

Brasted High Street Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2019

This appraisal for Brasted High Street Conservation Area supports the duty of Sevenoaks District Council to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

For details of the methodology employed in assessing the conservation area and preparing the appraisal, see the "Sevenoaks District Conservation Areas: an introduction to appraisals revised in 2019".

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1.0 Overview of Brasted High Street Conservation Area

The village of Brasted lies on the western edge of Kent, 4.5 miles from Sevenoaks and within 3 miles of the Surrey border. It is situated on an historic east–west route which is now the A25, while the M25 passes very close by on the north side.

The village sits within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The grounds of Brasted Place and Combe Bank and some open spaces on the north and south edges of the conservation area are included in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area around Brasted's parish church is designated separately as Brasted Church Conservation Area. Sundridge Conservation Area adjoins Brasted High Street Conservation Area to the east.

Conservation area boundary

Brasted High Street Conservation Area comprises the High Street (the A25) and parts of its side streets, land between the High Street and the River Darent including the lodge and part of the grounds of Combe Bank, along with Brasted Place and part of its grounds.

Designation history

Brasted High Street Conservation Area was designated in 1971 and extended in 1992. The previous conservation area appraisal was published in December 2003.

Topography and geology

The village of Brasted runs east–west, following the bottom of the Darent valley, with the North Downs rising to the north and the Greensand ridge to the south. The area is geologically mixed, including bands of chalk, gault and sandstones and sandy limestones from the Folkestone and Hythe beds, both of the Lower Greensand Group.

Summary of special interest

The main features of Brasted High Street Conservation Area's special historic and architectural interest are:

- It retains the form and appearance of a traditional Kentish village that developed along a main street with a green at its centre;
- An attractive and cohesive streetscape composed of buildings of similar scale, built with a distinctive palette of traditional, natural materials and colours;
- A wealth of historic buildings including good examples of medieval, Georgian and Victorian architecture;
- A large number of buildings and structures that are listed;
- Brasted Place, an example of the work of two important architects, Robert Adam and Alfred Waterhouse;
- Partially surviving parkland of two gentlemen's houses of the eighteenth century;
- Strong contribution of boundary walls to the character of the area;
- Traditional craftsmanship embodied in original building materials and architectural features.

