

**Advice for owners of properties
in the Deal and Walmer Conservation Areas**



**compiled by Jo Dempster and
Brian Groser**

Front cover: Brewer Street, taken from 'Photographs from Deal' circa 1948, and again in 2008.

The Deal Society

Why we exist:

The Deal Society, originally known as The Deal Protection Society, supported by a galvanised population, helped to thwart a partial destruction of the town, which would have meant having modern civic buildings in place of the largely unspoilt seaside town you see today.

In 1947 and later during the 1960s many of Deal's important oldest buildings, none later than the Nelson period, and sections of the sea front were to be demolished. During the late 1940s the excuse was "war clearance"; in the 1960s it was "modernisation". A large area of the town was to be razed and replaced by tall, Soviet-style municipal buildings totally out of keeping with their surroundings. The Deal Protection Society, with the help of well-known and distinguished supporters, the local and national press, along with a large number of Deal residents, were vociferous in their objections to the unwarranted destruction of a large part of this delightful town.

Eventually those plans, and another for a link road which would have demolished more of the town, were rejected and Deal was saved. The furore concentrated minds wonderfully: buildings were listed and in the late 1960s Middle Street was designated the first conservation area in Kent.

Why we still exist:

On your behalf we attend meetings of the Dover District Council, Deal Town Council and Walmer Parish Council in order to focus on any planning applications that could change the character of the locality. We can advise residents with planning problems concerning buildings which are listed or are in conservation areas. Our special projects programme identifies areas where our financial support would benefit Deal or Walmer. We keep members up to date with our activities by means of the News Update and the website www.thedealsociety.org.uk. Last, but not least, our members enjoy a lively lecture and social programme—and you could too—talks on a variety of topics given in the Town Hall, trips to places of interest, suppers and parties.

The aims of the Society are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Deal, Walmer and the surrounding districts;
- To stimulate public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the town and its surroundings;
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity and historic interest.

Deal is one of Britain's most picturesque and historic coastal towns. It grew up along the shore on a site occupied by medieval seamen's huts and to the south, beyond Deal Castle, lies the parish of Walmer, established near the location of the first Roman invasion of Britain.

Deal's Middle Street was designated in 1968 as Kent's first conservation area—full of 18th century houses and a few timber-framed cottages dating from the 17th century. Today, it looks much as it did in Nelson's time.

Deal has four conservation areas: Middle Street, which is now greatly enlarged, meandering from Bridge Street in North Deal to Deal Castle; Wellington and Victoria Road; Nelson Street; and Upper Deal.

Walmer has three conservation areas: the South Barracks; the Walmer Seafront, which incorporates The Strand, The Beach, Archery Square and the East Barracks; and Upper Walmer, including part of Grams Road and Walmer Village.

This small booklet has been compiled by *The Deal Society* to advise and help owners to care for their houses within the conservation areas. It includes advice for those seeking planning permission, information on the building techniques used in the original construction and as to why those original methods should be matched to preserve the appearance and integrity of a



2



property. Good conservation practice calls for original features to be repaired if possible; if not, for them to be replaced 'like for like'. We give a guide as to where you can find those period features that you want to replace; and also information about the skilled tradesmen you will need to help you to do this. Obviously, houses need to be brought up to 21st century standards, but there is only so much that you can legally do to alter or change your property without first gaining consent.

Remember that conservation legislation is not designed to stop changes being made, but to ensure that what is proposed is given careful thought. According to the insurance industry, British homeowners wasted £313 million in 2005 on building projects and alterations that had to be abandoned or removed because they did not have planning permission. Don't be one of those who waste money.

Adherence to planning rules is essential if you live in a conservation area, or if your house is listed. Our advice is that any alterations should be discussed with the Planning Department of Dover District Council (DDC) prior to any planning application, thereby saving time and money. Don't think this is an option: it is essential. Work with DDC from the beginning.



Let us look at the different situations:

1 Middle Street Conservation Area, incorporating Article 4(2) Direction

The purpose of establishing Deal's Middle Street Conservation Area was to preserve its appearance for posterity because of the scene it creates and the history it contains and represents. Planning decisions for the area are guided by 'Article 4 (2) Direction', copies of which are available from the DDC. An off-shoot of this 'direction' was that all buildings in the conservation area were photographed for the record, as a means of monitoring and maintaining the area's appearance.

Planning permission must be obtained if the part of the building to be altered or maintained can be seen from a 'highway, waterway or open space', or where it forms part of the street scene. As a rule of thumb, planning permission may not be required if the work to be done is remedial and simply replaces 'like for like'—ie same colour paint, same tiling, windows of the same design and material, etc.



Planning permission is essential in areas such as the following:

- Replacement of wood casement and sash windows, wood doors and other openings with uPVC, aluminium, or steel type units;
- Repair of a Kent peg or slate tiled roof with concrete or other types of tiles;
- Addition of a roof light;

4

- Replacement of an external entrance door;
- Replacement of cast iron roof gutters and plumbing pipes with plastic;
- Siting of satellite dishes and radio antennae;
- All external building additions, extensions, porches, walls and fences;
- Any alterations off the 'highway, waterway or open space' (as per Article 4 (2) Direction), out of sight and not part of the street scene may be approved, but planning permission must be obtained otherwise penalties may be incurred.

