

# LYNSTED with KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL

20 December 2023

Conservation Team  
Swale Borough Council  
Swale House  
East Street  
Sittingbourne  
Kent  
ME9 9TW



Dear Sirs

## Cellar Hill and Greenstreet Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2023

Firstly, Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council would like to thank Senior Conservation & Design Officer Jhilmil Kishore and consultant Peter Bell for their comprehensive report, following proactive engagement with the local community.

The document sets out the purpose of conservation areas as being reflective of the origins and purpose of communities and their spatial characteristics (including the hinterland) and not just the preservation of historically important buildings.

We particularly welcome the importance attached to the [Lynsted Parish Design Statement](#) which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Swale Borough Council. This designates the Lyn Valley as a 'sensitive edge' and a significant characteristic of the lower North Downs.

As many material arguments within the document draw on the Lynsted Design Statement and its language, this demonstrates its durability in guiding development. Linear development (one building deep) in the Parish is emphasised as a defining feature to retain and protect.

The point is well made that the M2 no longer protects Greenstreet against the heavy burden of modern-day traffic.

We are pleased to note that the report highlights the recent planning appeal decision where the Government inspector describes the importance of the gaps between the buildings on Cellar Hill and the valuable contribution they make to the setting of the listed buildings, stating that: "as a surviving parcel of undeveloped land, the site does serve as a reminder of an important aspect of the historic settlement pattern, in terms of the wider and more irregular spacing of the buildings, with productive land surrounding them on one or more sides, and extending up to the lane itself".

These gaps between buildings and the views of the countryside, including *inter alia* glimpses of traditional orchard trees, are important to the character of the conservation area and should be protected.

The statements made in section 2.6 reflect the importance of spatial considerations in planning, especially when a conservation area is implicated.

In terms of work to be done to mitigate the risk status there is a helpful list of ‘bad’ features that have diluted the historical nature of the conservation area and are all capable of being managed differently. For example, concrete highway kerbs which should be replaced by soft verges; concrete roof tiles that dilute local character and distinctiveness and should be constructed from more traditional materials; excessive overhead telegraph and electricity cables; and uPVC windows that should be wood.

We welcome the public realm ‘opportunities for enhancement’ including: an audit of public signage, street furniture and overhead supply lines & poles; as well as replacement of concrete kerbs and planting more highway trees.

We strongly support the recommendation that Swale Borough Council invokes an Article 4 Direction to bring certain householder alterations which are currently classed as permitted development under planning control – to ensure that any inappropriate alterations are positively managed through the planning process.

When there is an application for extensions and alterations and indeed new building applications it should be noted that these more modern materials are damaging and should be resisted or replaced.

This protection must include the safeguarding of trees and the preservation of open spaces and aspects.

An essential component of any conservation area management strategy is an effective planning enforcement regime to prioritise heritage conservation. Swale Council must be more robust in taking enforcement action against unauthorised alterations to buildings, particularly where listed building consent has not been obtained.

**We would request that the above mitigations of risk status, invocation of Article 4 and proactive planning enforcement are implemented – not buried within a worthy report.**

We support the minor extensions to the current conservation area at A to F. These include taking in the two Victorian cottages in Station Road as they do stand out as unspoilt.

However, we would welcome reconsideration of the Victorian terrace from numbers 8 to 40, on the East side of Station Road. It is an attractive range and contains many original features.

We agree that the stretch of London Road to the West of the existing CA from Station Road to Lynsted Lane should also be designated as a Conservation Area, although we would argue in favour of extending even further West. There may be fewer listed buildings, but several have been retained with social history explaining their form and changing functions.

We note the report states that given its distinctly different character from the existing conservation area and the fact there is a lack of continuity and character, it is not recommended as an extension to the existing CA. We do not entirely agree as some of the buildings in the existing CA such as the former blacksmiths and associated residence relate to the farming activity in the proposed addition. Further, Cellar Hill and Greenstreet already have different economic histories from each other, so we do not believe there is a barrier to adding a third.

However, we welcome the report's conclusion that there is a clear case for a more detailed review to consider the designation of a new and separate conservation area for this part of Greenstreet.

We particularly agree with section 4.7 which states: “The potential for new development within Cellar Hill and Greenstreet Conservation Area is extremely limited. If proposals for development come forward, they will be considered against local and national planning policies which attach great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area is likely to be harmful to its heritage significance. The local planning authority is required to pay special attention to preserving the setting of the conservation area (or the setting of any listed buildings) in any plan making or decision taking”.

In summary, the report notes the eclectic mix of traditional building styles, forms and vernacular building materials - all of which record the area’s history and development. It further notes the historic relationship between the village and the surrounding farmland and orchards. And that visual links to surrounding farmland are an important expression of the farming history of the area.

We support the conclusion that Cellar Hill and Greenstreet continues to be an area of special architectural and historic interest - the character and appearance of which should be preserved and enhanced. Cellar Hill and Greenstreet should indeed continue to be a designated Conservation Area of high importance to the Borough of Swale.

Once household alterations are brought under control through an Article 4 Direction and planning enforcement is prioritised, we agree that Cellar Hill and Greenstreet should be removed from the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

Yours faithfully

**JULIEN SPEED**  
Chairman