Brasted High Street Conservation Area

Conservation Area Boundary

2019 Extensions

Townscape view

Listed Building

Features that contribute positively

Features that detract

Registered Park and Garden

Character Zone 1:
High Street and approaches

Character Zone 2:
Brasted Place and Combe Bank

Strong contribution

Some contribution

Negligible contribution

2.0 Historical development

Beginnings

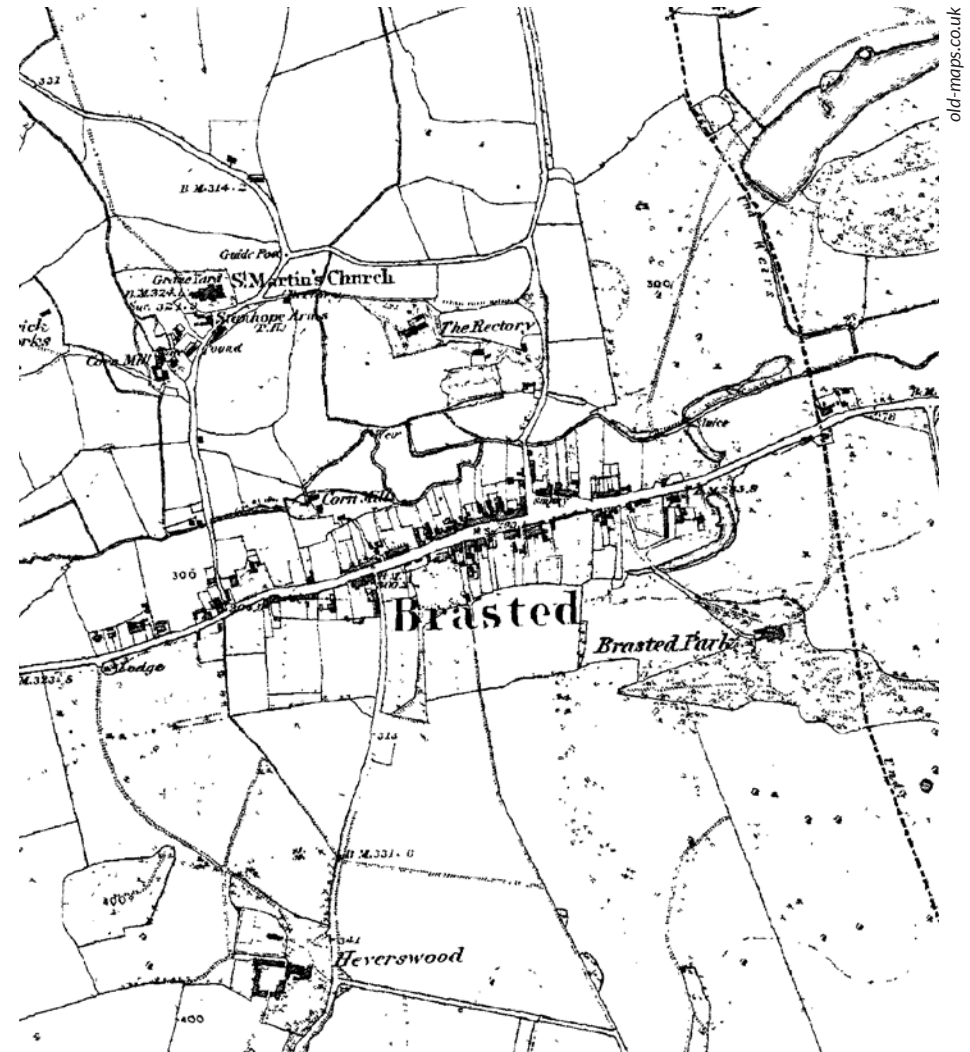
The manor of Brasted is recorded in Domesday Book, at which time it had arable land, pasture, woodland, a church and two mills. The parish was long and thin, running east–west along the valley bottom and at no point exceeding a mile in width. It developed as a linear settlement along the High Street and a number of sixteenth-century or earlier buildings survive, such as Alms Row Cottages and The Old Manor House.

Eighteenth century

The attractiveness of the countryside and good communication links meant that the country around Brasted became populated in the eighteenth century with gentlemen's houses, each in their own park. Two such houses were Combe Bank (c.1725, in the neighbouring parish of Sundridge, but with an entrance from Brasted (within the conservation area), and Brasted Place. The latter was built as a classical villa for Dr John Turton, in 1784–85, using Tunbridge Wells sandstone. The surrounding parkland was landscaped and a road that ran through it relocated further east to the line of New Road, which now forms the boundary of the conservation area. A number of large houses such as Rectory Lodge and Brasted House were also built in the village and many smaller houses and cottages, such as Barton's Cottages and the old King's Arms public house, were re-fronted during the eighteenth century.

Nineteenth century

The village evolved gradually during the nineteenth century, with development slowly extending further west along the High Street, with the construction of Hawthorn Cottages and Vine Cottages in the second quarter of the century. In



1873 edition of the Ordnance Survey

1881 the mill was built, continuing the centuries-old use of the River Darent for milling. The process of rebuilding and refronting older buildings continued in the late nineteenth century with buildings such as White Hart Cottages and Tilings remodelled in a vernacular revival manner. The White Hart was rebuilt on a large scale in an Old English style in 1885.

Twentieth century

Several new buildings were added to the village in the early twentieth century, including the Hollies and Rosena (1900) and the Village Hall (1900) and Bridge Cottage (1906) and 1 & 2 Tannery Cottages (1907). In 1911 a motor works was established on the High Street by F. A. Smith, which continued in business into the 1950s. The major development in the post-war years was the new Durnell's offices and development of the Old Yard.

