing the open green area at the end of Fifth Avenue, and a pair of garages next to No. 6 Eastern Esplanade, are both unwelcome intrusions
- Some of the historic buildings have been adversely affected by unsympathetic alterations, such as the ground and first floor extensions to Grosvenor Court in First Avenue
- Some of the buildings, such as the Newgate Gap Edwardian Shelter and the early 20th century terraced houses (Nos. 9-12) facing Lewis Crescent, are in very poor condition

Site specific improvements:

- Newgate Promenade and Queen's Promenade would benefit from a comprehensive enhancement scheme
- The public car parks next to the Lido (which form the setting to Ethelbert Terrace and Ethelbert Crescent) and the Thanet Indoors Bowls Club are in urgent need of improvement
- Both Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap would benefit from improvements and repairs, including new paving, street lighting and street furniture
- The Oval is in need of improvements to lighting, boundaries, and surface finishes
- The Lido complex is in very poor condition and appears to be mostly vacant – also the land around it (the car park) is neglected, with rubbish and damaged boundaries – the restoration of the Lido pool would be welcome

Nos. 17-18 Cliff Terrace and No. 1 Ethelbert Terrace

- Most of these buildings are in such poor condition and have been so altered that they cannot be considered 'positive'
- They lie next to Nos. 14, 15 and 16 Cliff Terrace, which are within the Margate Conservation Area and are listed
- Vacant, board-up or shuttered shop fronts although, increasingly, these shops are being occupied
- Very poor quality front elevations with uPVC windows
- No. 1 has advertising hoardings on the flank wall to Ethelbert Road, plus other advertising
- Poor quality shopfronts with some roll-down metal shutters, which appear to be empty

Ethelbert Terrace (Nos. 2-10 consec.)

- Poor quality concrete flagged pavement outside
- Upvc windows (including some of the canted bays to the ground floor) although many of the original front doors remain
- Some of the buildings are in poor condition with evidence of neglect
- Some of the cast iron front boundaries need to be repaired or replaced to match

Ethelbert Crescent (Nos. 1-9 and Nos. 18-28)

- Poor quality concrete flagged pavement outside
- Upvc windows to most of the openings
- Whilst the first floor balcony railings are complete, there are gaps in the railings at pavement level, or the historic railings have been replaced with modern equivalents
- Some of the buildings are in poor condition with evidence of neglect

6.2 Summary of issues

Taking the 'negative features' identified above into account, the following issues are considered to be the most pressing matters which need to be addressed by the Management Plan for the Clifftop Conservation Area:

Seafront strategy

- There is a need for an overall strategy to address both privately and publically owned land and buildings

Public realm improvements

- Most of the public open spaces would benefit from improvements to street surfaces, street lighting, street furniture

The control of new development

- All new development must be to the highest possible standards

The protection of views

- The important views into, out of, and around the Conservation Area must be both preserved and enhanced as opportunities present themselves

The condition of the buildings

- The poor condition and under-use of some of the buildings, and the potential for grant aid

Local List review

- There are a number of possible additions to Thanet District Council's proposed list of locally significant buildings

Site specific improvements

- A number of sites, both in private and public ownership, would benefit from either improvements or total redevelopment

