

HERITAGE STRATEGY for HASTINGS



**FOR
HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Drury McPherson Partnership
Historic environment policy and practice

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Heritage Strategy for Hastings* has been prepared by the Drury McPherson Partnership for Hastings Borough Council. Its aim is to identify the borough's built, natural, archeological, material and intangible heritage, to assess its significance, and to suggest means and priorities for conserving and sustaining it through the recommendations in the action plan with which the report concludes. The report is not a new history of the town: rather it is concerned with the heritage as it exists in Hastings today, in all its diversity.

The heritage of Hastings encompasses the town's history from the earliest times to the present. Archaeological evidence records human activity in the area in the late Palaeolithic period. The East and West Hills have Iron Age enclosures. The town was mentioned by name in the 8th century and was well established before 1066, when William of Normandy adopted the West Hill fort as his first stronghold. Hastings was one of the five Norman ports (the *Cinque Ports*) obliged to provide the Crown with marine feudal service. The early settlement to the west of the castle was effectively abandoned during the 14th century due to erosion by the sea, which also led to the decline of the town as a port during the medieval period, although its fishing industry survived. The castle remains, two parish churches, some houses and the street plan of the Old Town are medieval.

The town began to develop as a seaside resort in the late 18th century, expanding greatly in the early 19th, of which much survives including the set-pieces of Pelham Place and Wellington Square. St Leonards on Sea was begun c1826 and Georgian buildings survive extensively on the sea front and around St Leonards Gardens. During the mid-19th century, the town's centre was re-established to the west of the castle, served by the railway that arrived in 1852. Alexandra Park was opened in 1864. The town boomed as a holiday destination in the early-mid 20th century, when the modernist seafront promenade and Marine Court were built. It declined after the Second World War, incidentally helping to preserve what survived of the medieval Old Town. During the 1970s, suburbs were developed as London housing overspill, but tourism and fishing declined, leading to significant levels of deprivation in some parts of the town by the 1990s. The importance of the built heritage and townscape is reflected in statutory designations including 935 listed buildings, 18 conservation areas, six scheduled monuments and two registered parks.

The natural heritage of Hastings is exceptionally rich. The coast, where the Wealden ridge is cut by the English Channel, is its defining feature. There are fine 19th- and 20th-century public parks and gardens, extensive semi-rural public open spaces that link with the surrounding countryside and a range of significant habitats. Most notable is the starkly beautiful and ecologically significant Hastings Country Park, designated as a Special Area of Conservation. The town's natural environment designations include seven local nature reserves, three Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 21 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and 30 locally designated wildlife sites.

There are numerous museums, archives and collections in the town, including three fully accredited under the Arts Council for England's (ACE) museum accreditation scheme: the Council-run Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, the Fishermen's Museum and the Shipwreck Museum. There are several privately-owned collections open to the public. The Jerwood Gallery (opened 2012) is a charitably-owned art gallery, which has played a key role in culture-based regeneration in the town. Hastings Museum and Art Gallery provides support and mentoring to some of the smaller museums. The borough archives are preserved at the purpose-built East Sussex County Council repository, The Keep, Falmer.

Intangible or living heritage encompasses those activities and traditions that contribute to the sense of identity and continuity of a community. It is defined more by what the community itself values than by formal designations. The fishing and maritime heritage of Hastings is the best example, and the annual Town Bonfire and Jack-in-the-Green may be included in this category. Preserving, retelling, performing and researching the history of local places or events are also vibrant aspects of the town's intangible heritage, reflected in the range of local history and amenity societies, community groups and individual enthusiasts involved with the town's history. These range from bodies dedicated to the protection of specific areas to one-off campaigns, such as that to rebuild the pier, and arts initiatives such as ROOT1066, which explicitly connect the modern community with its history.

The *Heritage Strategy* aims to complement and develop a wide range of existing Council strategies, reports and initiatives. In policy terms, it supports the Council's *Culture-Led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-21* and complements the *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016), part of the evidence base for the emerging *Hastings Town Centre Area Action Plan* (AAP). The Council has also adopted a *Seafront Strategy* which identifies three key areas of heritage significance for regeneration. A series of *Conservation Area Appraisals* is in preparation.

The heritage-based regeneration of Hastings is already underway. The Old Town is vibrant and popular. St Leonards is drawing cultural industries and bohemian residents. The Council has run successful urban improvement schemes in historic areas, most notably under the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)'s Townscape Heritage Initiative in St Leonards, which has secured the repair of numerous buildings. The community-driven campaign which led to the rebuilding of the pier after the 2010 fire was a remarkable achievement.

At the same time, as described in this report, much remains to be done. The town does not benefit nearly as much as it should from its location, or the world-famous 'brand' of its name and there are still high levels of deprivation in some areas. It has not realised its potential as a destination for cultural tourism, and thus for its rich heritage to contribute to economic regeneration. The castle, could, and

should, be at the heart of the town and a key visitor focus of '1066 Country' alongside Pevensey and Battle.

Underlying this strategy is the idea of 'spirit of place': that each historic town, building, ruin or landscape has a unique character. The essential character of the town - the 'vision' – may be summarised as: ***Hastings: a proudly independent, diverse, historic and beautiful maritime town at the heart of 1066 Country.***

This vision can be articulated in four over-arching objectives: to ensure that:

- the potential of Hastings' heritage to contribute to quality of life for its residents and to attract visitors is realised
- heritage is a central aspect of regeneration and urban development
- the heritage of Hastings is recognised as a priceless and irreplaceable asset
- the heritage of Hastings is conserved appropriately.

These objectives can be put into effect in three key areas. Regeneration and town planning in Hastings should aim to conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of the town. The potential contribution of the heritage to wider regeneration objectives should be considered in all related decision-making. Finally, the Council must work in partnership with everyone who has a stake in the historic town.

In conclusion, the foregoing analysis has resulted in the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: the Council should work with Historic England and the property owners to remove the identified sites from the 'Heritage at Risk' register.

Recommendation 2: building condition surveys should be undertaken as part of the conservation area appraisal programme and a survey of grade II and significant unlisted buildings 'at risk' should be compiled.

Recommendation 3: the Council should take appropriate action to secure the future of the scheduled and listed buildings at risk in its ownership.

Recommendation 4: the Council should review the options for management of the Castle when the current lease ends.

Recommendation 5: a new application for a major grant from HLF should be developed by the Council (in partnership with another non-profit body, if appropriate), to re-present the wider castle site to the public.

Recommendation 6: the Council should work to improve physical connections and signage between the Old Town and the town centre.

Recommendation 7: the town centre should be reinforced and enhanced as point of arrival by road and rail, including provision of heritage-related signage.

Recommendation 8: the Council should prepare design briefs for key sites, with heritage/design input.

Recommendation 9: the Council should designate current 'gaps' in seafront conservation areas as part of a rationalisation arising from the current reviews.

Recommendation 10: the Council should maintain its support for the fishing beach, which should continue to be managed as far as possible by working fishermen.

Recommendation 11: the Council should review its management of the net shops, including their tenure, use, maintenance costs and setting; and draft and publish guidance based on the review.

Recommendation 12: the Council should manage Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve to national Green Flag standard and seek appropriate national and international grant funding to secure its long-term management.

Recommendations 13: the Council should pursue all options for the development of a visitor centre at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve and new interpretation around the site, including the East Hill.

Recommendation 14: the Council should produce a public realm strategy and street design manual covering the historic town centres of Old Town, Hastings Town Centre, Central St. Leonards, and Hastings and St. Leonards sea front.

Recommendation 15: the Council should work with East Sussex County Council to remove or reduce through traffic on the A259, A 21 and A2101 in the town centre, seafront and Old Town and seek to reduce parking on the seafront.

Recommendation 16: the Council should consider the development of a new visitor hub in the town centre to provide orientation and information.

Recommendation 17: the Council should enhance or provide way-marking for pedestrian routes to key heritage sites, such as the castle, East Hill, Old Town and Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

Recommendation 18: the Keep should continue to be the official depository for the historic archives of Hastings, and the Council should draw on its resources by agreement, as appropriate.

Recommendation 19: the Council should increase the specialist resources available for development management in the historic environment.

Recommendation 20: the Council should commission and adopt conservation area appraisals and management plans for all its conservation areas.

Recommendation 21: the Council should allocate sufficient resources to develop a bid to Historic England for Heritage Action Zone status.

Recommendation 22: The Council and owners of heritage assets and should consider increasing efforts to animate heritage sites and thus public awareness and understanding of them.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commission and aims

- 1.1.1 On 31st August 2016, the Drury McPherson Partnership was commissioned by Hastings Borough Council to produce a Heritage Strategy for Hastings, the need for which was identified as a priority in the Hastings Planning Strategy (2014) Policy EN1 and re-stated in its *Culture-led Regeneration Strategy 2016-21*.
- 1.1.2 The aim of the heritage strategy is to identify the heritage of the town (including St Leonards) in the broadest sense - built, natural, archeological, material and intangible; to assess its significance, and to suggest means and priorities for conserving and sustaining it in support of the *Culture-led Regeneration Strategy* and in the context of the wider economic and cultural regeneration of Hastings.
- 1.1.3 The report is not a new history of the town; rather it is concerned with the heritage as it exists in Hastings today, in all its diversity. Whilst the larger part of this heritage is comprised of buildings, it also includes the material heritage held in museums, the 'hidden heritage' of archaeology, the natural environment and intangible or 'living' heritage.

1.2 Terminology

- 1.2.1 Where the report refers to Hastings, it means the present day local authority area of Hastings and St Leonards. Its constituent parts are described by their usual present day names: St Leonards, the Old Town, etc., following as far as possible Council's Planning Focus Areas, although these do not exactly coincide with the core historic areas or conservation areas.
- 1.2.2 This report uses the Historic England (formerly English Heritage) definition of heritage, which is 'All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility'.¹
- 1.2.3 The strategy has adopted the definitions used in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* where relevant. (See Appendix B)

¹ *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* Historic England 2008

1.3 Acknowledgements

- 1.3.1 The authors are grateful for the assistance of the following: Kevin Boorman and his colleagues (HBC), Caspar Johnson and Chris Whittick (ESCC), Paul Roberts and Sam Johnson (HE), Ion Castro, Steve Peake, Anne Scott and all who attended the consultation workshops and commented on the drafts.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical overview

- 2.1.1 The history of Hastings is well-known and has been extensively researched. For the purposes of this report, which focuses primarily on the physical heritage that survives today, the briefest of historical overviews will suffice. More detailed history of individual monuments and areas is given where it has a direct bearing on the strategy. In addition to general histories of the town, extensive use has been made of four relatively recent studies that focus on its built and archaeological heritage: the *Hastings Historic Character Assessment Report* (2010) is part of the Sussex Extended Urban Study (EUS), funded by English Heritage. *Coastal Treasures* (2007) was intended to be an audit of coastal architecture in Hastings, East Sussex, in a publicly accessible database, although in the end it was limited to the Old Town and St Leonards-on-Sea and some seafront buildings, and was not published. *Buildings of England: East Sussex* (Ian Nairn 1965) was revised in 2013 by Nicholas Antram, with a greatly enlarged entry for Hastings. Last but not least, the monumental and comprehensive volume *Hastings Old Town, An Architectural History to 1750* in the series *Historic Buildings in the High Weald*² (2016) cannot be bettered as a source for the architectural history of the area.
- 2.1.2 Hastings was well-established by the time of the Norman Conquest and had by then developed both in the Priory Valley to the west of the castle and the Bourne Valley to its east. The town had had one or more landing places safe and substantial enough to have been regarded as a port and there was also a landing to the west at Bulverhythe. On the West Hill, Hastings Castle is an Iron Age fort adopted by William of Normandy as his first stronghold immediately after the conquest and developed through the medieval period. The settled land extended further seaward than is now the case.
- 2.1.3 Hastings was one of the five Norman ports (the *Cinque Ports*), obliged to provide the Crown with marine feudal service, but from at least the early medieval period the town lacked a good sheltered harbour. The loss of land and erosion by the sea has been a constant and determining force in the evolution of the town since its earliest history. The settlement to the west of the castle was effectively abandoned during the 14th century in favour of the present old town, with a landing place at the mouth of the Bourne. Only two of seven medieval churches survive: All Saints dating from the early 15th century, and St Clements of c1400, the latter having been relocated inland from its primary site as a result of coastal erosion. During the medieval period as a whole, despite brief periods of revival, the Hastings shipping fleet declined in favour to Rye and Winchelsea, the

² Martin B., Martin D., Whittick C., Briscoe J., *A Survivor of Storms: Hastings Old Town, An Architectural History to 1750*, Domtom Publishing, Burgess Hill 2015.

other nearby Cinque Ports, although the town remained a significant centre with an important fishing industry and fish-market.