Historical associations

Britain's oldest building company, R. Durnell & Sons, which is still located in Brasted, dates its existence back to at least 1591 and built many of the buildings in the conservation area. Brasted Place was built for John Turton (1735–1806), George III's doctor, by Robert Adam (1728–92), one of the most important architects of the eighteenth century. In 1840 it was lived in by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (1808–73), the future Emperor Napoleon III of France. The house was later owned by the Tipping family, for whom Alfred Waterhouse enlarged and altered it. It was the childhood home of H. Avray Tipping (1855–1933), an important garden designer and influential Architectural Editor of *Country Life* 1907–30. The rebuilding of the White Hart in 1885 was carried out by Edwin T. Hall, better known as the architect of Liberty's department store in London. The White Hart later became famous as a watering hole for Battle of Britain pilots based at nearby Biggin Hill.



3.0 Architectural and built character

3.1 Spatial character

Brasted is a good example of a linear settlement which remains largely within its historic boundaries.

Its spatial character can be summarised as follows:

- Long lines of virtually continuous development on both sides of the High Street, composed of buildings and boundary walls;
- Most buildings on the High Street come right up to the pavement, with some, particularly on the south side, set back behind small front gardens;
- Views are largely confined to long views up and down the High Street;
- Little connection to the surrounding landscape other than occasional glimpses between buildings or up side streets;
- The village green and the parkland of Brasted Place and Combe Bank are important open spaces;
- Historic buildings in the side streets are smaller in scale than those on the High Street;
- Small alleyways between buildings leading to dwellings or outbuildings within rear plots.



3.2 Building forms and details

The historic buildings of the conservation area are strongly traditional in character and their forms can be summarised as follows:

- Small scale and domestic in character;
- Two storeys, with some attics;
- Simple rectangular forms, mostly flat-fronted but some with nineteenth and twentieth-century bay windows;
- Traditional pitched roof forms, often with irregular rooflines;
- Tall brick chimneys, sometimes with the upper part turned through 45 degrees to the lower part;
- Traditional timber shopfronts, some projecting from the front of the building;
- Traditional joinery: timber casement and sash windows and plank or panelled doors.



Small scale and domestic



Simple rectangular forms



Traditional pitched roof forms



Tall brick chimneys



Shopfronts



Projecting shopfronts

3.3 Architectural styles

- Kentish vernacular – a style characterised by the use of locally available materials that reflect local custom and building tradition. Characteristic features within Brasted include timber frame walling, tile hanging, steeply pitched roofs covered with plain clay (Kent peg) tiles, and casement windows. Roof slopes are unbroken with no dormer windows. Other characteristics are asymmetry in form and elevation and the small scale of buildings;
- ‘Polite’ Georgian domestic architecture – larger in scale than the vernacular and characterised by symmetrical facades in Flemish bond brickwork or stucco render, sash windows and classical detailing e.g. classical door cases and porches on larger houses. Larger Georgian houses often have the use of the attic as an integral part of their plan-form, with small, usually lead-clad dormer windows;
- Vernacular revival buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Vernacular



Vernacular



Georgian



Georgian



Vernacular revival



Vernacular revival

3.4 Traditional building materials

The materials used in Brasted's buildings remained remarkably consistent over hundreds of years, added to which many buildings combine elements from different periods as they were altered and improved over the centuries. The traditional building materials that are most characteristic are:

- Clay tile roofs – plain (Kent peg) tiles for earlier roofs, but in the nineteenth century using different shapes and patterns and decorative ridge tiles;
- Slate roofs are less common but appear on a range of buildings;
- Timber-framing – both medieval and later imitation;
- Local red or orange brick – often Flemish bond patterned with grey/blue headers;
- Clay tile hanging on upper storeys;
- Plaster – both roughcast and smooth lime renders, generally painted in a traditional cream colour or grey;
- Rubble stone walling of Kentish ragstone, often for side elevations only or as a plinth and for boundary walls;
- Brick-tile hanging (mathematical tiles);
- One rare example of rat-trap brick bonding.



Timber frame



Slate roofs



Local red brick



Clay tile roof and tile-hanging



Plastered fronts



Rubble stone walls

3.5 Boundaries and streetscape

Boundary walls play an important part in the character of the High Street, connecting the buildings together to form a continuous ribbon of development through much of the village. Elsewhere, they define the traditional separation between public space and private gardens or curtilage boundaries. Typical boundary treatments within the area are:

- Kentish ragstone and/or red brick walls, many over 2 metres in height;
- Punctuated with substantial gate piers;
- Metal railings – traditionally detailed railings to front gardens, decorative cast-iron railings and surviving estate railings to Brasted Place.