Education and publicity

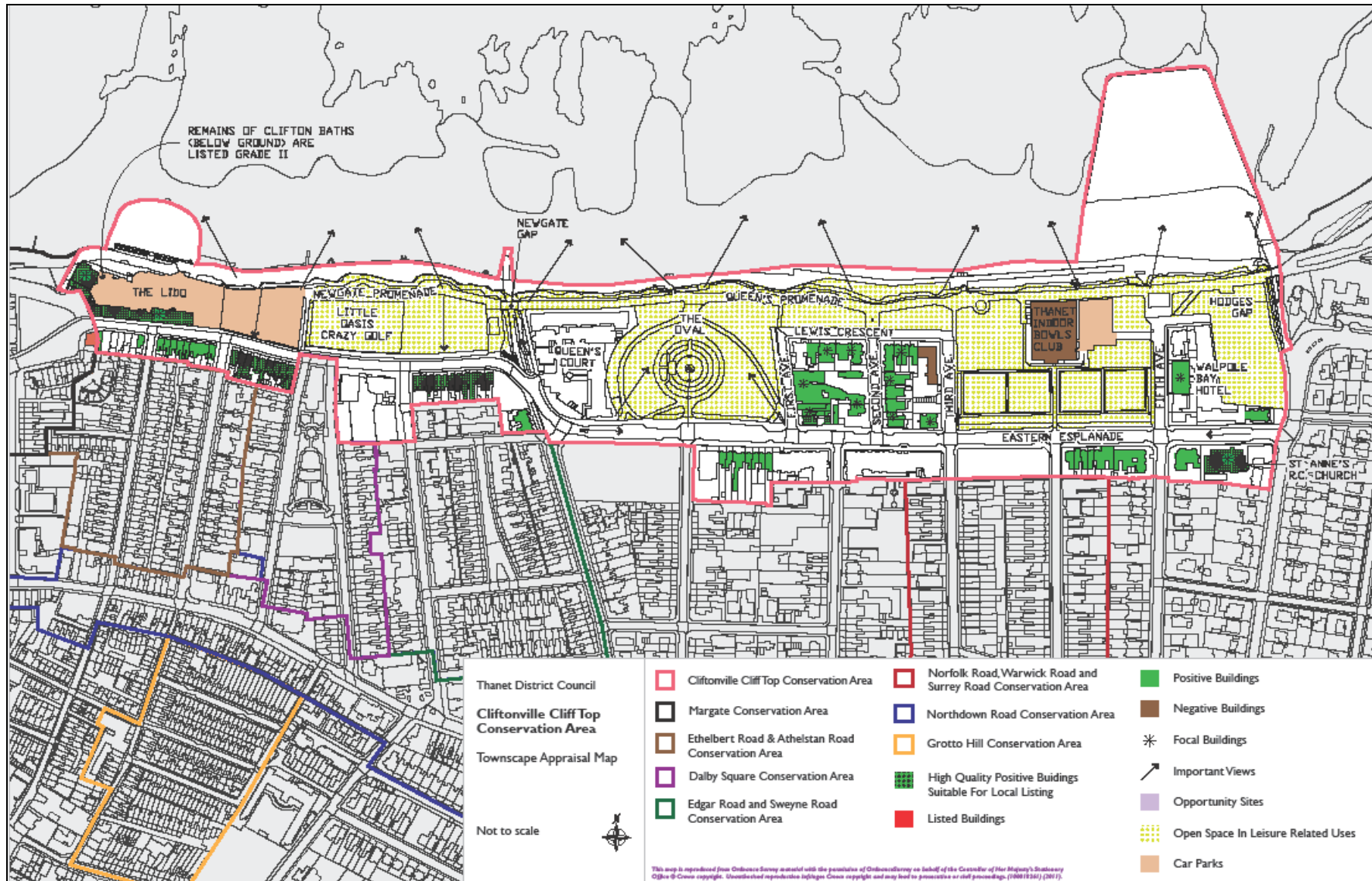
- There is a need for further education and publicity, including encouraging civic pride and a sense of place

Monitoring and enforcement

- The District Council needs to set up a programme of implementation to ensure that the recommendations in the Management Plan are taken forward at the earliest opportunity



Appendix 1 Map 1 Cliftonville Development Phases



Appendix 2 Map 2 Townscape Appraisal Map

PART 2

CLINTONVILLE CLIFFTOP CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Management Plan

Part 1 of this document, the *Character Appraisal*, has identified the special positive qualities of Clifftop Conservation Area which make the conservation area unique. Part 2 of this document, the *Management Plan*, builds upon the positive features and addresses the negative features which have been identified to provide a series of recommendations for improvement and change.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and will hopefully mean that the various actions identified in the Management Plan will have greater impact and longevity. For Clifftop this will be achieved through the current eight week public consultation exercise. A Public Consultations Report will then be prepared (copies will be made available on request from the District Council). Any necessary amendments will be made before the final version of the document is completed. The document will be adopted by the Council as a 'material' document for development control purposes.

