

Watts Avenue and Roebuck Road conservation area Article 4(2) Direction design guidance

September 2003

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Background

The Watts Avenue and Roebuck Road conservation area is an attractive residential suburb of Victorian and Edwardian terraces and semi-detached houses surrounded by well-planted gardens. It became a conservation area in July 1995.



This guide aims to help residents care for their properties by explaining what will need planning permission and the best ways to make alterations and repairs that are sympathetic to the historic character of the area. A draft of this document was distributed to all residents in April 2003 and it has been amended in response to comments received. It will now be used as standard Medway Council guidance for the area.



The reason for introducing an Article 4(2) Direction

Design details such as original windows and doors, traditional materials such as decorative brickwork and slate and tile roofs, and the gardens in front of properties, are important features that make a vital contribution to the attractive appearance of individual properties and of the area in general.

Most properties are carefully and sensitively maintained by their owners. A small number of properties have had their windows and doors replaced with unsuitable modern examples, and gardens have been replaced by driveways for cars. In many cases, concrete tiles have replaced original slate roofs.

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To prevent the character of the area being damaged even more, an Article 4(2) Direction has been placed on this area since February 2001.

This means that you need planning permission if you want to do the following work to property that faces onto a road or path:

- Building, altering or removing a chimney.
- Enlarging, improving or altering a house. This includes replacing windows, doors and guttering, and applying bargeboards (boards along the gable end of a roof).
- Altering a roof (including reroofing in a different material).
- Building a porch.
- Laying a drive or path.
- Putting up, altering or replacing a satellite dish.
- Building, altering or demolishing a gate, fence, wall or railings.
- Painting, rendering or pebble dashing the outside of the property (not including painting woodwork).

There is no charge for this type of planning application.

As with other conservation areas, you need planning permission for extensions, conservatories and roof alterations to the back of the property.

There is more guidance in our leaflet **'Conservation areas in Medway – a guide to the law and the council's policies'** and in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions' booklet **'Planning - A Guide for Householders'**.

Design guidelines

We will expect planning applications to meet the following guidelines.

Windows

The most common window in the Watts Avenue and Roebuck Road area is the timber-framed sash. There is a lot of variation in detail across the area, with 12- to 16-paned or round-headed windows being common in the earlier houses of Maidstone Road and two- or four-paned sashes being used elsewhere.



Casements (window frames with hinges on one side) are common on the south side of Watts Avenue.

Original windows should be retained wherever possible. Replacements should be an exact copy. Should you wish to replace inappropriate windows, our Design and Conservation section will be happy to give you advice on a suitable replacement design that would match the originals.



Major changes such as replacing bay windows, or extensions to the front of the property will not normally be allowed.

Doors

One of the distinctive features of the area is the wide variety of door types. These vary from simple types with four to six solid panels to elaborate double doors. Stained glass and cast-iron ventilation grills are also common features.



Most of these doors have survived and it is important that these are repaired rather than replaced. If a new door is needed, it should be of timber and match the original work exactly. Our Design and Conservation section will be happy to give you advice on an appropriate design if you wish to reinstate an original door.



Roofs

Most of the roofs in this area would have originally been covered in slate, often with decorative clay ridge tiles and finials (a decorative tile placed over a gable end). Tiles were occasionally used, particularly at the west end of Watts Avenue and on the older houses at the northern end of Maidstone Road.



It is our policy to keep slate roofs wherever possible. Sadly, the roofs of many buildings have now been re-covered with concrete tiles, and the ridge and ornamental details have been lost. When it is time for these roofs to be renewed, we are keen to see these roofs replaced with slates.

Other alterations such as putting roof lights or dormer windows into the front roof slope will not normally be allowed. These alterations break up the uniform appearance of streets, and have a negative effect on the appearance of individual buildings and the area in general.

Painting and rendering

Most of the houses in the area were originally made of unpainted brick with window and door surrounds in contrasting coloured brick. A few properties on the west side of Maidstone Road were originally finished in stucco (plaster used for coating outside walls).

