

HOOK GREEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



DARTFORD
Borough Council

August 1998

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Introduction

Under Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to review conservation areas from time to time.

Hook Green Conservation Area was originally designated on 8th October 1985 and was extended on 1st June 1998.

Conservation area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest. It will be for the Dartford Borough Local Plan review to determine whether changes are necessary to the actual policies which apply to conservation areas.

The statement defines as fully as possible the character and appearance of the Hook Green Conservation Area including architectural and natural features.

Any omissions of particular buildings, features or space should not be taken to imply that they are of no interest or importance.

Origins and Development

Hook Green is a small hamlet set in farmland, close to the southern edge of the village of Southfleet, in the south eastern corner of the borough. The Conservation Area is centred around Hook Green Farm. To the north east is Friary Court (Figure 4), a large C14th hall house, built by Thomas de Alkham, the Rector of Southfleet from 1323. Hook Green is now characterised as a ribbon development along Hook Green Road. The location of the large Georgian houses around, and close to, the elbow of Hook Green Road may infer that the village was formed around an earlier green at this point. The use of the area for farming dates back until at least the C14th.

The house known as The Limes (Figure 1) originated in the C15th



Figure 1- The Limes

with the erection of a mediaeval hall house, and was originally part of Hook Green Farm. The large aisled barn to the south west of the house, and privies

to the east are early C18th, indicating continuing development of the site throughout the intervening period. The house was subsequently extensively rebuilt and gentrified in the late C18th to form the building as seen now.

The boundary wall to Hook Green Road is contemporary to the house, and may well have enclosed the green.

Hook Place was formerly the seat of the Swan family who held several estates in the neighbourhood. The present house at Hook Place Farm (Figure 2) was built in the C18th and is also contemporary with The Limes, indicating the popularity of Hook Green and Southfleet as country residences.

The core farming activity is still very much present with both Hook Green Farm and Hook Place Farm in production today. Arable farming has replaced the orchards over the past 200 years. With mechanisation, these farms have grown into very large estates with comprehensive storage and processing facilities. Hook Green saw little in the way of development in the C19th.



Figure 2- Hook Place farmhouse

However, the building of Banbury Villas in the 1920's, and Rectory Meadow, Monks Walk and Weavers Orchard in the 1980's expanded the hamlet. This has somewhat eroded the core hamlet surrounded by fields, although the residential character of the settlement remains.

Character

The village character is that of a treed, relatively private settlement set in the farming landscape.

The entry to the village from the north is entirely different from that to the south west. Entering from the north, the road is treed and heavily banked, creating very narrow views towards the elbow and entrance to Hook Place Farm (Figure 3). It is

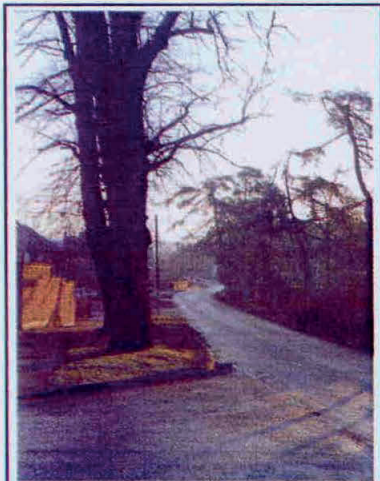


Figure 3- Northern entry

possible to glimpse Friary Court on the left as you arrive (Figure 4).

In contrast, the approach from the south west is through open

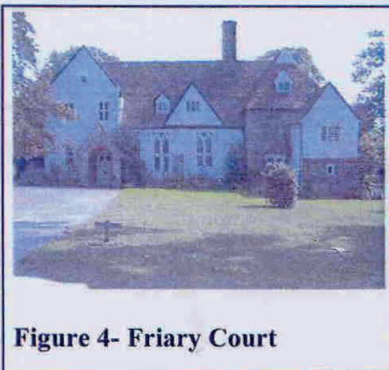


Figure 4- Friary Court

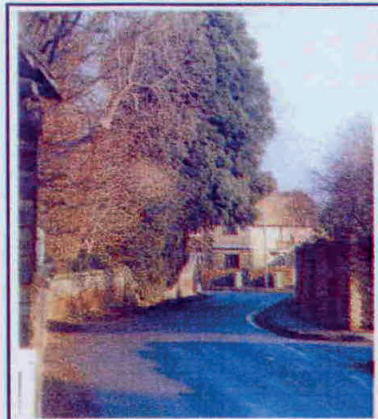


Figure 5- Southern entry



Figure 6- Northern tree boundary

countryside. Although the road has banks both sides, there are extensive views until Banbury Villas. The view is then converged by Hook Green Farm Cottages and then by the boundary walls to The Limes and Hook Place Farm, resulting in the blind bend where the road turns north. Hook Place Cottages form a very important focus on this axis (Figure 5). There are no formal public spaces or facilities



Figure 7- Important trees

in the village, which reinforces its strong residential/ farming character.