The scheme of paving on the High Street is not historic, but was applied in a consistent way, with good quality materials and therefore enhances the character and appearance of the High Street. It is formed of:

- Red bricks for pedestrian-only areas;
- Blue diamond chequered pavers for off-street parking bays and entrances to driveways;
- Bands of stone cobbles or sets;
- Aprons of ironstone pebbles or York Stone flags in front of buildings.

Surviving historic street furniture such as the nineteenth-century pump and the K6 telephone kiosk on the Green, and the Royal Mail pillar box opposite, all add to the historic character of the streetscape.



Kentish ragstone wall



Kentish ragstone and brick walls



Substantial gate piers



Brick paving

3.6 Heritage assets, positive contributors and detractors

The buildings and structures of the conservation area contribute in different ways to its overall character and appearance, some positively (positive contributors including listed buildings), others negatively (detractors). The contributions of individual elements are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

Positive contributors

The conservation area contains a large number of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, all of which add to the architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. The extent of a building's contribution to the character and appearance of the area is not limited to its street elevations but also depends on its integrity as an historic structure and the impact it has in three dimensions. Rear elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards.

- Listed buildings (designated heritage assets). Buildings or structures that have been designated by national government as having special historic or architectural interest at a national level. For further details, see <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/>
- Positive contributors (non-designated heritage assets). These are unlisted buildings that help to shape the character and appearance of the conservation area. Some buildings may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily. A checklist for identifying positive contributors in a conservation area is given in the Historic England guidance 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2018).

Detractors

Some elements of a conservation area may be out of character due to, for example, their scale, use of materials or the way they relate to neighbouring buildings. These are identified as detractors.

3.7 Character Zones

Two zones of discernibly different character can be identified within Brasted High Street Conservation Area, based on their spatial character and architectural qualities, historical development and the contribution they make to the conservation area.

The features and individual characteristics of each zone that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area are summarised below. The boundaries of the Character Zones are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

Character Zone 1: High Street

- Strongly linear character with important long views up and down the street;
- Retains the character of historic commercial centre of the parish, with shopfronts lining the street, some of which are preserved in former retail units converted to domestic use;
- The village green is an important component of the townscape of the High Street and an historically important survival;
- Streetscape unified by consistently small scale of the buildings and a restricted palette of traditional materials;
- Buildings stand mostly parallel to the street, fronting straight on to the pavement, although some have small front gardens;
- Particularly important groupings are (south side) Alms Row and Haynes Cottages, and (north side) from Tilings to Constables;
- Boundary walls provide continuity of enclosure and consistency of building line.

Important views: 1, 2 (see [Interactive map](#) for location of views)



Character Zone 2: Brasted Place and Combe Bank

- Parkland character, thickly wooded in parts;
- Historically important as remains of eighteenth-century parks;
- Estate grounds provide an element of separation between the villages of Brasted and Sundridge;
- Brasted Place is the architecturally most significant building in the conservation area, listed Grade I;
- Estate boundaries, gateways and lodges characterise the entrance into the village from the East;
- Encroachment in the form of new housing, the loss of its lake and the east arm of its drive, detract from the setting of Brasted Place.

Important views: n/a



4.0 Views

Views make an important contribution to our ability to appreciate the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In Brasted High Street Conservation Area the important views are long views up and down the High Street and across the village green. Rather than having particular viewpoints, each is a kinetic, or dynamic, view in which the movement along the road reveals a changing streetscape.

The photographs reproduced here are illustrative of these views but are not definitive because of the dynamic nature of the views.



View 1: townscape view looking east



View 2: townscape view across the village green



View 2: townscape view looking west

5.0 Open space assessment

There are large amounts of open space within and around Brasted High Street Conservation Area, not all of which is publicly accessible, but some of which makes a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Open space contributes in two main ways:

- It allows views, e.g. across the village green;
- It defines the built-up area of the village by providing open space between it and neighbouring settlements.