- 2.1.4 The town began to develop as a seaside resort in the late 18th century, served by coaches and packet boats from London. East Cliff House (c1762) is regarded as one of the first seaside villas in England designed to enjoy a sea view. By the early 19th century the town was increasingly focussed on attracting well-heeled visitors. Pelham Crescent and its very early shopping arcade (1824-28) exemplify the urban resort architecture of the period, and the beginning of the Old Town's expansion westwards. St Leonards on Sea was a completely new resort town, begun c1826, separated from Hastings proper by a rocky promontory, the White Rock. St Leonards was designed and built as a major speculation by James Burton, a London developer with local connections, and continued by his sons, among them the notable architect Decimus Burton.
- 2.1.5 During the 1830s, the Priory valley, to the west of the castle hill, and its foreshore were drained to allow for urban development, which was greatly encouraged by the arrival of the railway in Hastings, with a station also west of the castle. From the mid-19th century, the town's centre was re-established in this area. A new Town Hall was built in Queens Road in 1880-81. The White Rock was dug away in 1834-5 to link St Leonards more easily with the town centre. The pier was built in 1869-72 to the designs of the splendidly-named specialist Eugenius Birch. (It was damaged by fire in 1917 and rebuilt only to be burned again in 2010, since when, remarkably, it has been rebuilt again with public funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund.)
- 2.1.6 By the early 20th century, the town boasted several new churches, a magnificent public park (Alexandra Park), numerous civic buildings, theatres, hotels and extensive terraces of substantial stuccoed houses. Visitors to the West and East Hills were served by a pair of funicular lifts (1889-1 and 1900-2 respectively). The town's growth continued into the 1930s with a number of municipal improvements, including a new promenade from the Pier to Warrior Square designed by the 'go-ahead' Borough Engineer, Sidney Little, who was also responsible for creating underground car-parks on the sea front. Of the same period is the immense Marine Court (1936-8) on St Leonards seafront; popularly said to be based on the form of an ocean liner.
- 2.1.7 Relatively little new development took place in the Old Town during the early-mid 20th century, preserving its medieval street pattern of burgrave plots separated by the narrow alleys, locally called 'twittens', characteristic of Sussex coastal towns; and continuing to house the fishing families. A considerable number of late medieval timber-framed buildings survive.

- 2.1.8 The late 19th century and the 20th century down to 1939 was the period of the town's greatest prosperity as a resort. After 1945, it began to decline, and numerous historic buildings in the Old Town (especially as a result of the widening of the main road in 1958) and on the sea front were lost and much of the redevelopment was, at best, utilitarian. After 1971, Hastings became one of a number of places in which the population was greatly increased (by c25,000 over two decades) to accommodate working class Londoners, willingly displaced by slum clearance, in spacious new suburban public housing estates. Unfortunately, while a certain amount of new employment was created on peripheral industrial estates, the growth in population was matched by the decline of the town's economic bedrocks, tourism and fishing. Demand for the sort of large houses that had served visitors for the previous century dropped away dramatically, and many fell into poor condition.
- 2.1.9 Nonetheless, tourism remains a major element of the town's economy, albeit now dominated by day visitors. The town centre retail area is relatively buoyant, with a large new shopping centre at Priory Meadow (opened 1997), its name taken from the former municipal cricket ground which it replaced, amid much controversy.

3 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Legislation

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- 3.1.1 Commonly known as the Ancient Monuments Act, this makes *all* works to a scheduled monument, including repairs, subject to specific scheduled monument consent, as well as planning permission where relevant. Applications for scheduled monument consent for works affecting a monument either above or below ground level are made to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, advised by Historic England.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 3.1.2 The 1990 Act is the primary legislation providing for the protection of historic buildings. Under the Act, listed building consent (LBC) is required for all works affecting special the architectural or historic interest³ of listed buildings of all grades, both internal and external, whether or not a particular feature affected is specifically mentioned in the statutory list description. Most applications are determined by the local planning authority, which should have the benefit of appropriate specialist advice in doing so. Consent is granted in most cases. LBC is not normally required for routine (like-as-like) repairs, but may be required where such repairs could affect the special character of the building.

³ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990, Ch. II, Pt I, s.7ff.

- 3.1.3 The Act is also the basis for the local designation of conservation areas, 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. In deciding applications for planning permission in these areas, the local authority must pay special regard to their preservation or enhancement, and the demolition of buildings of itself requires planning permission.

Parks and gardens and battlefields

- 3.1.4 Parks, gardens and battlefield sites of special historic interest are subject to a non-statutory system of registration by Historic England to recognise their heritage significance, using the same three grades as for buildings. There is no separate consent system for them, but their significance is a "material consideration" in the determination of proposed development affecting them. Local planning authorities must consult Historic England where a planning application affects a Grade I or II* registered park or garden or battlefield; and the Garden History Society on all applications for registered parks or gardens.

3.2 National planning policy

- 3.2.1 National planning policy, for plan- and decision-making affecting designated heritage assets and their settings (as well as non-designated heritage assets) is set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), published in March 2012. It is supported by the *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) published (online) in March 2014.⁴ The NPPF and PPG set out the criteria against which applications for development (planning permission) must be determined by the local planning authority.
- 3.2.2 Where a building (such as Hastings Castle) is both scheduled and listed, the listing has no practical implications for the control of works since consent under scheduled monument legislation obviates the need for listed building consent. However, scheduled monument consent is separate from planning control. Where works or changes of use constituting development are proposed, planning permission must be sought in parallel with scheduled monument consent (or alone for works outside the scheduled area).
- 3.2.3 Listed building consent does not supersede the need to apply for planning permission. Where works or changes of use constituting development are proposed, planning permission must be sought in parallel with listed building consent.
- 3.2.4 The Government's over-arching aim, as set out in the NPPF, is that there should be "a presumption in favour of sustainable development". In determining applications affecting heritage assets, the local authority must, in broad terms, weigh up the potential harm to the significance of the

⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

heritage asset arising from the proposed development against its public benefits.

3.3 Historic England Guidance

- 3.3.1 Guidance on the management of the historic environments, listed buildings, conservation areas and their settings, which does not carry statutory weight, was produced by English Heritage. The statutory planning and advisory role of English Heritage was taken over by its successor organisation, Historic England, in 2015. It may be assumed that, unless otherwise stated, any English Heritage publication has been adopted by, or is the most recent guidance from, Historic England.
- 3.3.2 The guidance includes: *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes*, a series of three (so far) published in 2015 aimed at local authorities, covering local plans, decision-making and the setting of heritage assets; and a series of seven *Historic England Advice Notes (HEAN)* (2015- 2016) of which *HEAN 1: Conservation Areas: Designation Appraisal and Review* and *HEAN 7: Local Heritage Listing* are most relevant to this local strategy.
- 3.3.3 Historic England has adopted *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, (English Heritage 2008), as ‘a clear, over-arching philosophical framework of what conservation means at the beginning of the 21st century’ and goes on to state that: ‘The idea of ‘significance’ lies at the core of these principles. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place.’⁵*Seeing the History in the View* (English Heritage 2011) provides a method for understanding and assessing heritage significance within views. This methodology can be applied to any view that is significant in terms of its heritage values.
- 3.3.4 Historic England publishes an annual, regional *Register of Heritage at Risk*,⁶ based principally on voluntary returns from local authority planning departments. The Register covers all categories of designated heritage asset including scheduled monuments, historic buildings and conservation areas, but, outside London, only grade I and II* secular buildings are included, together with all grades of religious building.

3.4 Nature Conservation Policy and Guidance

Ecological context

- 3.4.1 The NPPF also sets out in Section 11 policy related to planning applications and biodiversity including protected sites, habitats and species. In addition to planning permission, any works affecting protected or notable species or habitats are likely to require further ecological survey

⁵ <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles>

⁶ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

work and/or applications for mitigation licences from Natural England prior to commencement.

3.5 Local policy

- 3.5.1 Hastings Borough Council's Corporate Plan and Service Priorities 2016/17- 2018/19 includes among its key priorities: 'To secure economic and physical regeneration that produces high quality new developments while preserving the best of our heritage... To contribute to the regeneration of the borough through a rich cultural programme that appeals both to local people and visitors, extending, broadening and promoting the borough's cultural activities to establish Hastings as a nationally and internationally recognised centre for arts and culture... To maintain visually interesting, well-maintained, uncluttered, clean and functional urban public spaces, especially along the seafront and in our town centres, integrated with high quality protected green spaces accessible to all.⁷ Management of the built, natural and cultural heritage is central to these objectives.
- 3.5.2 The Local Plan identified four 'cultural quarters': Old Town and The Stade, White Rock and the America Ground, Academic Quarter, and Central St Leonards. These overlap to a large degree with the most historically significant areas of the town, emphasising the need for the heritage strategy to complement wider cultural strategies (see below).
- 3.5.3 Hastings Borough Council's planning policies for the environment are set out in the *Hastings Planning Strategy* (2014). Most relevant to this strategy is *Chapter 7: Protecting our Environment* which includes policies: EN1: Built and Historic Environment; Policy EN2: Green Infrastructure Network; Policy EN3: Nature Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity; Policy EN7: Conservation and Enhancement of Landscape; Policy EN8: Open Spaces-Enhancement, Provision and Protection.
- 3.5.4 The *Hastings Development Management Plan* (DMP) includes a comprehensive suite of the policies against which applications for planning permission and listed building consent will be determined, as follows: Policy HN1 - Development Affecting the Significance and Setting of Designated Heritage Assets (including Conservation Areas); HN2 - Changing Doors, Windows and Roofs in Conservation Areas; HN3 - Demolition involving Heritage Assets; Policy HN4 – Development affecting Heritage Assets with Archaeological and Historic Interest or Potential Interest; Policy HN5 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets; Policy HN6 – Former Convent of Holy Child Jesus, Magdalen Road; Policy HN7 – Green Infrastructure in

⁷http://www.hastings.gov.uk/content/my_council/consultations/current_consultations/pdfs/draft_corp_plan_priorities

New Developments; Policy HN8 – Biodiversity and Green Space; Policy HN9 – Areas of Landscape Value.

- 3.5.5 The DMP also identifies areas and individual development sites that could have a considerable impact - for better or worse - on the historic environment. They include, particularly: Focus Area 6: Maze Hill & Burtons' St Leonards (especially MBL1 – Former Hastings College, Archery Road); Focus Area 7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia; Focus Area 8: Hastings Town Centre (especially HTC6- Priory Quarter, Havelock Road); and Focus Area 9: Old Town, although no individual development site here that would have a dramatic impact on the wider area. Although section 5 in the plan includes 'site design briefs', these are concerned primarily with land use and access. They do not provide guidance on the scale, appearance or architectural approach that would be appropriate on each site, other than to state the need to 'sustain and enhance the significance and setting of the [relevant] conservation area [and/or as appropriate] adjacent listed buildings.

3.6 Links to other local strategies

- 3.6.1 The heritage strategy complements and enlarges on aspects of several other existing and upcoming strategic and policy documents. Specifically, it builds on the Council's *Culture-Led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-21*, of which *Objective 6: Support and enable the preservation development and use of the town's cultural assets*, states, *inter alia*: 'Historic sites and buildings, cultural venues, the built environment and outdoor spaces all make up the physical cultural assets that give a place its character and enable its cultural identity to develop and thrive. They are the infrastructure on which culture-led regeneration is built and link to all the other objectives in this strategy.' It includes a commitment by the Council to 'deliver a dedicated Heritage Strategy to map our heritage assets and guide their conservation, development and use.'
- 3.6.2 The *Culture-Led Regeneration* strategy also identifies the [historic] public realm as an 'asset,' particularly 'developing public arts interventions', and highlights the significance of local museum collections and archives; Blue Plaques and the potential of popular culture to draw in visitors through such things as the use of the Old Town as the setting of a television programme, *Foyle's War*. Specifically in relation to heritage, the strategy identifies the following 'challenges':
- There is insufficient understanding of the needs and potential of our heritage assets.
 - Many of our existing built assets need significant capital development to bring them up to modern standards.
 - Lack of resources restricts the potential of key heritage assets, such as Hastings Museum, and the development of the town's Blue Plaque trail;

and 'Outcomes'

- Hastings stock of cultural assets will be better maintained, interpreted and promoted.

3.6.3 Also relevant is the *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016). This study forms an important part of the evidence base in the development of the *Hastings Town Centre Area Action Plan* (AAP) for these areas, which have high priority in terms of the economy, perception of the town and for regeneration. The AAP will also be supported by a *White Rock Area Masterplan*, currently in preparation which will focus on Council-owned sites in the area and connections between White Rock and the rest of the town. The 2016 study identifies heritage issues including:

- poor quality setting to historic buildings;
- poor condition of historic landscapes, buildings and structures; inappropriate shopfronts, fascias, signage on historic buildings;
- lack of interpretation of heritage.

It recommends the adoption of the following principles:

- Understand and articulate the heritage significance and value of the townscape to develop a robust policy framework for planning and management decisions
- Harmonise and restrain shopfront design to agreed standards in Conservation Areas
- Communicate heritage value and interest to the public
- Encourage public participation in the management of the historic environment;

and the following actions:

- Develop Conservation Area management plans in partnership with local interest groups
- Develop [a] masterplan for White Rock Gardens based on an assessment of heritage significance with enhanced leisure/cultural uses
- Develop and promote heritage trails and interpretation

3.6.4 The Council has also adopted a strategy for the seafront as a whole, which *inter alia* identifies three key areas of heritage significance for regeneration: 7.d Bottle Alley; 7.e White Rock area; 7.f Harold Place (pp.23-5). It supports the reduction of seafront car-parking in favour of the town centre car parks. It notes that the seafront has benefited in recent years from public funding from the government, and Heritage Lottery Fund, which has gone into such projects as the Stade and net huts, St Mary in the Castle, the pier, façade refurbishments, pavement widening, and Marina Pavilion (Azur).