2 *Other conservation areas*

Other conservation areas can be defined as: 'Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Planning rules still apply but they are not so strict.



NB DDC issues pamphlets covering both these areas, further details are under 'Helpful information' below.

Trees: all trees in a conservation area are protected. A tree may not be cut down without approval from the DDC Planning authority. Permission for work on a tree, including surgery and pollarding, must also be obtained. If permission is given for a tree to be removed, there is normally a requirement that another be planted in its place, or close by.

Internals: Generally speaking, alterations that do not affect the elevations of the building such as interior

decorating, wiring and the like are governed in the same way as for buildings outside a conservation area and planning permission may not be required. However, building regulations are enforced by the local authority Building Control Department. It is unwise to start any kind of work without telephoning to check whether building control approval is required. If you make the wrong structural move, you could literally bring the house down ... and your neighbour's as well.

3 *Listed buildings*

If you own a listed building don't do anything inside or out without permission. For specialist advice refer to the 'Helpful information' listed at the back of this pamphlet. You can contact an architect experienced in working with old houses (not all of them are); a building firm working on old buildings (not your average builder); or, if the work is very specialised, eg repairing an 18th century fanlight, panelling, stone work etc, you may need a conservator. They will have a great deal of experience in working with old buildings and will be able to advise you and your architect if you are using one. Remember, a conservator is not the same as a specialist. A specialist stonemason may know everything there is to know about stone, but may not have the knowledge to re-lay a 300-year-old flagstone floor. To find a conservator you have several options—check the list at the end of this booklet.

6

KNOW YOUR HOUSE

Typical 18th century construction would be as follows:



Roofs would be gabled or 'hipped', with clay tiles (called 'Kent pegs'), originally held in place with wooden pegs or 'nibs', or if of a later date, slate fixed to the battens with nails. A roof might undulate a bit, but if the timbers are sound and it doesn't leak, leave well alone. If you need to repair or replace, you can still purchase hand made Kent pegs and ridges from specialist suppliers and real slates are in good supply. Don't ever think of replacing slates with concrete tiles. They are heavier than slate and the extra weight can cause the rafters to sag; furthermore, they will not be accepted on a listed building.



Gutters should be cast-iron. They are still made and are available through builders' merchants. They are heavy to replace, but are authentic and have a good life expectancy, unlike plastic, which can twist, expand and come apart at the joins.

Walls are solid, of local brick with lime mortar. It is very important when re-pointing that the same lime and sand mortar is used. There is a very good reason for this: lime mortar 'breathes'; cement mortar does not. Using cement mortar on a solid brick wall traps the damp, which will slowly destroy the bricks and manifest itself on the inside of your walls. The same will happen if you apply a waterproof coating or a sand and cement render.

Internally, the walls will be of lathe and horse-hair plaster construction, easily repaired by a good builder specialising in old buildings. Apart from the fact that it is the right thing to do, old lathe and plaster has good sound proofing properties, unlike modern plaster-board.

Windows at the beginning of the 18th century were sash windows with glazing bars, replacing side-hung casements. Larger panes were introduced in the second half of the 19th century. Attic windows, of whatever date, are frequently of casement design. In smaller houses you would still have Yorkshire sashes that slid horizontally, or casements. All period windows should be repaired, draught-proofed and, if necessary, secondary glazed for extra protection. A repair will last longer than a replacement window. The original glass will not be uniform and may be full of imperfections, which is part of its charm. To replace old glass try local salvage yards or a specialist glass company listed at the end of this booklet.



Doors would be pine and painted inside and out. (They would be made of 'pitch pine', a far superior wood to that which is available today.) You should always try to repair a door, but if it is not possible and you need to find more appropriate doors to replace uncharacteristic ones, try a salvage yard.

Floors may be of timber or flagstones. All timber ground floors should be 'suspended', ie an air gap, or void below, should be ventilated to the outside. This must be kept clear to avoid wood rot. Flagstone floors should be allowed to 'breathe' so joints should not be cemented, nor should the flagstones be



8

sealed with wax or oil. A solid cement floor with a waterproof membrane is best avoided in an old house as this can cause damp to rise up the adjacent walls, damaging plaster as it does so.

Fireplaces were important features in any room and until the 17th century wood was the main fuel, which was replaced with imported coal when it began to become scarce. Chimneys for original wood fires are wide, creating a strong updraught. Coal needed cast-iron grates with a controlled flue. Replacement period fireplaces and surrounds can be found and some dealers are able to repair existing grates.



TO FIND A SPECIALIST

- 1 Historic Building Conservation, tel: 01747 871717, www.buildingconservation.com
(This website has a huge list of people under their specialties)
- 2 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Information Service, tel: 020 7222 7000,
email: conservation@rics.org.uk www.rics.org.uk
- 3 Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has an advice line,
tel: 020 7377 1644, email: info@spab.org.uk www.spab.org.uk
- 4 Listed Property Owners Club (annual membership £55), which supplies a register of
specialist contractors, tel 01795 844939, email: info@lpoc.co.uk, www.lpoc.co.uk

HELPFUL INFORMATION

'Deal Middle Street Conservation Area'

This is a helpful pamphlet, complete with map, available from:

The Conservation Officer, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover CT16 3PJ, tel: 01304 821199, email: conservation@dover.gov.uk.