1.2 Relevant documents

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by Historic England in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Plan should be subject to regular monitoring and reviews, as set out in section 3.

Other relevant documents include:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
 - This Act sets out the legislative background for the control of conservation areas and listed buildings.
- National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
 - This provides government policy guidance which relates to the historic built environment in particular section 12.
- The Kent Design Guide
 - This advocates high quality design for all new development and provides detailed guidance.
- The Thanet District Local Plan (which will be replacing the Thanet Local Plan 2006)
- The Margate Renewal Study (undated but post-2006)
 - This document was commissioned by the Margate Renewal Partnership to carry out a study of the drivers of deprivation in Margate Central and Cliftonville West Wards and make recommendations on future regeneration activity to tackle deprivation.
- Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan (March 2008)
 - This document sets out the Council's approach to the management of the conservation areas within Thanet – it draws on both national and local planning policies

Documents produced by Thanet District Council which relate specifically to Cliftonville:

- West Cliftonville Neighbourhood Renewal Area (2006)

- This report produced by Thanet District Council and consultants identifies the need to improve the housing stock in four parts of Thanet including Cliftonville West, and provides some policy guidance.
- The Cliftonville DPD (February 2010)
 - This document provides planning policies for the Cliftonville West Renewal Area (in advance of the Core Strategy) to be used to inform development control decisions on the large number of planning applications which are submitted in the area – its main thrust is to enhance the existing building stock in terms of physical condition and use (particularly the reduction in number of poor quality flats and their replacement with family houses), encourage community pride in the area, and support the growth of high quality tourism-related facilities. One of the outcomes of this DPD is the imposition of a surcharge on local landlords which is aimed at encouraging a reduction in the number of small residential units, and an increase in the number of family dwellings within the Cliftonville area.

1.3 The scope of this Management Plan

This Management Plan has been drawn up following detailed survey work of the Cliftonville Clifftop Conservation Area by The Conservation Studio in collaboration with Thanet District Council's conservation staff. Its recommendations relate specifically to the Conservation Area, and it is not intended to include general advice about the control of conservation areas, which is set out in the Council's document *Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan* (March 2008 – under revision). This document also includes advice about the quality of new development which will be needed in all of Thanet's conservation areas.

2 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following recommendations are based on the key negative features and issues identified as part of the Character Appraisal. Some of them may have to remain aspirational for the time being, but it is considered 'good practice' to identify possible actions which could be implemented in the future if the funding becomes available. Other recommendations are dependent on sufficient resources being available to the District Council to bring forward. All of the recommendations particularly rely upon a successful partnership between the District Council and the local community, assisted by Kent County Council as appropriate.

2.1 Seafront Strategy

Until recently, Thanet District Council's main impetus, in partnership with the Margate Renewal Partnership, was to regenerate the town centre of Margate. Relevant documents include a Strategic Urban Design Framework, which was produced in 2004, and an Action Plan for Margate, produced in 2005. One of the outcomes has been that buildings in the Old Town have been subject to a variety of grant schemes including a Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme between 2002 and 2006 which provided over one million pounds of funding. A similar scheme is currently operating in the Dalby Square Conservation Area. Other initiatives include the construction of the Turner Contemporary art gallery. Several key development sites have also been identified, including the Lido and the adjoining car park.



View down Second Avenue

So far, little of this has impacted on Cliftonville where the Council has been focusing its efforts on the various social and economic problems of the area. The Cliftonville DPD (February 2010) provides planning policies for the Cliftonville West Renewal Area which encompasses part of the Clifftop Conservation Area from the Lido to Third Avenue. Its 'vision' for Cliftonville includes the provision of a range of high quality varied family housing with private gardens, the enhancement of the historic buildings in the area, and the provision of higher quality tourist accommodation. It also confirms its aim to provide high quality public green spaces in the Cliftonville area, but no further details are given.