- 3.6.5 The first in a series of Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) and Conservation Area Management Plans (CAMP) for the Town Centre (covering a slightly larger area than the present conservation area) is currently (December 2016) in draft. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Design to provide guidance in support of the Local Plan is in preparation and will be subject to public consultation in late 2017. The design guidance will complement the CAAs. It will provide general design advice including advice on the repair maintenance and alteration of historic buildings, incorporating and replacing the existing guidance documents on roofs, doors and windows in listed buildings and conservation areas.

3.7 Role of East Sussex County Council

- 3.7.1 Several areas of local government that relate to this strategy are managed by East Sussex County Council (ESCC): principal roads, public footpaths, archaeology, libraries and archives. This report touches only briefly on roads and footpaths. Archaeology and libraries and archives are considered in more detail below. Where the action plan makes recommendations affecting the County's areas of responsibility, it is assumed that Hastings BC will initiate discussions and work in partnership with the County Council to deliver the desired outcomes.

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

4.1 Spirit of Place

- 4.1.1 Underlying this strategy is the idea of 'spirit of place': that each historic town, building, ruin or landscape has a unique character. Conservation is essentially the process by which that character is identified, preserved, reinforced, enhanced and sustained. Conservation is concerned not simply with keeping things as they were, but with a dynamic process of managing change. The spirit of place is both the sum that is more than the parts and the quality within each element of a place that is identifiable as being of that place alone. It encompasses the material and the narrative, the human and the concrete, past and present and the place in its setting.
- 4.1.2 The spirit of a town is ultimately undefinable - Hastings means something different to every resident, every visitor - but it can shape a vision: a thumbnail sketch against which to test the practical decisions that must be made about the future of the town. Hastings has an extraordinarily rich physical and cultural heritage, which is both protected by, and vulnerable because of, its relative geographical isolation in the regional context. It is a town that for the whole of its modern history, since the end of the 18th century, has been dominated by visitors and migration from other parts of the country, a trend that is still strong today, whilst retaining, for example, an ancient fishing tradition.

- 4.1.3 Its historic environments, especially outside the Old Town, are relatively little known compared to places with a similar heritage. Despite the fact that the most famous battle in English history is named after the town, Hastings has done relatively little in recent years to trade on its historic fabric or associations, in contrast to nearby Battle, Rye or Pevensey, underlining the fact that Hastings is at the very heart of a richly historic area, and that its heritage has enormous unrealised potential. These characteristics and many more give the town and its people their distinct sense of identity - a fierce affection for their physical and cultural heritage, combined with a strong independent, sometimes anti-authoritarian, streak which sits uncomfortably with, for example, planning control or the kind of unthreatening, tidy-minded conformity associated with more conventional tourist destinations. This personality is reflected in its physical fabric, unkempt, but authentic, full of unexpected surprises, hidden corners and dramatic views; and its narrative history, exemplified in the story of America Ground.

4.2 Vision and Objectives

- 4.2.1 The essential character of the town - the 'vision' - might be summarised as: ***Hastings: a proudly independent, diverse, historic and beautiful maritime town at the heart of 1066 Country.*** This vision in turn may be articulated in four over-arching objectives: to ensure that:

- the potential of Hastings's heritage to contribute to quality of life for its residents and to attract visitors is realised
- heritage is a central aspect of regeneration and urban development
- the heritage of Hastings is recognised as a priceless and irreplaceable asset
- the heritage of Hastings is conserved appropriately.

- 4.2.2 For Hastings Borough Council, these objectives can be put into effect in three key areas. Regeneration and town planning in Hastings should aim to conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of the town. The potential contribution of the heritage to wider regeneration objectives should be considered in all related decision-making. Finally, the Council must work in partnership with everyone who has a stake in the historic town.

5 SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This report does not attempt to evaluate the significance of the individual elements of the heritage of Hastings, but rather to take into account their heritage significance in prioritising actions and to identify areas where further work is needed in relation to assessing significance. High

significance is one of several considerations, but it is likely to increase the priority for attention of a particular asset that is, for example, at risk. Therefore the heritage of the town is considered below, by type and 'theme'. Relative significance, and areas or types of heritage that do not have formal designation, or that might be worthy of designation, are addressed under Section 6, below.

- 5.1.2 Historic England/English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance* (2008) provides the basis for the discussion and recommendations that follow. It recommends that the significance of heritage assets is articulated as the sum of their heritage values. These can be considered under four headings:

Evidential value: the potential of heritage assets to yield evidence about past human activity;

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events, and aspects of life can be connected through heritage assets to the present, both by illustrating aspects of social history, and through association with notable people and events;

Aesthetic value: the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from heritage assets, particularly their architectural qualities; and

Communal value: the meaning of heritage assets for the people who relate to them, or for whom they figure in the collective experience or memory of the community.

- 5.1.3 We have used the well-established categories (normally used internally by Historic England). For the purposes of this report, these terms are employed as a convenient means of describing relative significance rather than as a definitive assessment of significance:

Exceptional significance

Elements of the historic environment whose values are both unique to the place and are relevant to our perception and understanding of architectural and social history in a national and international context. (These are the qualities that, for buildings, warrant statutory listing in grade I and II*.)

Considerable significance

Elements whose values contribute to the place's status as a nationally important heritage asset. These are the qualities that justify statutory protection at national level (i.e. grade II).

Some significance

Elements whose values make a positive contribution to the way the place is understood and perceived, primarily in a local context.

Little significance

Elements whose values contribute to the way the place is perceived in a very limited, but positive, way.

Neutral significance

Elements which neither add to, nor detract from, the significance of the place.

Intrusive

Elements of no historic interest or aesthetic or architectural merit that detract from the appearance of the place, or mask the understanding of significant elements.

- 5.1.4 Overall, the built, archaeological and natural heritage of the town is well-recognised by the relevant statutory designation regimes, but local and intangible heritage, less so. No unlisted building or site in Hastings has come to our attention for which statutory listing, re-listing (potentially including re-grading) or scheduling should be sought.
- 5.1.5 A local list of historic buildings is in preparation. At the time of writing there are five entries awaiting public consultation and Council ratification.
- 5.1.6 Conservation areas are not graded nationally or locally. Their designation reflects the distinctive character of each area, which can vary widely. Some conservation areas contain a large number of important historic buildings, some few or none. No wholly new areas justifying conservation area designation in Hastings have come to our attention. However, the current programme of conservation area appraisals may reasonably propose some local adjustments in order to rationalise boundaries, or reflect the greater understanding of the area resulting from the appraisal process.
- 5.1.7 There is a wide range of national and local natural heritage designations in Hastings. No new natural heritage sites for which designation is clearly justified have come to our attention. There is local support for the designation of Specked Wood as a Local Nature Reserve, but it is not yet certain that the site meets the national designation criteria.
- 5.1.8 Museum collections (including archives) may have significance as a whole (relative to other collections nationally or locally) and items within the collection may have significance individually, but they are not subject to the same sort of assessment of significance as buildings and sites. The Arts Council for England (ACE) grants 'designated status' to the most significant collections, but these tend to be those of outstanding, national importance; none is in Hastings and there are only ten designated collections in the whole south-east region. The three accredited collections in Hastings have clear and undisputed significance to the town. The other collections with local themes or origins may be regarded as significant to the local heritage even if their collections are small or contain objects of less cultural significance. 'Tourist attractions', such as themed collections with no specific connection to Hastings, are likely to be of the least significance to local heritage.
- 5.1.9 There is no national system of designation for intangible or 'living' heritage, and it is not easily defined in such terms. The issue is discussed at Section 6.7 below.

6 HERITAGE BY THEME AND AREA IN HASTINGS

6.1 Topography, hinterland, origins

6.1.1 Hastings stands where the Wealden ridge is cut by the English Channel; a gateway protected for much of its early history by a citadel. The ridge still effectively defines the limit of urbanisation around Hastings. Its eroded geology produced three headlands projecting further into the channel than now: East and West Cliffs and (the lost) White Rock. The low-lying land between the cliffs was from prehistory presumably a natural harbour, providing a point of entry from the Channel; and the Ridge a natural route inland, north-westwards. This is the context of the probably pre-Roman Iron Age promontory forts on both headlands. The Roman road from Rochester across the Weald, through Bodiam, traceable as far as the Ridge, provides circumstantial evidence for a Roman port probably lost to erosion. The road certainly served the iron industry; one of its main administrative centres was at Beauport Park, just outside the modern borough.

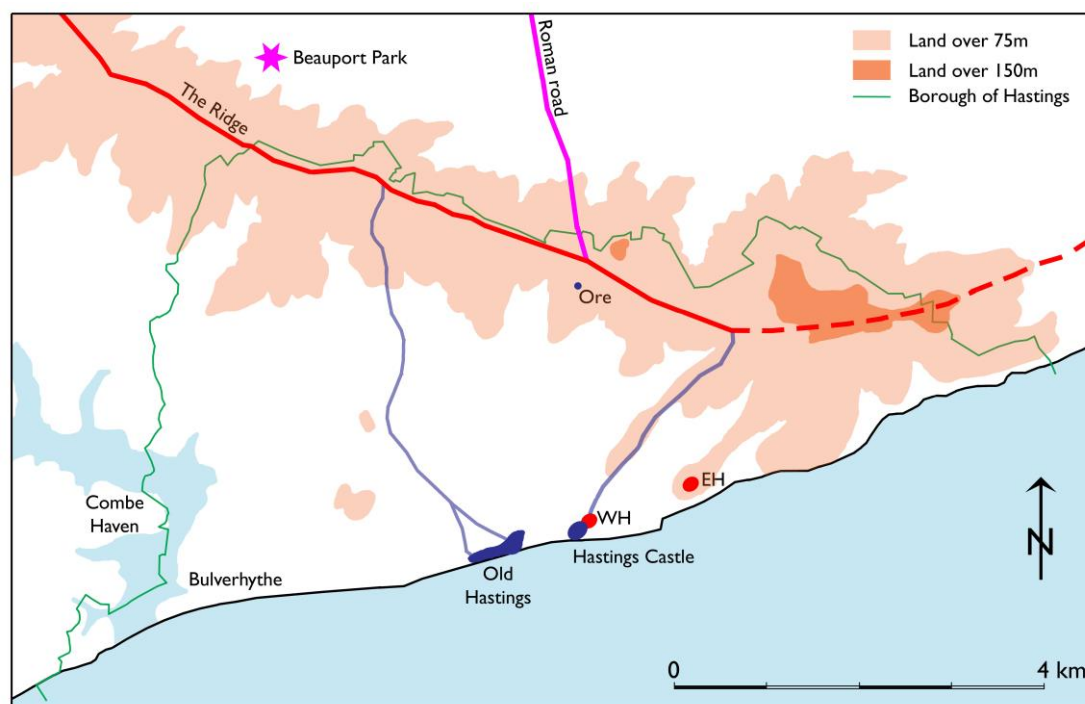


Figure 1: Historic context map

6.1.2 The survival of much of the Roman road from the north within the medieval road system is evidence for the importance of Hastings before the conquest as a port and town, although later coastal changes have largely removed its (dispersed) sites. By the late 12th century, the principal route from Hastings northwards towards London had shifted westwards via the Ridge to Battle and then the new bridge over the Rother at Robertsbridge, towns of 11th and 12th century origin. So until the harbour

was compromised after storms in the late 13th century, Hastings had long been a major port of entry, equal to Dover, well connected by land both northwards and westwards.⁸

- 6.1.3 The Old Town is the successor of the medieval one, which migrated further up the Bourne valley in the face of coastal erosion. Standing above it on the west is the castle, visibly reduced by erosion of the cliff, and famous as being the site of the earliest fortification of the Norman conquest. However, the position of the motte suggests that it was sited in the corner of the Iron Age earthwork whose perimeter largely survives, and only later was the principal defensive circuit built to its south, incorporating a collegiate chapel in the circuit, the curtain wall actually cutting across the motte. Most of this later bailey has, like the early town, been lost to coastal erosion, but the realisation that the conquest period and earlier earthworks largely survive has important implications for the significance of the surviving Castle site and how it might be presented in the future.