The extent of the contribution of individual parcels of open space depends on the way they are experienced. Hence, those which are visible in views from the streets of the conservation area or from public footpaths tend to be the most important. Brasted High Street does not have a strong visual connection with the surrounding landscape and as a result, the most important open spaces are those within the conservation area itself.

Open space is defined as common land, farmland, countryside and recreational spaces (including allotments, school grounds, churchyards and cemeteries). Private gardens and private car parks are excluded.

The contributions of individual parcels of land are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

Open space inside the conservation area

- The village green is an important component of the townscape of the High Street and an historically important survival;
- The grounds of Combe Bank and Brasted Place are historically important and provide a separation between the villages of Brasted and Sundridge;
- The grounds of Brasted Place constitute the setting to the house, and even in their eroded state make an important contribution to its significance;
- The car park of the White Hart is largely hidden from view by a hedge so that it makes no particular contribution. It was formerly a garden, which would have made a positive contribution.

Open space outside the conservation area

- The paddock west of Rectory Lane marks the edge of the village and extent of historic development and makes a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area on the approach from the north;
- Other open spaces which help to define the historic boundary of Brasted, as experienced on routes into and out of the village, make some contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- The linear built form of the village and lack of gaps between buildings limit views into and out of the conservation area, and open spaces to the rear make a negligible contribution.

6.0 Condition and issues

Buildings in the conservation area are generally in a good condition and are looked after by their owners. As in many villages, the loss of the mix of uses is an issue, but Brasted has retained social facilities, such as the pub and the village shop, and a number of retail premises, many of them antique shops. A number of issues have been identified that could be addressed with future management and improved design guidance:

- The relentless traffic, and the air and noise pollution that comes with it, continues to affect the village character of Brasted.
- Inappropriate painting of historic brickwork;
- Occasional inappropriate type of paint and paint colour to buildings;
- Unsympathetic repairs to pavements to front of buildings;
- Unsympathetic paving schemes to modern infill development;
- Different colour and texture of tactile paving disrupts the consistency of the paving scheme;
- Intrusive twentieth-century development, i.e. No. 8 The Old Yard, Rectory Lane;
- Derelict state of East Lodge detracts from the significance of that building and setting of Brasted Place;
- Poorly-maintained estate railings and inappropriate replacement fencing detract from the setting of Brasted Place.

7.0 Management recommendations

Sevenoaks District Council has a statutory duty to review the management of conservation areas from time to time. The following recommendations have emerged from the assessment of Brasted High Street Conservation Area in the preparation of this appraisal.

Guide for owners and residents on the effects of conservation area designation

Recommendation

Sevenoaks District Council will issue guidance about what it means to own a building in a conservation area and to encourage stakeholders to take an active part in the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

Conservation area designation brings with it additional responsibilities for owners and occupiers due to increased planning controls and particular requirements for materials and detailing in works to buildings. These are often outweighed by the benefits of living in an area of architectural integrity and traditional character, which people appreciate and which is often reflected in higher property values.

Design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings

Recommendation

When determining applications for planning permission, Sevenoaks District Council will take account of the 'Conservation Area Design Guidance' which is issued with the revised appraisals. The guidance will be reviewed periodically to maximise its effectiveness.

New buildings and alterations to existing buildings have an effect on the conservation area and Sevenoaks District Council will exercise its powers through the planning system to ensure that such changes preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The design guidance has been drafted to help applicants in putting together their proposals. It will be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and revised if necessary.

Development in the setting of the conservation area

Recommendation

Applications for permission to develop in the setting of the conservation area should be determined with reference to the open space assessment in this appraisal.

Development in the setting of the conservation area could potentially have a harmful impact if it erodes the village boundary where that is still well-defined and threatens its open character. As identified in this appraisal, different areas of open space in the setting of the conservation area make a different contribution to its character and appearance (see section 5.0 for details).

- Development on areas of existing open space which make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area is likely to have a harmful impact;
- Development in areas which make some contribution may be possible without causing harm, subject to design, siting, scale, density, choice of materials and retention of mature trees.