The possible designation of five new conservation areas in Cliftonville (in addition to the already designated Dalby Square and Ethelbert and Athelstan Roads Conservation Areas) provides an opportunity to revisit the advantages provided by heritage-led regeneration. Because of its open spaces, many of which are owned and controlled by the District Council, the Clifftop Conservation Area provides the greatest opportunities within Cliftonville to rebrand the area and upgrade the

'offer' for visitors. For instance, the proximity of the Turner Contemporary will increase the number of tourists to Margate but there is nothing at present to 'tempt' them to Cliftonville, and the assumption appears to be that most will visit the Old Town, the Sands and Dreamland but will go no further. The provision of an up-market seaside café, such as has been built in Newquay in Cornwall or Littlehampton in West Sussex, might draw visitors to Cliftonville and provide a catalyst for further investment in the area. The redevelopment of the Lido site, apparently being discussed since the 1990s but not furthered, could provide a suitable opportunity. Any Strategy would have to be allied to a similar document for any improvements to the Northdown Road Conservation Area, and would probably need to cover land beyond the boundaries of the Clifftop Conservation Area. The possible 'branding' of the area, using new street name plates, new street lighting, new street trees and other enhancements will provide some focus to the local community and give the area a greater 'sense of place'.

A 'Seafront Strategy' could provide the following:

- The agreement of priorities and a clear vision of what improvements need to be achieved, in the form of a detailed Action Plan – possible improvements could include extending housing densities policy (as recommended in the Cliftonville DPD) into the conservation area and the removal of inappropriate rear extensions to some of the properties
- A basis for applications for grant aid from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England
- The integration of works to the Clifftop Conservation Area with other initiatives in Margate
- The provision of a Public Realm Strategy
- The provision of a car parking and traffic management strategy (in association with other similar initiatives in Cliftonville)
- Site specific guidance, including the provision of Development Briefs and Feasibility Studies
- A methodology for engaging the local community, particularly business owners
- A framework for the production of educational and publicity material, designed to encourage civic pride and a sense of place

Recommendation 1:

- *Once the Clifftop Conservation Area is designated, the District Council will consider the production of a Seafront Strategy for Cliftonville, primarily covering the Clifftop Conservation Area.*

2.2 Public realm improvements

Whilst some small areas within the Cliftonville Clifftop Conservation Area have already been improved, there are other areas where enhancements are urgently required. The identification of specific sites for improvement, and the specification of outline proposals for their enhancement, would be welcome and could be brought forward as and when funding became available.

Matters that could be addressed if funding and resources become available include:

- Agreement between the District and County Council on the choice of materials and details for street lighting, street furniture, and paving materials;
- The provision of a list of sites for possible action including:
 - Newgate Promenade and parts of Queen's Promenade (continuing the style of street lighting already established)
 - The land in public ownership between the Lido and Newgate Gap
 - The Oval and its immediate setting
 - Newgate Gap and Hodges Gap

- The use of a common palette of colours for street lights, street nameplates and other street furniture would provide a recognisable ‘branding’ of the area, although this would need to be very carefully controlled in the future with regular maintenance and repainting;
- Copying some of the wall-mounted historic street name plates which can be seen elsewhere in Cliftonville – these are rectangular with recessed corner details and white lettering on black (it might be necessary to adjust the design so the new plates can be positioned on poles rather than fixed to individual buildings, due to problems with their future maintenance).



The area in front of Ethelbert Crescent is in urgent need of improvement

Recommendation 2:

- *The District Council will look to ensure the retention of any surviving historic streetscape features. Any highway and landscaping works should bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance the Historic England Streets for All campaign guidance*
- *The District Council will seek to engage on a co-ordinated approach to public realm works via consultations between all relevant Council Departments/stakeholders etc. including Highways, Cliftonville groups and Utility companies.*
- *Liaison between Planning, Conservation/Regeneration and Highways should be further developed with an agreed approach to new surfacing within public areas or those likely to be adopted.*
- *As and when funding permits, the District Council and Kent County Council will consider carrying out improvements to the public realm in the Conservation Area;*

2.3 The control of new development

There are several opportunities for completely new development in the Clifftop Conservation Area, including the possible redevelopment of the 1960s flats off Third Avenue and the Thanet Indoors Bowls Centre. The Council car park off Ethelbert Terrace is another area which could be developed, possibly in relation to the restoration of the Lido and improvements to the car parking area which lies to the east of the complex. The provision of site-specific Development Briefs or Feasibility Studies (as proposed under the Seaside Strategy) would assist potential developers in achieving the high standards required by the District Council.