6.2 Built heritage

Listed buildings

- 6.2.1 There are 935 listed buildings in Hastings. Of these, one, Hastings Castle, is listed at grade I, the highest grade, which includes approximately 2.5% of all listed buildings in England. There are 52 entries on the list at grade II*, the second highest category, comprising about 5.5% of the national total. In Hastings, most buildings at this grade are churches, but some are secular, including Pelham Crescent, Pelham Place and Pelham Arcade. The other 882 of the town's listed buildings are grade II, the category that includes the vast majority of listed buildings nationally.⁹ The listed buildings are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Old Town, St Leonards and the town centre. Each property in all grades is subject to the same statutory controls.
- 6.2.2 Listed buildings are the most substantial physical expression of the town's heritage. Their statutory designation means that they are recognised in the national context as being of importance for their special architectural or historic interest. This gives them a considerable degree of protection.
- 6.2.3 In addition to the castle and associated structures, there are three other groups of buildings in the town that stand out as having exceptional heritage significance:
- Net shops
 - Burton's St Leonards
 - Old Town: High Street/All Saints Street
 - St Mary-in-the-Castle/Pelham Crescent/Pelham Arcade

⁸ Martin, D & Martin, B. *A reinterpretation of Hastings Castle, Hastings, East Sussex, Part 1, Overview*, 1999, 33

⁹ Information from Jane Stephen, HBC Conservation Officer, 17 Jan 2017

- 6.2.4 The net shops have been celebrated since the mid-20th century as both essentially English and distinctively local vernacular forms, and proto-modernist for their spare functional design. Such architectural luminaries as JM Richards wrote about them most notably in his 1958 book *The Functional Tradition in Early Industrial Buildings*¹⁰ and its photographs by Eric de Mare were probably even more influential than the text. They are now listed at grade II.* The net shops stand on ground owned by the Council but the buildings themselves are privately-owned.
- 6.2.5 Burton's St Leonards was conceived as a complete new resort town by the builder and developer James Burton (1761-1837) with grandiose palace-fronted sea-facing terraces and an hotel (the St Leonards, now the Royal Victoria) at their centre. Directly inland from the hotel was a park designed in the picturesque style (St Leonards Gardens, now registered grade II), around which villas in a variety of styles were built, in the manner of Nash's Regents Park, London, although inevitably on a smaller scale; along with commercial and service areas, known as Mercatoria and Lavatoria. Burton built a new church on the seafront, which was lost in the Blitz (rebuilt 1953-61, architects G. and A. Gilbert Scott). A classical seafront baths building was demolished in 1946 following war damage but the imposing Assembly Rooms behind the hotel survive as the Masonic Lodge.
- 6.2.6 The development was continued by James Burton's sons, particularly Decimus (1800-1881) mainly after 1850 (the railway had reached St Leonards in 1845), with further houses and terraces inland, and the new town continued to expand, beyond the Burtons' estate (and plans) throughout the 19th century. Although the architectural quality of the later buildings does not match that of the earliest, even some of the areas wholly outside the Burton development, such as King's Road, have considerable architectural merit. Nonetheless, the exceptional significance of St Leonards derives primarily from the work of the Burtons, and in its survival, if not quite intact, as an instantly recognisable architectural ensemble, including a large number of listed buildings.
- 6.2.7 The Old Town is the historic heart of Hastings, and contains a large number of listed buildings, ranging from its medieval church and post-medieval vernacular buildings in the High Street and All Saints Street, to polite 18th and 19th century houses and terraces. Despite the damage to the urban grain along the main road in The Bourne (originating in the 19th century and continuing until the late 20th), the buildings, streets and alleys (or twittens) of the Old Town as a whole comprise an area of exceptional architectural quality, historic interest, character and significance.

¹⁰ Richards J, *The Functional Tradition in Early Industrial Buildings*, 1958, Architectural Press, London,

- 6.2.8 The early-19th century group comprising Pelham Crescent, Pelham Arcade, Pelham Place and St. Mary in the Castle, set dramatically below the castle cliff, is all listed grade II *. Together, it is one of the most impressive architectural set pieces of their date on the south coast of England.

Conservation areas

- 6.2.9 There are 18 conservation areas in the borough (listed in order of date of designation):
1. Old Town: the oldest part of Hastings including the medieval high street and the fishing beach.
 2. Burtons' St Leonards: the core of the Regency resort town designed and developed by James Burton between 1828 and 1835.
 3. Blacklands: the southern part of Alexandra Park and an area of Victorian houses around it.
 4. St Leonards West: a mid-19th century extension of the Burton development to the west of Burtons' St Leonards,
 5. St Leonards East (Gensing): Lavatoria and Mercatoria, the service area of the Burtons' St Leonards 'new town', comprising largely modest 19th century terraced commercial and residential buildings
 6. St Leonards North: mainly substantial detached and terraced Victorian houses
 7. Warrior Square: a formal mid-19th century square of large terraced houses on the seafront between Hastings and St Leonards.
 8. White Rock: mainly mid- and late-19th century residential buildings in a variety of styles along the seafront, but including the important early 20th century White Rock Theatre (1927) and White Rock Baths (1876, rebuilt 1932), now the Source Skate Park.
 9. Cornwallis Gardens: substantial mid- and late-Victorian properties, with an attractive open space of similar date.
 10. Grosvenor Crescent: the western end of the St Leonards seafront, with an early 19th century terrace along Marina.
 11. Magdalen Road: late-Victorian terraces and semi-detached properties and the former Holy Child convent school.
 12. Eversfield Place: predominantly residential mid-19th century seafront terraces.
 13. Markwick Terrace: a terrace of substantial late 19th century houses, the detached villas in adjoining streets and the private Markwick Gardens (laid out c1870s).
 14. Springfield Road: a suburb characterised by large mainly detached late-19th and early-20th century houses and including St Matthews gardens.
 15. Tillington Terrace: mainly early 20th century housing between the Old Town and Ore.
 16. Hastings Town Centre: the Victorian commercial and civic centre of the town, with some earlier buildings, many listed, especially around the 'Trinity Triangle' (part of the old 'America Ground'). Mainly modern shop fronts at ground level.
 17. Kings Road: the commercial and retail centre of St Leonards. Mainly Victorian with some good original shopfronts.

18. Ore Place: the area around the ruined medieval St Helens Church, including Ore Place (a scheduled monument).

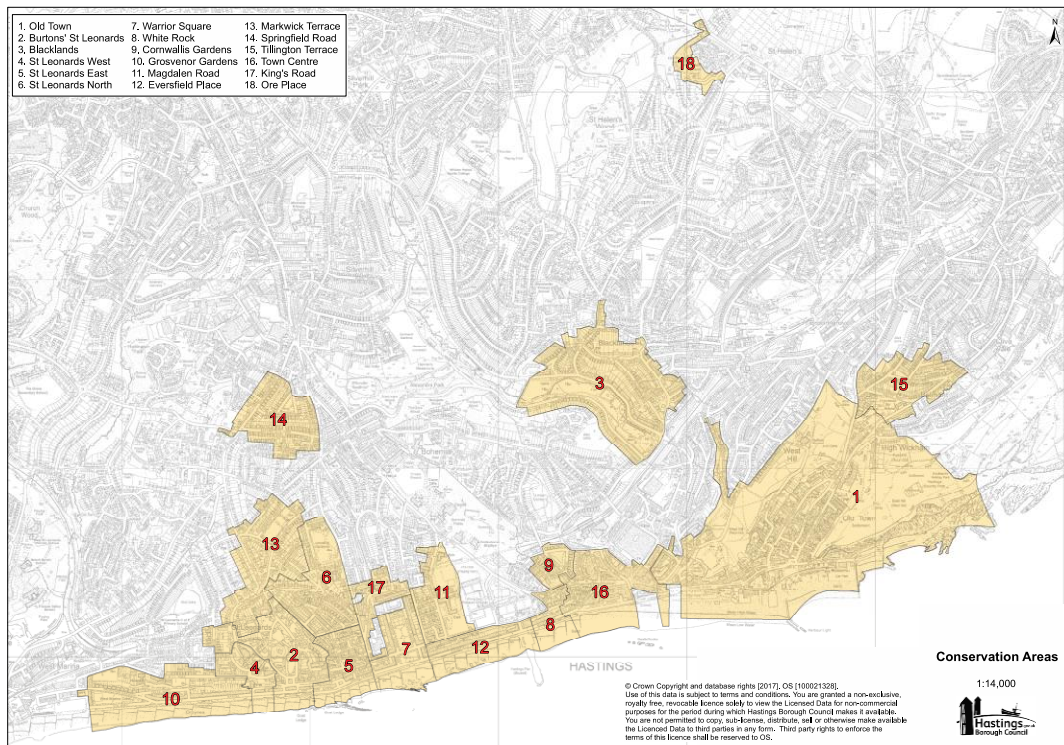


Figure 2: CA location map

6.2.10 A programme of conservation area appraisal reviews is under way at the time of writing (early 2017), which may result in some boundary alterations. However, nowhere in the borough has been identified during the preparation of this report for which a wholly new designation, or the substantial enlargement of an existing one, is recommended.

6.3 Scheduled monuments and archaeology

6.3.1 There are six scheduled monuments in Hastings: Hastings Castle, the Collegiate Church of St Mary and the Ladies' Parlour (West Hill); Hastings Town wall; St Mary, Bulverhythe; Iron Age Fort and St George's Churchyard, East Hill; the Manor House, Ore Place; and Old St Helen's church, Ore. Like the conservation areas, these sites are grouped together, mainly around the Old Town.

6.3.2 In addition, archaeological sites of less known significance are designated as Archaeological Notification Area (ANAs). These are areas identified in the local plan, to trigger consultation with the ESCC archaeology team in the event of development proposals that affect them coming forward. The County Council would like to review the Archaeological Notification Area

(ANAs) within the Borough, but does not currently have resources to do so. This task is outside the remit of HBC.

- 6.3.3 The County Council maintains the Historic Environment Record (HER) for East Sussex. This is part of a nationwide comprehensive database (that has evolved from the archaeological Sites and Monuments Records) that can be used by the Borough Council and the public to inform planning and heritage consent applications, as well as academic research. The Sussex Conservation Officers' Group, with the support of the County Council, has recently devised a template for the heritage statements that are normally a requirement by local planning authorities to support applications for development affecting the heritage, which usually draw on HER data.

6.4 Wrecks

- 6.4.1 There is one designated shipwreck on the Hastings coast. The *Amsterdam* was a Dutch East Indiaman beached at Bulverhythe during a gale in 1749. Her remains are visible at low tide and overlie a prehistoric petrified forest. Material from a second wreck, the *Anne*, a frigate that was deliberately beached and burned on Pett Level to prevent the French capturing her during the battle of Beachy Head in 1690 is held at Hastings Shipwreck Museum, although the wreck site itself is beyond the borough boundary.

6.5 Natural Heritage

- 6.5.1 The natural environment provides an amenity for local people, without the risk of elitism sometimes perceived in relation to more traditional heritage. Hastings is exceptionally rich in this respect: the seafront is, of course, the defining feature of a seaside town, together with the associated topography and geology. There are fine public 19th- and 20th-century parks and gardens, extensive and beautiful semi-rural public open spaces that link with the surrounding countryside and a range of significant habitats.
- 6.5.2 Many of the town's natural environments are designated as habitats, for their amenity value, or for their historic design. The most important are Hastings Country Park, which includes a variety of natural environments and habitats and has archaeological and historic significance; Alexandra Park (registered grade II*, with a notable tree collection), and St Leonards Gardens (registered grade II). The designated sites are:
- Hastings Country Park (Local Nature Reserve, incorporating Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach (SSSI); Hastings Cliffs SAC; High Weald (AONB) and
 - Church Wood and Robsack Woods (Local Nature Reserve)
 - Combe Haven (SSSI) including Filsham Reedbed (Local Nature Reserve)

- Marline Valley (Local Nature Reserve)
- Old Roar Gill (Local Nature Reserve)
- St Helens Park (Local Nature Reserve)
- Summerfields Wood (Local Nature Reserve)
- Alexandra Park (Registered Historic Park and Garden Grade II*)
- St Leonards Gardens (Registered Historic Park and Garden Grade II)
- Ponds Wood (the Council is currently working towards designating this site as a Local Nature Reserve)

6.5.3 Several other areas are of considerable local significance and, although not designated in their own right, form part of conservation areas or historic sites. They include:

- East Hill
- West Hill
- Foreshore/Stade
- Warrior Square Gardens
- Wellington Square Gardens
- Gensing Gardens
- Linton Gardens
- White Rock Pleasure Grounds
- St Helens Woods
- Markwick Gardens
- St Matthews Gardens

6.5.4 The natural environment also includes geological phenomena, including St Clements caves and the fossils found in the cliffs to the east of the town. The most prominent cliff features of the town occur east of the Old Town at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve. The Country Park is the gateway to the High Weald and is the only area the Weald is exposed at the sea. The sandstone exposures and eroding sandstone cliffs at Hastings are unique in the South East and of international significance. The nearest examples of sandstone cliffs in England are at Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

6.5.5 There are 30 Local Wildlife Sites. These are locally designated sites that do not have statutory protection, but which are protected under Local Plan Policy EN3.

6.5.6 There are two long distance footpaths that run into Hastings, the Saxon Shore Way and the 1066 Country Walk Hastings Link. They represent a valuable intersection between access to the natural environment and the local and regional tourism economies, and provide the opportunity for connecting natural and historic landscapes, the Weald, hill forts, etc.

6.5.7 The seafront represents a distinct feature of Hastings' heritage and it is, above all the aspect of the town that shapes visitors' perceptions of the place. It includes some of the most important aspects of the built, natural and intangible heritage. It borders very different parts of the town, but it is, importantly, a single entity, raising similar conservation and management issues along its entire length. It is perhaps the single most important aspect of the town's heritage, yet also the place in which heritage conflicts most directly with other uses and priorities: it is literally the place where the town comes together. Any heritage strategy here must also be part of other, wider strategies for the area ¹¹.