However, there are substantial lime trees which help define the boundary of development against the open farmland to the north of Hook Green Farm (Figure 6). Other trees (Figure 7) form an overall sense of enclosure in contrast to the open farmland surrounding the village. Important long vistas to the south across open farmland can be seen from Hook Green Road, and need to be maintained.

Materials and Styles

The majority of the listed residential buildings in the Conservation Area are of brick with pitched and tiled roofs. Examples range from fine red brickwork complete with toothed bands on Weavers Cottage (Figure 8) to local yellow stocks with flush joints and pebbledashed walls on Hook Place Cottages (Figure 9).

There is no painted brickwork, helping to retain the consistency of the use of natural brick in the village.

Roofs are generally peg tiles. Windows are mainly white painted softwood although some modern replacements are in hardwood to the detriment of the overall character.

There are also listed agricultural buildings which are timber framed, with tarred or stained weatherboarding and pitched tiled roofs (Figure 10).

Boundary walls play an important role in the village, and vary from the C18th brickwork around The Limes, to the more recent knapped flint and brick wall outside Hook Place Cottages, and a modern brick wall to Hook Place Farm.



Figure 8 Weavers Cottage



Figure 9 Hook Place Cottages



Figure 10 Timber barn

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The key characteristic of the village is its linear development, with the majority of buildings partly hidden behind boundary walls or vegetation. Glimpses of important buildings are vital in this narrow route through the village.
2. The important vistas to and from the south should be protected from development in order to prevent the open nature of these from being disrupted. Any new agricultural buildings should be considered carefully in terms of location, mass and colour, ideally placed in close proximity to existing structures in order to minimise their impact on the landscape.
3. The materials used are traditional and subdued, with no strident colours. Likewise architectural forms are traditional, with pitched, plain tiled roofs, natural brickwork with relatively small openings for doors and windows. Trees within the Area are a dominant feature; any losses should be replaced on a like for like basis.
4. With regard to individual properties;

Hook Place Cottages form an extremely important termination to the vista along Hook Green Road from the south west. Therefore any change to this building should be carefully considered.

The boundary walls to Hook Place Farm and The Limes are vital in providing the linear character of the village.

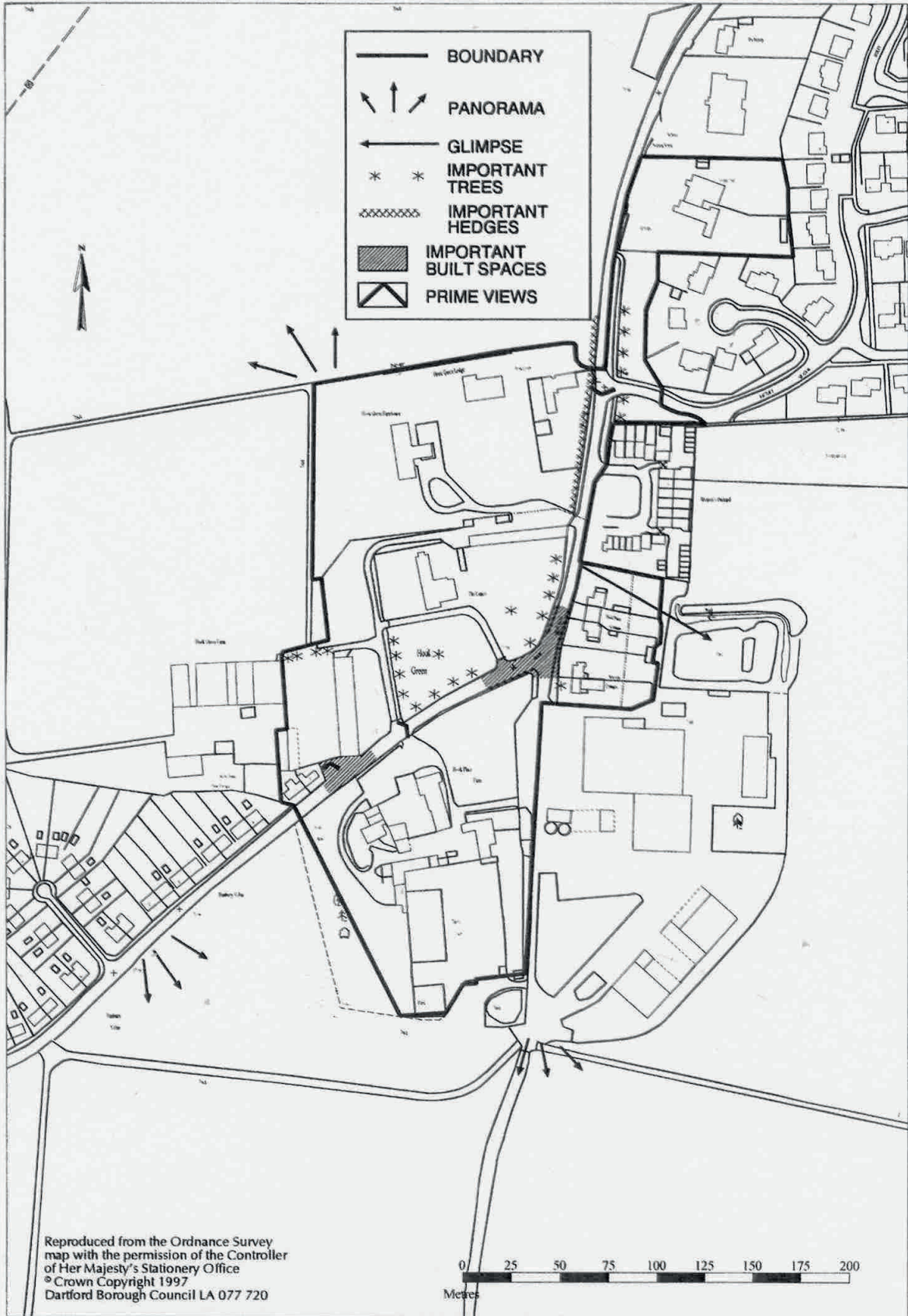
Friary Court (a Scheduled Monument), is a key building in the area. It is slightly removed from the core, but nevertheless forms part of the historic development of the area.