To help determine whether the impact of proposed development is harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area, applicants should undertake an assessment of the likely impact of their proposals on the built character of the area, on important views and on open space. Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 3 (2nd edition 2017) provides advice on assessing impacts of development on the setting of heritage assets.

Enforcement

Recommendation

In implementing its Planning Enforcement Plan, Sevenoaks District Council should pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the special qualities of the Brasted High Street Conservation Area.

The effective operation of the planning system depends on the ability to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with planning permission and to enforce against development carried out without planning permission. Sevenoaks District Council has adopted a Planning Enforcement Plan which sets out how it will respond to planning enforcement complaints. It can be downloaded from the Council's website: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069126/planning_enforcement

Conservation area boundary

Recommendation

Extend the conservation area boundary to include Old Orchard, 1 and 2 Tannery Cottages, the Old Forge and Tanners Mead.

The new boundary is shown on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

The previous boundary of the conservation area excluded a number of houses of historic and architectural interest which would make a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

- Old Orchard, High Street

This house appears to date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century and is historically associated with the ragstone building to the west (at the entrance to Corniche House) which probably served as stables, coach house and barn to the house. The former barn/stable building is within the conservation area. The front boundary wall, shared with the adjacent chapel, is characteristic of the conservation area and although it has lost its historic windows, its vernacular origins are still visible in its form. The building and the garden and retaining walls feature prominently at the entrance into the conservation area and make a valuable contribution.

- 1 and 2 Tannery Cottages, Rectory Lane

A pair of vernacular revival cottages with a display date of 1907, probably built by the local building firm of Durtneil. They are typical of the early twentieth-century cottages in the conservation area, with semi-hipped clay tile roofs, bay windows with pitched roofs and have good quality detailing including stone quoins, a carved stone tablet bearing the date '1907', carved stone lintels over their entrances and coloured glass in the bay windows. Unfortunately, new windows have recently been installed in no. 1, harming the uniformity of the pair, but windows to the historic pattern could easily be reinstated.

- The Old Forge, Rectory Lane

A modest single-storey building of ca. 1900, with good Flemish bond brickwork and overhanging eaves. Despite modern alterations, it has a vernacular character in keeping with the many buildings of the conservation area.

Extending the conservation area to include 1 and 2 Tannery Cottages and The Old Forge would mean including the following building, which although not of architectural interest, does not detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- Tanners Mead, Rectory Lane

A typical late twentieth-century bungalow, the small scale and red brick elevations of which make it fit unobtrusively within the eclectic development along Rectory Lane.

Public realm

Recommendation

Streets and public open spaces should be managed in a way that enhances their character and contribution to the conservation area.

The street furniture on the High Street is a mixture of standard, poor quality design and more appropriate, sometimes bespoke designs. An holistic scheme of good quality paving has been compromised by the overlay of standard elements, which undermine the success of the overall scheme.

The character and appearance of the High Street are sensitive to changes in street furniture and surfaces and careful consideration is needed before any changes are made. Small changes made over time can easily have a negative cumulative effect.

More sensitive, better quality design and removal of unnecessary or superfluous street furniture, signage or road markings would help to enhance the conservation area.

This depends on public bodies rather than owners of private property. Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Brasted Parish Council should refer to Historic England's guidance in 'Streets for All' (latest edition 2018) in any public realm works they propose or carry out. For more information go to: <https://bit.ly/2OD4JXx>

Village Design Statement

Recommendation

The Parish Council and local people could give consideration to whether a

Village Design Statement should inform design of development in the village (including the parts which fall outside the conservation area), so as to extend community involvement and reinforce the design guidance issued with this appraisal.

Village Design Statements (VDS) are prepared by local people to guide new development in their villages (not restricted to the conservation area). They are used when assessing planning applications for development and other changes within villages. The statements have been adopted as informal guidance by Sevenoaks District Council and are used in assessing planning applications. Adopting a VDS for Brasted would enable local people to express their views on design, both inside and outside the conservation area, and reinforce the design guidance issued with this appraisal.

Alan Baxter

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