6.6 Museums

6.6.1 There is a variety of museums, archives and collections in the town.

- The Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (opened 1892) is the principal public repository of objects, archive and art gallery, serving the town and the wider district. Fully-accredited under the Arts Council for England's (ACE) museum accreditation scheme.
- The Fishermen's Museum and Shipwreck Museum at Rock-a-Nore are privately owned collections open to the public. Each is fully-accredited under the Arts Council for England's (ACE) museum accreditation scheme.
- Smugglers' Adventure, a privately-run visitor attraction in St Clement's Caves, which displays a small collection of objects, including some on loan from HMAG and Bexhill Museum.
- The History House in the Old Town is primarily a centre for local history research and amenity groups. It holds a small collection of documents and objects and mounts temporary exhibitions of local interest.
- True Crime Museum, a privately-run visitor attraction in White Rock Caves, billed as 'The largest collection of Crime Memorabilia in the UK'.
- Hastings Pier has a collection (mainly copies) of local images, films and oral history recordings.
- Flowermaker's Museum is a small collection of artificial flowers and related items accumulated by a leading supplier of flower and plant props for film, theatre and television productions.
- The Jerwood Gallery (opened 2012) is a charitably-owned art gallery, which displays a revolving selection of the Jerwood Foundation's collection of largely 20th century British art, as well as temporary exhibitions.
- The Brassey Institute (Hastings Library) local history room holds an extensive documentary collection, including local archive material and newspapers. (The official repository for local archives is the

¹¹ see e.g. *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016); *Hastings Seafront Strategy 2014-2020*

East Sussex Record Office, now known as The Keep, Falmer.)

- 6.6.2 Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (HMAG) in Bohemia Road is both a destination in its own right and a source of expertise for the whole town.
- 6.6.3 Museums are encouraged to work towards accreditation under the Arts Council for England (ACE)'s scheme, which sets national standards for care, conservation, display and management. Museums eligible for this scheme normally hold collections of objects. The Council can provide support and mentoring in this context through the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (HMAG), and its curators do so, for example, for the Fisherman's Museum.

6.7 Intangible Heritage

- 6.7.1 Intangible - or living - heritage is defined by UNESCO as 'the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.'¹² It may include:
- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
 - performing arts;
 - social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - traditional craftsmanship.
- 6.7.2 There is no UK system for designating intangible heritage, and UNESCO's approach to identifying it is in its infancy. Nonetheless, the concept recognises that heritage need not be limited to physical objects or monuments, and that activities and traditions transmitted over time that lack material manifestations may be regarded as equivalent to material heritage.
- 6.7.3 On a local level, recognising and respecting living heritage is more important than categorising or evaluating it. Its significance lies in its role in contributing to a sense of identity and continuity of a community; only incidentally may it become something that is shared outside that community. It is very hard in this context to draw a line between what

¹² UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* 2003

meets the definition of 'transmitted over time' and what simply contributes to communal identity and continuity.

- 6.7.4 The living heritage of Hastings might include: the fishing heritage and fishmarket, the annual Town Bonfire and Jack in the Green. The Town Bonfire, in particular, attracts the whole community. Although a relatively modern event in Hastings itself, it is linked with the long tradition of officially tolerated (and sometimes sanctioned) anti-Papist and anti-French mayhem shared by the Bonfire Societies elsewhere in East Sussex; as such, it is authentic 'living heritage'. The May Day 'Jack-in-the-Green' is also a popular, raucous community event, to which visitors are welcome. May Day 'Green Man' celebrations are not unique to Hastings, but the event has a long history in the town, probably dying out in the late 19th century before it was revived in its present form in 1983.¹³
- 6.7.5 However, some other community activities lack an historic or vernacular dimension and are either recent creations, or are essentially events that take place in the town to draw in visitors- of undoubted cultural value, but not necessarily heritage. The Town-Crier Championship, Seafood and Wine Festival, Chess Congress and the Hastings half-marathon, among many others, fall into this category. Similarly, while story-telling is an essential part of enriching local history, it is the universal medium through which we understand and articulate history, culture and identity, rather than something unique to Hastings. If a local story is, say, acted out in a local festival, traditionally recited at a certain place or time, or related to a specific place, it might be appropriate to identify it formally as intangible heritage in relation to those places or events, but story-telling in the abstract is outside the scope of this Strategy.

History, stories and activities

- 6.7.6 Preserving, retelling, performing or researching the history of a place or event are vital aspects of the cultural heritage of any community. They are, literally, intangible and outside the scope of anything that could be designated or legally protected. History is recorded in documents, objects, buildings and landscapes: the 'heritage' with which this strategy is principally concerned; but history is also contained in the narrative of the past that exists within a community. The stories it tells about itself are an essential part of understanding, interpreting and communicating heritage significance and local identity- the 'spirit of place'. Without them, we would be unable fully to appreciate and enjoy the significance of the physical heritage.
- 6.7.7 This element of its heritage is particularly vibrant in Hastings and is reflected in the range of local history and amenity societies, community groups and individual enthusiasts involved with the town's history. These range from bodies dedicated to the protection of particular areas, to one-

¹³ <http://www.hastingsjtg.co.uk/history>

off campaigns such as that to rebuild the pier, to arts initiatives such as ROOT1066, and feeding into the Town Bonfire and Jack-in-the-Green, which explicitly connect the modern community with the history of the town.

7 ACTION PLAN

7.1 Issues and Opportunities: Introduction

- 7.1.1 The historic built and natural environment of Hastings is a remarkable, concrete illustration of the evolution of the town and its communities, but reading the story of the town from its monuments and streetscape can be very difficult. The exceptional wealth of the town's heritage is not matched by its interpretation and there is enormous unrealised potential for residents and visitors alike better to enjoy and benefit from it. This strategy aims to ensure that preserving and enhancing this heritage is a part of the ongoing social, economic and cultural development of the town, wherever it has the potential to do so; and that development and regeneration should not be at the expense of the heritage.
- 7.1.2 In many ways, Hastings is moving in a positive direction. The Old Town is vibrant and popular. St Leonards is drawing cultural industries and bohemian residents. The town centre is relatively buoyant when compared to many other towns with similar levels of social and economic deprivation. Large numbers of tourists visit the town and its heritage is recognised and marketed as an attraction, if not as much as it could be.
- 7.1.3 On the other hand, the town's most prominent monument, the castle, is lamentably neglected and visitors hoping to experience the heart of '1066' country will be sorely disappointed. Hastings should be the centre of '1066 country', whereas at present it is like the hole in the doughnut of cultural tourism surrounded by the coast, the Weald and Downs, Rye, Winchelsea, Battle and Pevensey. The brand '1066 Country' is unusually strong and, while Hastings has an exceptionally rich heritage, neither its interpretation nor the physical links with the surrounding historic environments matches it. The town does not benefit nearly as much as it should from its location. Only if Hastings is sufficiently attractive as a place will it realise its potential in the wider sub-regional context.
- 7.1.4 The levels of deprivation in the outer wards are severe, and such regeneration as has taken place at the seafront has so far done little or nothing for the outer wards. Significant sums of heritage grant money have been invested, and considerable improvements have been made to the appearance of individual historic buildings. In some cases it has been possible to use complementary (e.g. housing) funding to improve accommodation as part of the same project.¹⁴ However, much remains to be done. Many historic buildings are still in poor condition, or have been unsympathetically altered. Some of the town's historic sites are hard for visitors to find and connections between them poorly signed and unwelcoming.

¹⁴ see, for example the Heritage Lottery Funded St Leonards Townscape Initiative schemes

- 7.1.5 Realising Hastings' heritage potential requires investment in the major sites such as the castle, and in the town of which they are a part. It must include improvements to physical links (paths, streets), orientation, information and interpretation, but also, more broadly, effective development management in historic (usually designated conservation) areas.
- 7.1.6 As well as the designated assets, the physical heritage of Hastings includes many small features and sites, ranging from steps, paths and twittens to old street furniture, signs and surfaces that form the setting of heritage assets that are not in themselves of historic significance, but nonetheless contribute to the overall historic character of the town. Therefore, to be effective, management of the heritage must go beyond individual historic sites to include the whole historic town, which should be recognised as a heritage asset itself.
- 7.1.7 Encouraging (hopefully, high-spending) cultural tourism is a key theme, but sustaining the resident community is equally important. It is true that Hastings can be 'ranked' as the 30th most deprived town in the country and the most deprived in the south-east region, reflecting the incidence of deprivation against a standard series of measures; but it also contains areas of considerable affluence. Economic deprivation will not, generally, be addressed directly by investment in heritage, but it is important that public investment in the heritage does benefit the whole community, not just those in the often relatively affluent areas which are richest in physical heritage.
- 7.1.8 Investment in heritage may not affect measurable deprivation, but in the longer term, it is places with the strongest and most distinctive 'spirit of place' that are most successful in drawing people to visit and live. For this reason, celebrating and protecting that spirit of place is immeasurably valuable to sustainability. In practice, investment in the heritage usually complements or adds value to other regeneration initiatives. The outcomes in terms of social and economic regeneration deriving from heritage are often indirect: qualitative as much as quantitative.
- 7.1.9 Heritage-based regeneration can provide employment through tourism, certainly, but also, for example, attract investment in old buildings because they have inherent qualities, deriving from their age, that new buildings do not. It should secure high quality new buildings because quality complements and adds value to the old ones, and such buildings should in time themselves become valued. It should take the opportunities to make investments that contribute to wider regeneration objectives such as meeting local housing and employment needs, but it should not be driven by the need to do so in every case. Sustainability is more important than meeting specific regeneration targets. Grants may be needed for particular projects, but ideally, investment should be made because it has a sound return. The need for grant reflects a problem of market failure, the root

cause of which needs to be identified. Grants should be the means, not the end: a bridge, not a destination.

7.1.10 These principles have, of course, guided existing regeneration initiatives such as the new Jerwood Gallery and the purpose of this report is as much tactical as strategic. It does not aim to re-invent the wheel, but rather to give clearer objectives to a well-established direction of travel. The following recommendations propose a small number of major initiatives, but equally, or more pressing, is the effective everyday management of all the multifarious parts, great and small, that contribute to the town's unique spirit of place. The Council is best placed to deliver, or to develop partnerships for delivering, most of the recommendations that follow, and a large proportion of them requires at least some public resources.

7.1.11 In summary, therefore, this action plan aims to provide practical actions that will help address the following questions:

- How can the heritage improve the quality of life for residents?
- How can heritage best contribute to the visitor economy?
- How can heritage contribute to the urban environment?
- How can the heritage best be visited, understood and enjoyed?
- How best should the overall historic environment be managed and maintained?

7.1.12 The actions recommended are considered in four broad thematic areas:

- Buildings, sites and historic areas
- The spaces 'in-between': connections, parks and gardens, public realm, traffic, signage and footpaths
- Information and interpretation: arrival and wayfinding, visitor centre(s), information, guides, publicity and marketing, activities, telling the stories
- Management and delivery

7.2 Issues and opportunities: buildings, sites and historic areas

7.2.1 Hastings' built heritage includes the key heritage sites noted above, statutorily listed buildings, unlisted buildings in conservation areas and locally listed buildings elsewhere.

Building condition

7.2.2 The most pressing issues affecting statutorily-listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas in Hastings are poor maintenance and underuse. Cumulatively, the poor condition of historic buildings creates an overall impression of neglect and disinterest in the heritage, which is extremely damaging to the perception of the historic town. For this reason, building repair and maintenance is a high priority. In several areas, most

notably the seafront and Old Town, low property values and rental returns have discouraged investment over a long period. Many buildings are large houses that are unsuited to modern family use without investment; and of these, many have been cheaply converted into HMOs or flats with little regard for their heritage value. Addressing this issue requires a partnership between the local authority and the building owners, although the responsibility lies primarily with the latter. The principal tools available to the Council are development management, legal action, education and persuasion. In certain very limited circumstances, some grant aid may be available, but all these mechanisms require at least some public resources. The Council is currently undertaking a ‘Grotbuster’ initiative, aimed at improving the appearance of unsightly land or buildings, but this is not heritage-focused and more could be done..

- 7.2.3 There are many areas of well-maintained listed residential properties, for example, in the suburban conservation areas to the north of St Leonards, where the owners’ self-interest ensures that the character of these neighbourhoods is cherished. A firm regulatory regime is important, but it will work best where building owners can see good maintenance and sensitive development as being in their own and the town’s best interest. Support and guidance is vital for owners in this context, even if (e.g.) grant aid is not available.