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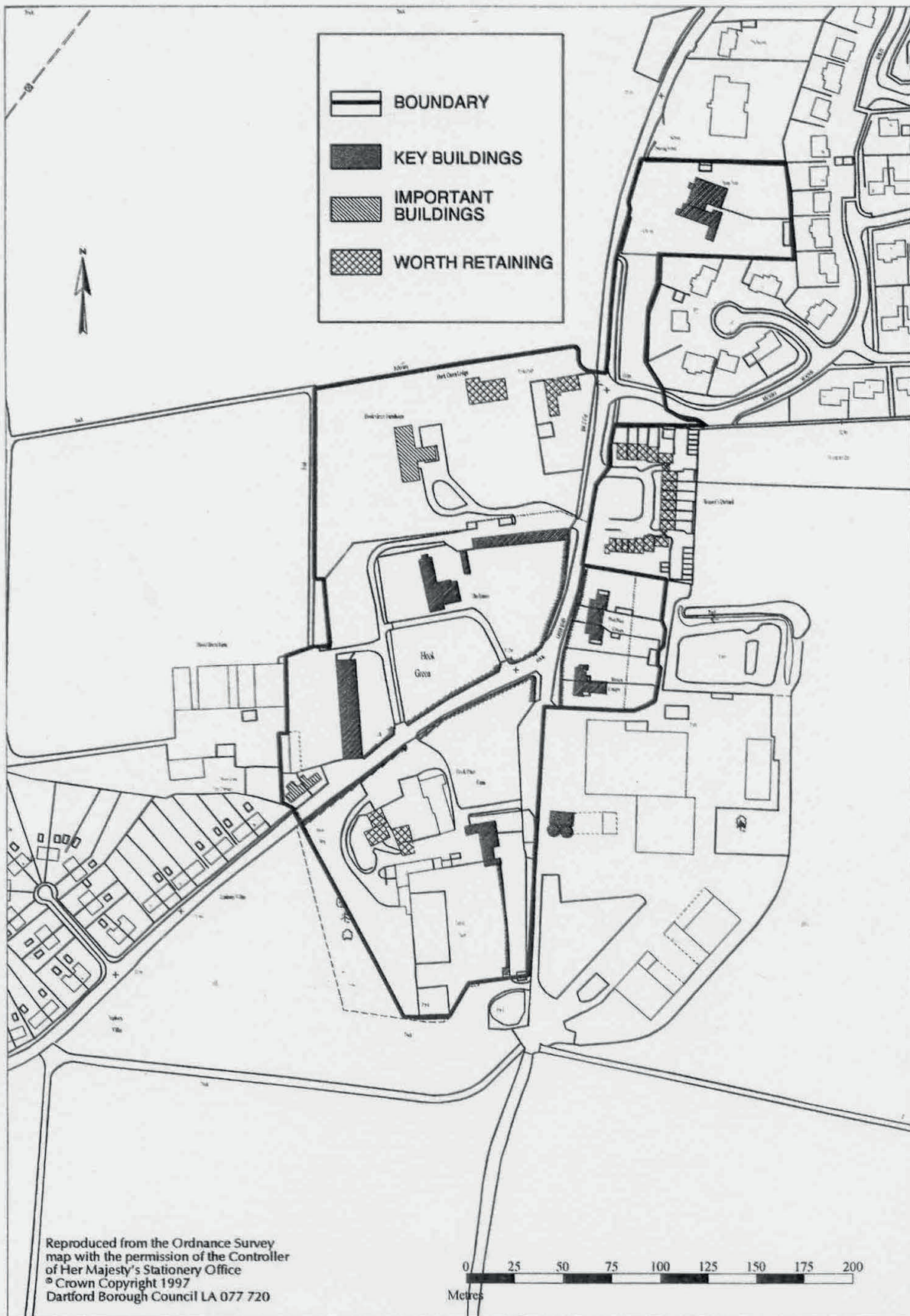
HOOK GREEN - CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

MAP 1



SPACES VIEWS AND NATURAL FEATURES

MAP 2



CONTRIBUTION OF BUILDINGS

MAP 3