A more immediate threat is posed by the number of poor quality alterations to the existing buildings, most of which buildings are considered to be ‘positive’ and therefore of sufficient architectural and

historic interest to merit special treatment. Many but not all of the changes listed below would usually require planning permission:



New development on Eastern Esplanade fits in well with the surrounding historic buildings

- Badly designed extensions, particularly to the front elevations
- The loss of architectural details such as corncicing or balconies
- The insertion of unsympathetic modern windows or front doors, usually in uPVC
- The loss of front boundary treatments
- The addition of modern garages in sensitive locations

It is important that any new development in the conservation area is in keeping with its special character and appearance. New development which pays minimal respect to local building traditions and which detracts from the special character and appearance of the conservation area, results in the loss of the special qualities that the designation is intended to protect. It is therefore critical that any development which occurs within the conservation area complements the qualities of its context defined within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

New development within the conservation area and its setting should aspire to the quality of design and execution related to its context. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will involve respecting values established through the assessment of the form and significance of the area. Developers and/or their designers will be required to demonstrate a thorough understand of the urban context of the area and the way it has evolved.

The main consideration must be on the built and natural environment, key strategic views and approaches, the conservation area and setting of key historic buildings. Development proposals should be accompanied by a comprehensive urban design analysis of surrounding areas that details the positive and negative contributions that the proposed development makes to the visual quality of the area.

The scale, massing, architectural detailing and pattern of development of any new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area will be expected to respect that of the existing built environment of the conservation area.

Appropriate external materials and finishes will be expected on all new development. Traditional materials typical of the conservation area, identified within the appraisal, will be encouraged to complement the local built heritage. Where modern materials are proposed these should be in harmony with traditional materials.

Extensions and alterations to buildings will be expected to follow scale, proportions, features, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

Surviving elements of historic landscape interest, such as historic street patterns, pedestrian routes, plot outlines and the fabric of surviving early boundaries, make an important contribution to historic distinctiveness and so should be retained.

In general, all new development in the proposed Conservation Area must be of the highest possible standard and should adhere to guidance provided within the following documents:

- The Kent Design Guide
- Thanet District Council's Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan (March 2008)

Recommendation 3:

- *The District Council will ensure that all new development in the Clifftop Conservation Area preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area and adheres to national policies and to guidance provided in the Kent Design Guide and within Thanet District Council's own policy framework, through engagement in pre-application discussions and consideration and determination of planning applications within the area.*

2.4 The protection of views

This Conservation Area provides the most notable sea views in Cliftonville, as well as views along the main road between the Lido and the Eastern Esplanade and over the open spaces which lie between the main road and the cliff. It is important that any new development does not reduce the impact of these views and that the contrast between the existing blocks of buildings and the open spaces between them are maintained. The outstanding views from Ethelbert Crescent and Ethelbert Terrace towards the sea and the Lido complex should also be preserved. Some of this open land is used as a Council car park and as the (former) Little Oasis Crazy Golf Course, and the open nature of this area should be retained. As opportunities present themselves, the enhancement of this area with more soft landscaping and higher quality public open space would be welcomed. No further buildings should be allowed (unless relating to leisure activities and very carefully designed) and modern buildings should be removed if possible.

Recommendation 4:

- *The District Council will seek to ensure that the important views into, out of, and around the Conservation Area and within the setting are both preserved and enhanced as opportunities present themselves, through engagement in pre-application discussions and consideration and determination of planning applications within the area.*

2.5 The condition of the buildings

A consistent problem within the Conservation Area is the poor standard of maintenance in many properties. This has resulted in:

- Clear evidence of the need for repairs to roofs and front and back elevations;
- The loss of architectural features such as decorative stucco work, railings, and boundary walls;
- The replacement of original features with inappropriate modern fittings such as front doors, windows, cladding and boundary treatments;

- Inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to existing properties, such as front extensions.