The precise boundaries can be seen on the DDC website www.dover.gov.uk under the conservation section.

'Conservation areas: what they are and how they affect you'

This is another pamphlet published by the DDC for owners of properties in conservation areas—apart from the very special Middle Street Conservation Area, mentioned above.

For excellent advice on maintaining your property:

'A Stitch in Time' available from The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY.

'Making Better Planning Applications' Report No 54 is available from English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF), PO Box 22, Bristol BS16 1RZ, tel: 0117 975 0459.



10

SUPPLIERS

Glass: London Crown Glass Company, tel: 01491 413 227, www.londoncrownnglass.co.uk. They produce two types of glass—Georgian sheet and Victorian sheet.

Plaster: the nearest to the original lime plaster for internal repairs is made by British Gypsum. Their 'Universal One-Coat' is soft and chalky, easy to use and similar to lime plaster. Stocked by Jewson's in Canterbury.

Doors: for refurbished period doors try Cox's Architectural Salvage, tel: 01608 652 505. www.coxsarchitectural.co.uk.

For reclaimed building materials: stone, bricks, tiles, wood, doors etc, look under Architectural Antiques, or Salvage and Reclamation in the 'Yellow Pages', or on the Internet.

Don't forget – there may be a local craftsman available ...



ADVICE FOR PLANNING OBJECTIONS

The Deal Society is often asked for advice on planning objections, so here is information on what is and what is not valid.

It is important that:

- 1 For the objection to be heard at the highest planning level of the Dover District Council (DDC), at least three separate letters representing objections must be submitted within 21 days of the publication of the planning application's date of publication—usually in the East Kent Mercury. (Sometimes there is a notice on the nearest lamp post or drain pipe.) Each letter must be individual, making a separate point, no duplicates. Petitions may also be submitted. It is advisable that copies be sent to either the Deal Town Council (DTC) or Walmer Parish Council (WPC), whichever is relevant.
- 2 The subject matter of the objections must fall into categories known to be '*Material Considerations*', the list of which follows, together with a list of what are not '*Material Considerations*'. The DDC will only consider the planning application and objections based on these lists.
- 3 More weight can be brought to bear by attending the DTC, WPC or DDC planning meetings and voicing your objections.
- 4 The Society's voice is still only one voice, although we are working to make it a voice with weight. The more people object with good reason, the more the Councils are going to be influenced. If the Society as a whole signs a petition, then this is the best way to object, but at least 75 percent of the members must sign for it to be effective.

12

These are 'Material Considerations':

- Effect on the character or appearance of a conservation area or setting of a listed building;
- Impact on the character of the surroundings—bulk/scale/appearance etc and relation to context;
- Draft plans—according to progress and any conflict with the Development Plan;
- Local government planning policies and ministerial statements;
- Statutory planning designations, eg areas of outstanding natural beauty, site of specific scientific interest or green belt;
- Noise contamination and other forms of pollution;
- Availability of parking;
- Road safety—parking/traffic/adequacy of roads;
- Potential disturbance to neighbours/locality;
- Retail impact;
- Amenity and privacy of dwellings/gardens;
- Archaeology;
- Nature conservation interests—habitats/bats/badgers/slow worms/crested newts etc;
- Precedent;
- Planning history—including appeals;
- Change of planning circumstances, if a renewal application;

- Economic considerations eg jobs/community benefits;
- Tourism considerations;
- Sustainability;
- Flooding—river/coastal;
- Countryside—landscape/solitude;
- Trees and hedgerows;
- Loss of open space/playing fields.

What is NOT a 'Material Consideration':

- Loss of private view;
- Infringement of ancient rights of light;
- Breach of covenant attached to land (not overridden by planning decision);
- Fear that property may be devalued;
- Businessman's fear of competition;
- Unproven fear of what might happen;
- Political reasons;
- Moral obligations eg to betting shops and amusement arcades;
- Informal opinion of a planning officer;
- Matters subject to other statutory controls eg building regulations;
- Private rights of way/land ownership;
- Personalities—popular or unpopular;
- Number of objections received.

14

NOTIFICATION

It is up to us, the public, to bring to DDCs notice any external alterations within a conservation area, or to a listed building, that we believe are being carried out without the relevant consent. This should be done in writing and sent to the Dover District Planning Department, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PJ.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank the members of the Society for their ideas, contributions, help and assistance in compiling this publication. You can contact the authors and editors via email at conservation@thedealsociety.org.uk.

THE DEAL SOCIETY WEBSITE

Updates to the brochure will be made available through our website (www.thedealsociety.org.uk).

Printed by: Smart Design & Print

Published by: Richard Huggard (richard@downdeal.org.uk)

Photographs by: Marianne Haslegrave & Geoffrey Cox