Heritage at Risk

- 7.2.4 The 2015 Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk includes grade I and II* buildings and churches, but not grade II buildings. Inclusion means that the building has a higher priority for HE grant than others, although such grants are currently extremely limited. The entries for Hastings are as follows:¹⁵

- St Mary Magdalen St Leonards (grade II)
- URC Cambridge Road (grade II)
- Statue of Queen Ann in Grounds of Holmhurst St Mary School, The Ridge, Baldslow (grade II*)
- Manor House (ruins), Ore Place, (Scheduled Monument)
- All Souls Athelstan Rd (grade II*)
- 1-12 & 12a, Pelham Arcade (grade II*)
- Chapel of the former Convent of Holy Child Jesus, Magdalen Road (grade II*)
- Church of St Leonard, St Leonards (grade II)

- 7.2.5 These are buildings of national significance which are at risk of serious decay or complete loss if their problems are not addressed. As such, they are a priority for Historic England, which would normally work with local authority partners to seek solutions. The buildings may not necessarily be

¹⁵ For full entries see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results?q=hastings&searchtype=har>

high priorities for investment or action locally. The local authority should be proactive in seeking the repair and/or reuse of these buildings as a priority within any heritage strategy. Actions will range from informal discussions with owners, to the use of the town planning system and planning conditions, use of s215 (Amenity) or Urgent Works notices, to serving repairs notices and ultimately, compulsory purchase (CPO).

- 7.2.6 Several sites are currently being addressed. The Queen Ann statue is due to be repaired under the terms of a planning agreement. At the time of writing Pelham Arcade is under repair, jointly funded by with Historic England and HBC. The Council has an adopted policy for the former Holy Child Convent chapel (Policy HN6) and is in contact with the owners.
- 7.2.7 The Church of St Leonard is especially prominent and arguably its grade II listing does not reflect fully its architectural merit or importance in the townscape. Whilst the issues relating to the surrounding geology are undoubtedly serious and complex, securing the future of this impressive building should be a high priority.
- 7.2.8 The ruins of the Manor House at Ore belong to the Council. The structure is badly overgrown, but limited resources mean that the Council is prepared only to ensure public safety on the site. The ruin is quite small, it is not interpreted, and its intrinsic interest somewhat limited. However, it is adjacent to, and was historically associated with, the very successfully repaired medieval ruins of St Helen's Church, managed by the Sussex Heritage Trust (SHT), which received Heritage Lottery Fund grant towards a community archaeology project in 2012. We suggest that a potential partnership with SHT and possibly transfer of the manor house ruins to the trust be explored to secure its repair.
- 7.2.9 There is no data available about secular grade II buildings 'at risk'. An understanding of the physical condition of buildings within the town is a key tool in drawing up an order of priority for action. Compiling such information needs to be undertaken locally. Where listed buildings are within conservation areas, as are most in Hastings, the preparation or revision of conservation area management plans can usefully include a general assessment of the condition of historic buildings and identification of the listed buildings at greatest risk, based on HE Register criteria.
- 7.2.10 At least one other site in Council ownership is believed to be 'at risk': the unusual grade II 19th century ornamental 'Roman Bath' folly at Summerfield Woods. (It has not been inspected for this report.) As with the Manor House at Ore, the Council's parks department is unable to fund its repair. It is recommended that its condition be investigated and possible sources of funding for its repair be sought as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 1: the Council should work with Historic England and the property owners to remove the identified sites from the 'Heritage at Risk' register.

Recommendation 2: building condition surveys should be undertaken as part of the conservation area appraisal programme and a survey of grade II and significant unlisted buildings 'at risk' should be compiled.

Recommendation 3: the Council should take appropriate action to secure the future of the scheduled and listed buildings at risk in its ownership.

7.3 Hastings Castle

- 7.3.1 The castle and its precursor should be at the heart of understanding, appreciating and promoting the heritage of Hastings. The site has great time depth of over two millennia just in terms of visible earthworks.¹⁶ As a viewpoint, it enables one to appreciate the particularity of the town's place in the landscape and why it exists here. It retains physical evidence of one of the most important events in English history, the first motte built by William the Conqueror's army on English soil.
- 7.3.2 David and Barbara Martin's plausible re-interpretation make it possible to present the enclosure formed by the Iron Age 'Ladies Parlour' earthworks and the Norman motte raised in its western corner as the primary (and substantially surviving) features of significance, cut across by the circuit of the successor inner bailey, now largely lost to cliff erosion apart from the collegiate church of St Mary.¹⁷
- 7.3.3 Only perhaps from the early 1170s, at the same time as a (now lost) keep was built, was this stone-walled inner bailey established, the earliest surviving (western) part of the circuit actually incorporating the collegiate church of St Mary as part of the perimeter wall. Works in 1225 by the crown, repairing the castle after it had been slighted, probably include the eastern curtain which anticipates over-riding the motte (if the section over the motte is not of the same date). Little seems to have been done later and, by 1330, the castle was all but derelict, with its circuit incomplete. Its later use seems to have been largely as an ecclesiastical precinct, including houses of the canons or their vicars. The point of this exposition is not the detail, but to emphasise that the early Norman castle most likely survives better than one might think, and can and should be presented as the key exhibit, along with the collegiate church whose footprint also largely survives.

¹⁶ And much longer in terms of artefacts which attest to significant Mesolithic occupation here

¹⁷ Martin & Martin 1999, 23



Figure 3: The Castle in context (Thomas Ford + Partners)

- 7.3.4 This is a more compelling narrative (insofar as there currently is one) than that of a fragment of a medieval castle largely lost to the sea. It ought to be enough to position the castle where it belongs, as a key visitor focus of ‘1066 Country’ alongside Pevensey and Battle, and so attract a cultural tourism audience which could also be encouraged to explore the Old Town below. This, however, requires investment in presentation of the site and approaches to it, to transform the visitor experience. The improvement needs to embrace the whole space of Castle Hill, beginning with head of the West Cliff Lift. The route to the north-east gate in the later medieval curtain (a more appropriate point of entry than the present one) needs to be informed by a better understanding than is currently available of the layout, particularly the entrance, of the earlier earthwork enclosure (which presumably later served as the outer bailey). Entering and understanding that needs to be a key part of the Castle interpretation/visitor experience. Direct management by the Council in a partnership arrangement, or by a not-for-profit trust could facilitate such improvements, and provide access to grant funding.

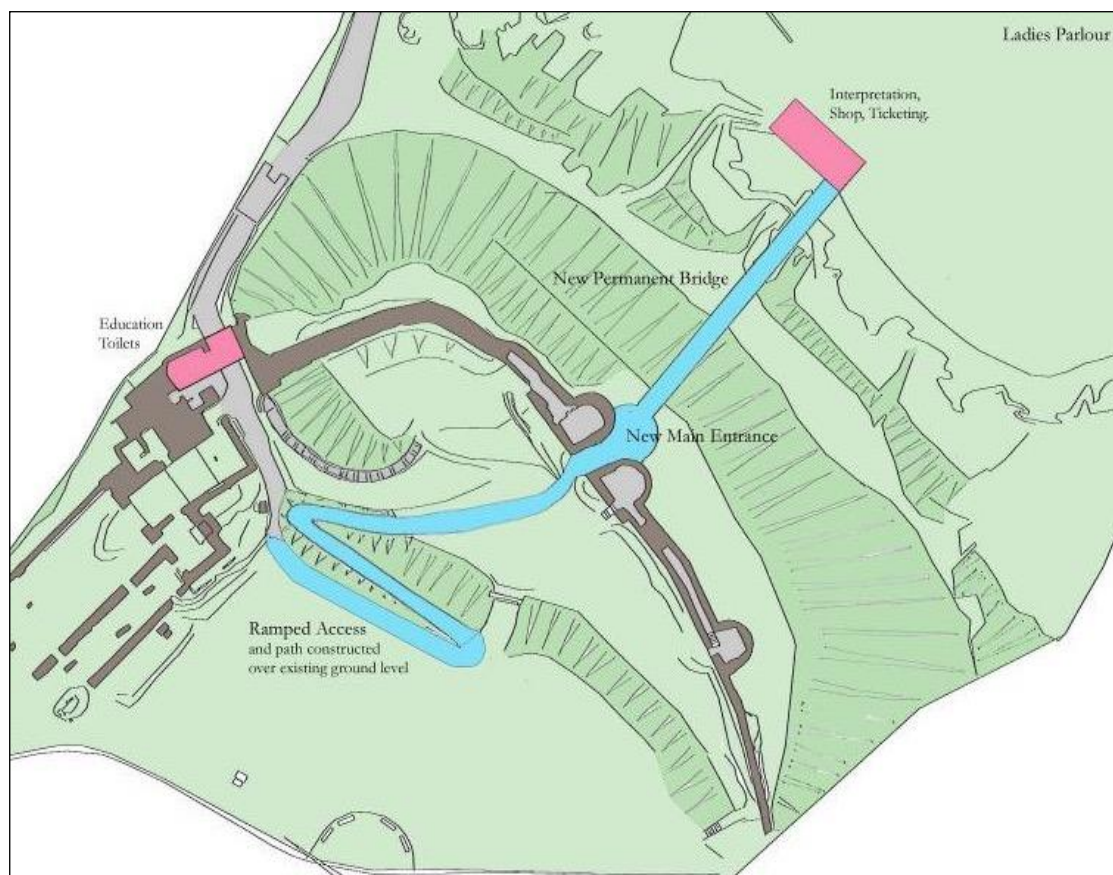


Figure 4: Potential approach to re-presentation of the castle, as developed in 2012 (Thomas Ford + Partners)

'Origin of Hastings' project

7.3.5 To better inform interpretation of the Castle, there is a need for targeted archaeological research to clarify the layout and date of the earthworks on Castle Hill that were seemingly appropriated by the Norman army, and the subsequent evolution of the castle. This might usefully be expanded into a wider 'Origins of Hastings' research project, embracing the earthworks on the east cliff and seeking to learn more of the elusive pre-Norman settlements.¹⁸ It might be part of a new HLF bid relating to the castle, or be a step towards one. A community archaeology project, professionally led, but offering extensive community engagement and understanding, could also have indirect benefits, in helping to draw together the efforts of the many groups and individuals interested in the history of Hastings.

Recommendation 4: the Council should review the options for management of the Castle when the current lease ends.

Recommendation 5: a new application for a major grant from HLF should be developed by the Council (in partnership with another non-profit body, if appropriate), to re-present the wider castle site to the public.

¹⁸ Martin and Martin 1999 laid a good foundation for this

7.4 Conservation areas: introduction

- 7.4.1 The 18 conservation areas in Hastings encompass all the town's historic areas, although, in effect they protect rather fewer neighbourhoods that share a broad common character, and within which the designated conservation areas are effectively sub-zones. Only three conservation areas (Blacklands, Springfield Terrace and Ore Place) are not contiguous with any other. The remaining conservation areas are, in effect, character zones within the three historic areas of the town; Old Town, Town Centre and St Leonards. These areas are considered in turn, along with the seafront, which, as noted above has an important historic character as a whole; the nine separate conservation areas into which parts of it fall suggest that its character is more varied than is actually the case.
- 7.4.2 The highest priority for conservation areas is the preparation of conservation area appraisals and management plans. A conservation area appraisal is currently being prepared for Hastings Town Centre, White Rock and part of the Old Town conservation areas. Further appraisals are planned for 2017-2018: Warrior Square (part); Cornwallis Gardens; Magdalen Road (part) and Eversfield Place.
- 7.4.3 Such plans are an essential management tool. They define the special architectural and historic character of the area, so that there is a benchmark for conservation planning, and include a boundary review. They should also include a survey identifying the buildings, features and views that contribute positively to that special character or appearance and their condition. Management plans should then provide clear, area-specific, guidance for the actions that are required to conserve and manage the area, to prevent erosion of its special interest.

Conservation area grants

- 7.4.4 Conservation area appraisals are a mandatory pre-condition for HLF Townscape Heritage (TH) grant, which is effectively now the only substantial source of grant aid for building repairs and enhancement in conservation areas. Conservation area grants under similar (earlier) grant schemes have been run in central St Leonards since the 1990s. These secured extensive building repairs and will continue until 2017; to some extent perhaps a recognition that heritage can only play a complementary part in the long-term regeneration of this area. Conservation area grants were also available in 2000-03 in the town centre (mainly around the 'Trinity Triangle'), an area that has recently been proposed for a new grant scheme. It has not been possible to obtain evaluations of these schemes during the preparation of this report, but understanding their outcomes is important if, as seems likely, applications for further TH grant are to be made to HLF.
- 7.4.5 Townscape Heritage (TH) awards are subject to competitive bidding for a share of a fixed HLF annual grant budget. Although several areas in

Hastings could benefit from TH grant, it is unlikely that more than one scheme would be supported at a time in the same town. The TH applicant must usually provide some partnership funding and/or resources and property owners must also contribute to repair costs. Whether or not it leads the bid, the local authority must support it with an unequivocal commitment to apply and enforce appropriate development management policies for the built heritage. Evaluating the most appropriate candidate to pursue for a first bid will depend on how well the proposed scheme is likely to meet HLF's criteria, ideally informed by conservation area appraisals.

7.5 The Old Town

7.5.1 The Old Town is an exceptionally attractive area, rich in historic buildings and associations. It is well-protected by conservation area designation, the listing of buildings, and the self-interest of the many tourism-related businesses in the area. The economic value of maintaining its heritage is clear and self-perpetuating and well supported by the Council, for example, through its commendable investment in and management of the East and West Hill lifts. However, the area stands in stark contrast to the utilitarian, multiple-dominated and 'modern' town centre. The Old Town is a relatively small area, some of its businesses are seasonal and some appear marginal. It would benefit from being part of a bigger, year-round tourism destination, complemented by the large retail 'multiples' in the town centre and perhaps intermediate sized units around the Trinity Triangle. A key action towards this end would be creating improved links, by providing attractive pedestrian routes, signage and wayfinding between the Old Town and the town centre.