The District Council has a Heritage Lottery Fund funded Townscape Heritage Initiative grant scheme in the Dalby Square conservation area. It is possible that this scheme could be extended, or a new scheme applied for the Clifftop Conservation Area at some stage in the future. Other funding agencies, apart from the HLF, include Historic England, Thanet District Council, Kent County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Recommendation 5:

- *The District Council will consider providing guidance on the use of traditional materials and details, which will be circulated to all property owners in the Conservation Area;*
- *The District Council will consider applying for a grant scheme when opportunities arise to assist property owners in the Clifftop Conservation Area.*

2.6 Advertising and shop fronts

The only shop fronts in the Conservation Area are in Cliff Terrace, which abuts the Margate Conservation Area and which contains a row (Nos. 13-18) of which Nos. 13, 14 and 15 actually lie within the Margate Conservation Area. These are early to mid-19th century properties, most of which were at ground floor catering establishments. These have recently started being occupied again. A large advertising hoarding is located on the flank elevation of No. 1 Ethelbert Terrace above two smaller signs advertising local shops. This feature is negative in its impact.



Cliff Terrace

Future initiatives may include:

- The provision of detailed shop front guidance;
- Exploring ways of making these commercial units viable, possibly through change-of-use;
- The provision of grant aid, to provide new, higher quality shop fronts;
- The removal of the first floor hoarding;
- The replacement of ground floor advertisements and their possible replacement by new advertising of much higher quality.

Recommendation 6:

- *The District Council will explore ways of improving the economic activity and appearance of the shops in the Cliff Terrace area.*

- *The District Council will give special regard to applications to alter or develop commercial frontages within the conservation area and ensure proposals are of overall high quality and make a positive contribution to the conservation area*
- *The District Council will ensure high standards in the design of new shop fronts and in the design of alterations to existing shop fronts through the implementation of relevant policies and guidance in determining applications for development in the conservation area.*

2.7 Local List

There is currently no Local List for Cliftonville although Thanet District Council is in the process of developing a Local List. Following the publication of PPS5 in March 2010, locally listed buildings have become an important 'heritage asset' of particular significance where they also lie within a designated conservation area. The preparation of a Local List for the whole of Cliftonville must therefore be seen as a priority, but meanwhile, this document includes recommendations for new locally listed buildings as follows:

- The Lido complex, Cliff Terrace – opened in 1927 the development reused one of the former chimneys of the Clifton Baths as an illuminated beacon
- Ethelbert Crescent – the earliest and most impressive of the terraces in the Conservation Area, dating to the 1860s
- The Florence Rose Tea Rooms and the adjoining Tom Thumb Theatre, Eastern Esplanade – these were completed in 1896 and are key focal buildings in the Conservation Area with their Chinoiserie first floor balconies
- The Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue – built in 1914 and completed in the 1920s this is the last of Cliftonville's many 'family' hotels and is still open
- St Anne's RC Church, Eastern Esplanade – this was built in 1926 to the designs of Dalby Reeve of Margate, with an extension of 1964 by H Curtis – it is described as 'not unimpressive' by Nickolaus Pevsner in his *Buildings of England* series.

Recommendation 7:

- *The District Council will work with the local community to produce a new Local List for Cliftonville.*

2.8 Site specific improvements

A number of sites, both in private and public ownership would benefit from either improvements or total redevelopment. Apart from the sites mentioned previously in 2.2, where the land or buildings are in public ownership, a number of privately owned sites would benefit from improvements:

- The Lido complex is in very poor condition and appears to be mostly vacant – also the land around it (the car park) is neglected, with rubbish and damaged boundaries – the restoration of the Lido pool is a further matter for discussion
- The Tom Thumb Theatre would benefit from improvements to its external appearance to remove later alterations
- The block of 1960s flats facing Third Avenue and Queen's Parade does not accord with the design of nearby Edwardian buildings due to its horizontal emphasis, flat roof, and overall bulk and detailing – its replacement in time with a more appropriately designed building would be welcome
- The Thanet Indoors Bowls Centre is a 1980's long, low building which is clad in dark blue/green aluminium sheet metal – it neither preserves or enhances the area and its redevelopment in due course with a building of greater architectural quality, or its total removal would be welcome
- The 1960s leisure complex next to Dalby Square is in urgent need of refurbishment or complete redevelopment



The 1960s flats facing Third Avenue and Queen's Parade

Recommendation 8:

- *The District Council will encourage the repair and reuse, or the potential redevelopment, of the four sites detailed above, but only to the highest possible standards.*

2.9 Education and guidance

There are several active residents' groups which each relate particularly to one small area. Some of these have already been involved in the public consultation exercise which was undertaken in October 2010 to gauge public reaction to the designation of conservation areas in Cliftonville.

Recommendation 9:

- *The District Council, working in partnership with Kent County Council and other stakeholders, will continue to encourage greater civic pride in the Cliftonville area through the use of its statutory powers and possible grant aid;*
- *The production of publicity material about the Conservation Area for local residents is advisable.*

2.10 Monitoring and enforcement

Local authorities are required to periodically review their conservation areas and the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Plans is part of this obligation. Indeed, in the past keeping Character Appraisals and Management Plans up to date has been a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities, and as a result, a five year review cycle is now considered to be best practice.

Over the next five years the District Council should therefore be expected to regularly review the content of this document, to carefully monitor change within the Clifftop Conservation Area, and to involve the community in any proposals for enhancement (subject of course to the funding being available).

Recommendation 10:

The District Council should therefore:

- Carry out periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change.

2.11 The control of unlisted buildings (Article 4 Directions)

The District Council is required to both 'preserve and enhance' the character of the Conservation Area. Some inappropriate alterations are visible throughout the conservation area. At the moment, however, the changes that have been made are in fairly localised locations and that on the whole the area has been fairly maintained. Whilst alterations have so far been relatively localised there is also evidence of more and more inappropriate alterations and additions within the area. In order to restrict the rights of landowners from carrying out inappropriate development an Article 4 Direction can be placed on specific buildings or areas. This enables the local planning authority to require permission for what is otherwise allowed without consent. This does not mean that permission would be refused but allows the authority to assess any potential impact to the buildings, the street scene and the conservation area.

Most of the houses in the Conservation Area are in use as family dwellings (i.e. as a single unit) but the occasional property has been divided into flats or HMOs. For these buildings, permitted development rights are already much lower, so, for instance, planning permission would normally be needed to insert new plastic windows or to change the roof material. For these buildings, an Article 4 Direction could still be used to control front boundaries, the creation of car parking spaces, and external redecoration. It can also be used to control colour, so it would be possible to limit external painting to a certain palette of colours, to provide greater cohesiveness to the front elevations – for instance, by insisting upon shades of cream or an off-white colour for stucco and brickwork.

Any proposal to consider removal of Permitted Development rights and carry forward a decision to proceed with an Article 4 Direction will result in further public consultation and assessment. The Council may take these forward in due course if a strong justification and public support following further monitoring and recording change of the conservation area show this to be necessary.

Recommendation 11:

- *The Council may consider making an Article 4 Direction in due course if a strong justification and public support of erosion of the character of the area show this to be necessary.*

3 ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan sets out a list of priorities for future actions, most of which will be the responsibility of Thanet District Council or Kent County Council, if sufficient resources are available.

Immediate Actions

- Adopt the Clifftop Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan as a material document for development management purposes

Medium term actions

- Produce a short publicity leaflet about the Character Appraisal and Management Plan and make available via the Council's website
- Approve additions to a new Local List for Cliftonville

Longer term actions

- Review and update the Clifftop Conservation Area Management Plan
- Update the baseline photographic survey of the Clifftop Conservation Area
- Consider a grant scheme for the Conservation Area
- Consider public realm improvements and agree standards with Kent County Council
- Discuss car parking/traffic management schemes for the Conservation Area (in association with other initiatives in Cliftonville)
- Produce a short publicity leaflet about the Character Appraisal and Management Plan and make available on the TDC website

Far future actions

- Review the Clifftop Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- Continue to protect important views across, into and out of the Conservation Area

4 CONTACT DETAILS

For all enquiries relating to conservation areas and historic buildings, please contact:

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