7.5.2 The Bourne is a harsh division between the two parts of the Old Town. Whilst the east side is predominantly residential, and still an attractive neighbourhood with no major heritage issues, the East Hill beyond it is far less visited than its history and natural beauty deserve. Reducing and calming through traffic on the A259 would greatly help.

Recommendation 6: the Council should work to improve physical connections and signage between the Old Town and the town centre.

7.6 The Town Centre

7.6.1 As a part of Hastings with a distinctive character of its own, the town centre extends somewhat further than the conservation area as currently designated, White Rock and Cornwallis Gardens Conservation Areas, at least, being part of the same 19th century urban development. The conservation area appraisal and management plan currently in preparation is understood to be likely to recommend a rationalisation of the boundary more accurately to reflect the historic character of the area. The Council's

Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis (2016) of retail, leisure and urban design issues looked at a substantially wider area, taking in the municipal buildings on Bohemia Road, the White Rock Pleasure Grounds and some other areas that are not designated as conservation areas.

- 7.6.2 For the purposes of the heritage strategy, areas beyond the designated town centre conservation areas are significant because they contain several important ‘non-designated’ heritage assets including the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Summerfields Woods, and White Rock Gardens, which, although while they are of interest in themselves, do not justify conservation area designation. There is considerable potential to improve what are at present poor links between these places and the town centre. There is no easy or clear source of information in the town centre advertising the Museum, in particular, nor about how to get there. Pedestrian routes - for example, along Bohemia Road - are unattractive and blighted by traffic and badly maintained buildings. Wayfinding (such as by signed routes) is lacking.
- 7.6.3 The town centre itself is important as the core of the town since the mid-19th century, as the point at which most visitors arrive, and as the principal retail area serving the borough. In the later 20th century, there has been some conflict between these characteristics, and addressing it is a high priority in heritage terms. Many of the 19th and early 20th century buildings are badly maintained and there is a severe problem with vacancy above shops. The design of some of the modern buildings, while they are economically valuable, is damaging to the historic environment. Routes from the railway station to the town centre and seafront are uncomfortable for pedestrians, with awkward crossings, heavy traffic and past the unwelcoming backs of buildings.¹⁹ Yet there is considerable unrealised potential within the area. There is understood to be under-used car parking capacity (see *seafront* and *traffic*, below) which could, over time, replace some of the seafront car parking within a wider strategy to reduce traffic along the seafront and The Bourne.

Recommendation 7: the town centre should be reinforced and enhanced as point of arrival by road and rail, including provision of heritage-related signage.

- 7.6.4 The *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016) identifies the key areas for regeneration in both locations, but these were not evaluated for their heritage significance. However, because of their detrimental impact on the area as a whole, their improvement is as of much importance to the recovery of the historic character of the area as to its economy. It is essential that redevelopment

¹⁹ For more detail see *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016) e.g. p.38

here is undertaken at a scale and to designs that enhance the historic environment.

Recommendation 8: the Council should prepare design briefs for key sites, with heritage/design input.

- 7.6.5 The urban environment of the retail core of the town centre (outside the privately managed modern ‘malls’) is degraded. Many buildings are neglected, the streets are cluttered and poorly maintained and, as a result, the area tends to be perceived negatively. The scruffy older buildings and poor quality modern ones have a detrimental impact on the setting of the surviving historic areas they adjoin, such as Trinity Triangle and Wellington Square. The area cannot realise its potential as the heart of the town and an attractive arrival point for visitors unless this issue is addressed.
- 7.6.6 As already noted, many shops have vacant upper floors. This is a wasted resource, but may be seen even in the best conserved historic streets around Trinity Church. Mixed use of a building is often the best means of adapting and reusing historic buildings, rather than attempting to impose a single purpose on a complex old structure: by so doing, the rich character of old buildings can often better be retained. Mixed use also has advantages in terms of public order, encouraging natural 24 hour surveillance rather than reliance on CCTV and security guards. Residential use is often that for which well-maintained historic buildings are most valued and improving the upper floors through conversion to residential use would benefit both the appearance of the historic shopping streets and overall impressions of the town centre. In the past, owners of commercial, especially retail, buildings have been reluctant to allow the use of upper floors for other, especially residential, purposes. Changes in legislation (shorthold tenancies) and the dramatic rise in residential values in London and the south-east have done much to address this, but comparatively low values in Hastings probably remain a considerable deterrent to the scale of investment that may be needed. However, TH grant schemes can meet a conservation deficit in bringing upper floors into beneficial use, as well as fabric repairs and architectural reinstatement.²⁰
- 7.6.7 Encouraging mixed uses (including residential) through development management would complement the recommendations of the *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016), which focuses on the opportunities for retail and commercial use and heritage-based improvements to the public realm. A survey of upper-floor vacancy (rather than commercial floorspace currently available) would be invaluable. A clear strategic commitment by the Council to supporting mixed uses, for example in making land use and licensing decisions, and appropriate high-quality treatment of the public

²⁰ For example, in Holyhead, Anglesey where residential values are comparatively very low; the creation of good quality residential units over shops has also widened the social range of tenants in the town centre

realm could encourage the necessary private investment. The Business Improvement District (BID) initiative provides another possible vehicle for private sector initiatives in this respect, as a partnership in which the public sector should set out a clear and over-arching strategy for maintaining and improving the public realm, design guidance, advice relating to the heritage and development management. The conservation area appraisal, when adopted, is key to this; a bid for TH grant could then be considered.

7.7 St Leonards on Sea

- 7.7.1 St Leonards includes some of the best-maintained conservation areas and some of the most problematic. Grant aid has been available to support conservation-standard repairs in Kings Road and Marina for many years. It is understood that most of the targets in Kings Road have been reached, but remain to be addressed along Marina. Many of the Burtons' listed buildings are decayed and have been damaged by unsympathetic alterations and poor or lack of maintenance over a long period. Their prominence means that this causes a disproportionate negative impact on perceptions of St Leonards. In this context, preparing a conservation area appraisal and management plan must be a priority; a further bid for TH grant could then be considered.

7.8 The Seafront

- 7.8.1 The seafront is the key feature of the any seaside town, and at Hastings it is the location of some of the town's most historic buildings and a key part of the setting of many of those inland. The topography of Hastings means that the seafront provides one of the most impressive vistas in the region, visible in its entirety from the many high points in the town. Its long, continuous sweep includes the ancient hill forts and the Norman castle, the seaward end of the medieval Old Town, the fishing beach and net huts, the Georgian and Victorian resort buildings, Burton's St Leonards and the mid-20th century Marine Court, promenade and 'Bottle Alley'. Whilst the Council has focussed significant resources on improving the appearance of the seafront in recent years, it is still marred by run-down buildings, heavy traffic, parking, inappropriate signage and unsympathetic modern developments.
- 7.8.2 The Council's *Hastings Seafront Strategy 2014-2020* recognises the need to consider the seafront as whole, but deals with heritage issues only briefly. The seafront should be regarded as a heritage asset in itself. Rationalising the conservation area boundaries would be helpful: the small undesignated 'gaps' like Denmark Place are the sites of some of the worst of the modern developments, and designation would extend the Council's planning powers and thus help to secure appropriately high-quality redevelopment and enhancing the historic townscape. Therefore, the designation of these

‘gaps’ as part of the conservation area is recommended. (The conservation area appraisal²¹ subject to consultation at the time of writing recommends this change.)

- 7.8.3 The seafront has some of the most neglected and prominent historic buildings in the town. The location should be a considerable asset, but a spiral of inappropriate- or under-use, problematic forms of tenure, poor maintenance (in the face of higher than usual costs) and a degraded public realm appear to have undermined its value severely. Reversing this spiral requires all of these issues to be addressed. The role of conservation is primarily to ensure that physical changes are delivered to an appropriately high standard. Whilst the key tool in achieving this is development management by the Council, analysis of building condition, vacancy and heritage significance (including through the conservation area appraisal programme) is an essential first step. Guidance on the design and maintenance of historic buildings here, adopted as supplementary planning policy, would be invaluable. As in the town centre, a bid for TH grant could then be considered, perhaps concentrating on one section of the seafront at a time, so that the impact of the scheme is most visible.
- 7.8.4 The ongoing repair of Bottle Alley and the promenade is commended, and the re-use of the old White Rock baths as a skate park (opened in 2016) is exemplary. The biggest environmental issues here relate to heavy traffic, parking and associated infrastructure; these are dealt with separately.

Recommendation 9: the Council should designate current ‘gaps’ in seafront conservation areas as part of a rationalisation arising from the current reviews.

- 7.8.5 The fishing beach itself is the embodiment of intangible heritage. As long as it continues in its historic use and it is managed with as light a touch as possible within the broad parameters of appropriate planning policy, its authentic character is safe. The Council’s present policies and its unequivocal support for the fishing fleet appear to be satisfactory here, despite occasional complaints. Tidying up, regulation, ‘prettification’ and anything that puts the future of beach-based fishing at risk are to be avoided.
- 7.8.6 The separation between the town and the seafront defined by the A259 and Rock-a-Nore Road is not necessarily a problem (c.f. Brighton). Traffic jams, and above all the large scruffy car parks on the seaward side, exaggerate the division and their reduction or removal would greatly enhance the seafront. The exceptional architectural, aesthetic and historic significance of the net shops has been addressed above. They are generally in fair condition, although their setting suffers from intrusive modern floorscape, surfacing, signage and street furniture. The Council contributes

²¹ *Hastings Central Area [draft] Conservation Area Appraisal*, The Conservation Studio for HBC, November 2016

c£8,000 pa for external decoration and minor repairs and they are not immediately at risk. The most serious issue affecting them disuse. Many are redundant and they have become physically and functionally separated from the fishing beach. This threatens their long-term preservation: viable uses are the best means of securing it. The physical form of the net shops is protected by listing, but their character depends to a significant degree on their appropriate use.

- 7.8.7 It is understood that the net shops may only lawfully be used in association with the fishing industry, and that they are now obsolete for this purpose. The road dividing the Stade open space and the Jerwood from the fishing beach has reinforced the obsolescence of the net shops, but it is doubtful, even so, whether a long-term, functional relationship between the net shops and fishing, their ideal use, will ever again be sustainable. Several of them have found new uses, although this may be in breach of the terms of the leases; of which some are more sensitive than others. In this context, the Council should consider the options for new uses or preservation without use, putting in place appropriate planning policies and a management regime in either case, in order to secure their long-term future and their unique contribution to the historic town. As a first step the Council should review the tenure of the net shops and compile a reliable terrier of ownership.

Recommendation 10: the Council should maintain its support for the fishing beach, which should continue to be managed as far as possible by working fishermen.

Recommendation 11: the Council should review its management of the net shops, including their tenure, use, maintenance costs and setting; and draft and publish guidance based on the review.

7.9 The spaces ‘in-between’

- 7.9.1 This theme includes the connections and spaces between individual heritage assets: parks and gardens, footpaths, the public realm, roads and traffic. There is a widespread and justifiable view that it is difficult to get where one wants to go in Hastings, and this is especially so for visitors.²² Public transport is outside the scope of this report, but any development of its recommendations as a tourism or visitor strategy would need to consider whether public transport is adequate for locals and visitors. The principal consequence of inadequate public transport is a greater numbers of cars in the town, and these can have a direct impact on the enjoyment and viability of the built and natural heritage. The problem of connections that is particularly evident between the town centre and the Old Town has been noted above and the proposals in the *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis* (2016)²³ would

²² See (e.g.) Appendix A: Heritage Strategy Workshop- Stakeholder Feedback

²³ See *Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Study* (2016); Figs. 44 and 45.

benefit the heritage. A similar analysis of routes to, through and from the Old Town would be helpful.

- 7.9.2 The great wealth of public parks and gardens in Hastings are generally in good condition and no requirements for significant urgent works, or major threats, have been drawn to the authors' attention. The international significance of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is worthy of continued management and promotion. The council is dependent on EU funding to manage Hastings Country Park through a legal agreement from a Stewardship grant 2013-2023. It is essential that the council secures the best possible replacement funding when EU grant ends.

Recommendation 12: the Council should manage Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve to national Green Flag standard and seek appropriate national and international grant funding to secure its long-term management.

- 7.9.3 The town's parks are not as well-known as they should be,²⁴ and could play a much larger role as visitor attractions. Examples include the little-known, but exceptionally rare, tree collection at Alexandra Park, the design significance of St Leonards Gardens within the Burton's resort, the grassland habitats on West Hill, the potential for bird-watching on East Hill and the unusual local geology and fossil beds. These and many more could be better publicised and interpreted.
- 7.9.4 There is little interpretation of either the natural or, especially, the cultural heritage of East Hill, yet it is one of the loveliest and most ancient sites in the town, lying on the Saxon Shore Way long distance foot-path. A visitor centre could explain the natural environments, geology and habitats, make connections with the neighbouring landscapes and their history (notably the High Weald AONB), illustrate the local impact of contemporary issues such as climate change, coastal change, adaptation and provide information on heritage, archaeology and the very long history of human occupation of the area from the Upper Palaeolithic (Late Stone Age) to the present day. This initiative cannot be given the priority over improving the castle, but every opportunity should be taken to work with local partners to make it an objective in the relevant strategic plans and identify funding sources, possibly including HLF in the medium term. The creation of a new visitor centre serving Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, including the East Hill is under consideration. A grant application was submitted in December 2016 through *Interreg* (a grant scheme funded by EU as part of the European Regional Development Fund) for a new centre, using straw construction, located near the existing centre.

²⁴ See: (e.g.) Appendix A: Heritage Strategy Workshop- Stakeholder Feedback

Recommendations 13: the Council should pursue all options for the development of a visitor centre and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve and new interpretation around the site, including the East Hill.

- 7.9.5 One of the great joys of Hastings is its twittens and footpaths, which reveal the town's unique architecture, topography, unexpected views and secret routes. Collectively, they are a substantial heritage asset, underused by locals and little known to visitors. They provide one of the most enjoyable ways of exploring the varied heritage sites of the town and of experiencing its distinctive urban character. Some of the best paths are overgrown - for example from Belmont to Rock-a-Nore - and others, such as the steps up from George Street to the castle, are uneven, damaged, littered and decorated by graffiti. Yet others debouch abruptly onto main roads with narrow pavements.
- 7.9.6 An up-to-date survey of paths, in partnership with the County Council, to identify their location, rights of way and condition is needed. This is a necessary precursor to finding those that have most to offer as linking routes and to establishing their potential for enhancement. Some paths will best be left to be discovered by accident, or to continue in use mainly by locals: but all should be made physically safe and usable. It is recognised that many of Hastings's footpaths will never be able to offer easy access for all, and they are unlikely to attract significant grant aid, but they could be greatly improved for a relatively modest cost, and community volunteers may be able to help.
- 7.9.7 The potential of the long-distance footpaths has only been developed to a limited extent. The approach along the Saxon Shore Way to Hastings at Rock-a-Nore is disappointing. The sense of arrival at what should be a significant destination on the route is almost lost in concrete, motorway-style street lighting, car parks and tourist-related advertising, engendering a strong desire to move on as quickly as possible, rather than to stop and linger in the nearby, but almost hidden, Old Town. (An East Hill visitor centre could help with this problem.)
- 7.9.8 The condition of the public realm in Hastings, as in many other historic towns, reflects the economic conditions of the particular location. In general, therefore, affluent and often historic residential areas are well-maintained, and busy roads, commercial areas and poor neighbourhoods tend to be dirty and neglected. Public pressure can mean (often in the name of heritage) that the funding is directed to the areas that are already best looked-after. However, if the historic core of Hastings (at least) is regarded as a heritage asset, then the same high standards should be applied right across it. This does not mean the same treatments, but rather that all historic streets or areas should be treated in a way that is appropriate to their particular character. Conservation appraisals and management plans should provide the basic neighbourhood-level guidance

and these, along with a design guide setting overall standards for the public realm as a whole, should be adopted by the Council, to ensure that historic areas do not become islands separated by a sea of neglect.

Recommendation 14: the Council should produce a public realm strategy and street design manual covering the historic town centres of Old Town, Hastings Town Centre, Central St. Leonards, and Hastings and St. Leonards sea front.

Roads and traffic

7.9.9 Although roads and traffic are generally outside the scope of this report, the impact of heavy traffic (particularly lorries and through traffic) is highly detrimental and the main roads create significant physical barriers within the most sensitive historic areas of Hastings. Especially problematic is the A259 on the Bourne and Seafront; but the A21 and A2101 are unfriendly to pedestrians and encourage people to drive into the town centre and to park along the seafront. The heritage would benefit significantly from a reduction in through traffic on these roads, and from parking on the sea front being reduced in favour of the town centre.

Recommendation 15: the Council should work with ESCC to remove or reduce through traffic on the A259, A 21 and A2101 in the town centre, seafront and Old Town and seek to reduce parking on the seafront.

7.10 Information and interpretation

7.10.1 This theme includes: arrival, orientation and wayfinding, signage visitor centre(s), information, guides, publicity and marketing, interpretation, activities and museums. There is an enormous range of information available about historic Hastings, produced often inexpensively by enthusiastic amateur groups, by the museums, by the Council and through the County libraries. There are blue plaques marking the homes of notable former residents, walking tours, guide books and websites such as the official www.visit1066country and the independent local www.1066online Yet there is no single physical visitor hub or on-line resource at which this material can be accessed, nor an obvious place of arrival in the town from which visitor can easily find their way to the main attractions.

7.10.2 For visitors, arrival in Hastings can be confusing and, for those coming to see its historic sites, there is no clear place at which to arrive and from which to find the main sites, apart from the seafront, contributing to the traffic and parking issues noted above.

7.10.3 Signage in the town is very poor. There is a large amount of redundant signage that adds to street clutter and is confusing to visitors.²⁵ It needs to be removed. Recent new signage in the form of totems is more attractive and informative, but it does not easily relate to any routes, tours or

²⁵ See: (e.g.) Appendix A: Heritage Strategy Workshop- Stakeholder Feedback

orientation points. Integrated, low key, ‘bespoke’ signage, designed for Hastings could not only improve wayfinding but also help build a positive image of the town for visitors while reinforcing the unique identity of Hastings. There is little or no signage to complement walking tours, published or digital guides, or routes linking specific heritage sites and themes. On-site interpretation at some key sites, for example on East Hill, is almost non-existent. All of these could be developed, and the totem signs should be capable of ‘broadcasting’ information digitally to mobile telephones.²⁶

- 7.10.4 The Council should either itself, or in partnership with neighbouring authorities or possibly through an independent body, draw together the existing information and interpretation resources and make them easily accessible, from physical and digital locations. Off-site and digital resources are especially important in a place like Hastings, where the topography can limit full physical access to some sites.
- 7.10.5 Consideration could be given to the development of a visitor hub. This would be a physical location in the town to which visitors would be directed. It would need to be at a convenient central location that would serve visitors arriving by car, public transport and by foot. Making use of an existing historic building would be ideal. If it were linked with the museum and local archive resources, so much the better. It is unlikely that either Hastings Museum and Art Gallery or the castle would meet these criteria. One possibility would be the central Library at the former Brassey Institute. This would be particularly apt for its great historical associations, central location, architectural splendour, as the home of the local history library and because it is close to the existing Museum. (The route from Robertson Street to the Museum along Bohemia Road is uninviting for pedestrians, who could relatively easily be re-directed to avoid the narrow, featureless pavements and the worst of the traffic; perhaps entering the Museum grounds nearer to the town centre.)
- 7.10.6 The marketing and publicity for Hastings mentions its historic associations and the Council’s logo includes an image of the net shops. Heritage could play a far greater role in the town’s general marketing to visitors: it should be central to the town’s tourist ‘offer’.
- 7.10.7 Activities in historic places and ‘story telling’ are particularly valuable as a means of bringing together local people and experience with visitors. Hastings has a strong recent track record in supporting arts events, but has been less successful in relation to heritage; for example, missing out perhaps more than it might have done to Battle in the recent celebrations of the 950th anniversary (in October 2016) of the great English defeat named after the town: Hastings Castle played no part in the events.

²⁶ An app for ‘1066 country’ is available through www.visit1066country.com

Without re-writing history, if Hastings developed its historic environments better, there is no reason why it should not be at the very centre of the millennial celebrations.

Recommendation 16: the Council should consider the development of a new visitor hub in the town centre to provide orientation and information.

Recommendation 17: the Council should enhance or provide way-marking for pedestrian routes to key heritage sites, such as the castle, East Hill, Old Town and Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

Museums and archives

7.10.8 Museums play a key role in interpreting and presenting the town's history and the three principal museums in Hastings are highly successful in doing so. The Council has an ongoing commitment to support them, primarily through Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (HMAG), which must be maintained as a central part of the visitor offer. A major development project at HMAG has been mooted²⁷, but it is to the institution's credit that it would be difficult to argue that it was a priority in the short term. It would require a major grant application to HLF and it is considered that this is a significantly lower priority than the castle.

7.10.9 Archives are primarily the responsibility of the County Council, but as and when documents are deposited at the Keep, the Council could make (or arrange to receive from The Keep) digital copies of the most useful material to be available at the local history library. It is not clear that the established mechanism for this has been wholly effective. However, where local access to archives is required, the Hastings Library should be able to arrange this through The Keep. The specialist staff, resources for conservation and economies of scale achievable at The Keep could not, practically, be matched locally.

Recommendation 18: the Keep should continue to be the official depository for the historic archives of Hastings, and the Council should draw on its resources by agreement, as appropriate.

7.11 Leadership and delivery

7.11.1 All of the recommendations within this report require resources, ranging from voluntary work, to those provided by the Council as part of its normal duties, to major sums of capital investment. The Council has a central role in leadership and co-ordination, but community groups and individuals are essential to delivery. As well as leading and initiating major projects, the Council can provide a framework, including regulation, expertise, co-ordination and support, within which partnerships and community activity can be directed. There are four areas in which the Council's role is critical: major projects on public sites (addressed above

²⁷ See ACE HMAG Resilience Report summary 2016

with reference to the individual sites, especially the castle); day-to-day development management; commissioning and managing research, guidance and strategies and co-ordination of resources outside the public sector.

- 7.11.2 Development management (i.e. planning control) is the regulatory tool for managing change in the historic environment. Maintaining the character and appearance of the built heritage relies on the rigorous, even-handed application of the Council's policies to all relevant development proposals and enforcement action in the case of breaches. This in turn requires that the local authority has access to specialist heritage advice. The Hastings local conservation officer has very limited time for considering all planning and listed building applications affecting the built heritage across the borough. Our experience suggests that this is insufficient and needs to be increased. Apart from the in-house management of grant schemes, other vital roles that, in past years, have been the responsibility of local authority conservation officers, including provision of design guidance and advice to applicants, occupiers and residents, providing input into policies, strategies and design briefs, and promoting and interpreting the heritage, are not resourced. Conservation officers can offer good value, not least by providing timely advice and often avoiding disputes between the Council and applicants, and costly heritage-related planning appeals and inquiries.

Recommendation 19: the Council should increase the specialist resources available for development management in the historic environment.

- 7.11.3 Conservation area appraisals and management plans are fundamental to understanding and managing this heritage. They provide the benchmark adopted by the Council against which development management decisions must be made by defining the significance of the historic environment that designation seeks to conserve, and against which the potential public benefits of development must be weighed if the proposed development is likely to cause harm. They provide a framework of guidance and objectives for appropriate management of an area. They provide the context for an understanding of building condition, repair needs, and opportunities for development and enhancement. They are essential as the basis on which public sector investment in the heritage should be prioritised and funds such as HLF's Townscape Heritage grant may be sought.

Recommendation 20: the Council should commission and adopt conservation area appraisals and management plans for all its conservation areas.

Local list

- 7.11.4 A list of non-designated heritage assets that are locally-important is an essential component in understanding local heritage. It not only recognises heritage that is valued by the community, but also provides for the recognition of that heritage in the formal development management

system. The Council is currently preparing a local list, but it has had relatively few nominations at the time of writing.²⁸ The various histories and gazetteers of buildings in Hastings, combined with the current conservation area appraisal programme mean that a draft list could be compiled, from existing sources, quite easily with modest cost implications. It may be possible to find volunteers who could bring forward such a list of proposals to the Council's local listing panel. However, some co-ordination and support from the Council is probably necessary to initiate this.

7.11.5 The Council's role in relation to living heritage and events within the historic environment aims to acknowledge, protect, support and enable community activities, rather than to initiate or direct them. It is very successful in doing so, most obviously in facilitating events like the Town Bonfire and Jack-in-the-Green. It should continue to do so. The Council is less successful in relation to community and voluntary action in other areas of the heritage.

7.11.6 It is clear that voluntary groups and expertise are one of the greatest unrealised resources that could support and develop the heritage of Hastings, and equally clear that, at present, this resource is not being used to its full potential for the benefit of the town as a whole. Co-ordination of these groups and individuals, so that their knowledge, research and expertise feed into the understanding, interpretation and visitor enjoyment of the town's heritage, could help to realise this potential. This is not to suggest that the various groups and individuals should be required to work together, but that there is a central point where their work can be shared or publicised, where offers of expertise can be made and opportunities for voluntary work and jobs that need doing can be advertised.

7.11.7 One means of achieving this could be for the Council to appoint a conservation professional as a heritage development officer, with a role similar to that of the arts officer; the two roles would be complementary. The heritage officer would co-ordinate voluntary groups and develop opportunities for community activities within the historic environment, and also take on many of the ancillary jobs in conserving, promoting and monitoring the historic environment that were, as noted above, in the past often done by conservation (planning) officers and which are recommended as actions by this report.

7.11.8 This role could be supported by Historic England's Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) scheme, which supports local heritage partnerships. These schemes need not be led by the local authority, but the Council must support the initiative. We understand that preliminary discussions with Historic

²⁸ see: http://www.hastings.gov.uk/conservation/heritage_assets/

England have already taken place, and we strongly recommend that this possibility is pursued.

Recommendation 21: the Council should allocate sufficient resources to develop a bid to Historic England for Heritage Action Zone status.

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