While most buildings are in their original condition, a small number of properties have been rendered or painted. This results in architectural features being covered and has a negative effect on the appearance of both individual properties and the area in general. **We will not normally allow anyone to paint or render the brickwork on the front of their property.**



Front gardens

Large, richly planted front gardens are a characteristic feature of this area. These generally have a low brick wall and gateposts at the front. Flint and high brown brick walls are common in St Margaret's Street. Originally, decorative wrought-iron railings and gates would have been common, but not many of these have survived. The gardens themselves often contain interesting features such as decorative tile pavements and railings around cellar light wells.



The pressure for off-street car parking has led to several gardens being converted into driveways, particularly in King Edward Road and on the north sides of Watts Avenue and Roebuck Road. The resulting loss of street greenery and the uniform appearance of the street is considered to be harmful to the character of the area.

We will not normally allow you to remove boundary walls. If you need to rebuild a wall, this should match the original exactly. We would support residents who wish to replace gates and railings as long as these are of a suitable design. Original railings were often low and highly decorated. Modern replacements with thin, spindly or widely spaced uprights, bowed or scalloped tops, or scroll decorations are not appropriate.



The east side of Maidstone Road has a more urban character. In the past, properties either faced directly onto the street or had small gardens surrounded by simple spiked railings on low plinths. These still survive in front of several houses, along with an inner set surrounding the cellar light well. However, many gardens have been covered in concrete and surrounded by unattractive painted or rendered brick walls.



It is our policy to insist that people keep original railings. We also encourage people to fit new railings of an appropriate design.

Repairs and maintenance

You do not need planning permission for like-for-like maintenance and repair work and we are keen to encourage owners to maintain their properties. It is particularly important to paint outside woodwork regularly. This prolongs the life of woodwork, and reduces the need for expensive repairs and replacements.

You should use contractors with specialist conservation skills to repair older buildings in the area. In particular, care is needed when repointing walls as the style and colour of the pointing can have a significant effect on the appearance of the building. It is also important to use a lime rather than a cement mortar when repointing older properties. Our Design and Conservation section will be happy to give you advice on how to repair historic structures.

Building control

You need to apply for building-regulation approval for certain building work to make sure that the work is done properly.

In April 2002, new building regulations (see paragraphs 2.9 to 2.11 of part L1) were introduced relating to improving energy-efficiency. Building work should always aim to improve how energy-efficient the building is as much as possible. However, in the case of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, building work **should not affect the character of the historic building or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to the building or its fittings**. You should follow the guidance in this leaflet, particularly relating to fitting traditional windows, instead of part L1 of the building regulations. If you are in doubt, please contact our Design and Conservation section.

Listed buildings

The following houses in the conservation area have been listed.

King Edward Road:	St Ronan's
Maidstone Road:	37, 55, 57, 61, 63, 65 to 67, 157 to 173 (Morden Terrace), Watt's Almshouses
St Margaret's Street:	59 (Mill House), 85 (Fort Clarence House)

You need **listed building consent** before you carry out **any** work which affects the character or appearance of a listed building, inside or out. This includes work to the back of the property, within its grounds or to its boundary. While this does not mean that all alterations are forbidden, any alterations must *preserve or improve* the existing character of the listed building.



Our leaflet '**Listed buildings - a guide for owners and occupiers**' provides more detailed information about listed buildings.

Contacts

Our **Design and Conservation** section is keen to give people advice on how to look after their property. This includes advice on doing repairs and designing alterations. Contact **Development Control** for general enquiries on all aspects of planning and contact **Building Control** for enquiries about building regulations.



You can contact all these sections at:

Regeneration and Environment Division
Development and Environment Directorate
Medway Council
Compass Centre
Chatham Maritime
Kent
ME4 4YH.
Phone: 01634 306000
Fax: 01634 331125

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Further information on the history of the area can be found at:

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Clock Tower Building

Civic Centre

Strood

Rochester

Kent

ME2 4AU

Tel: 01634 332714

Email: local.studies@medway.gov.uk

archives@medway.gov.uk

You can also get information from the following organisations.

The Victorian Society

1 Priory Gardens

Bedford Park

London

W4 1TT

Phone: 020 8994 1019

The Georgian Group

6 Fitzroy Square

London

W1P 6DX

Phone: 020 7387 1720

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

37 Spital Square

London

E1 6DY

Phone: 020 7377 1644

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language, please ring **01634 331110**.

এই লিফলেট সম্পর্কে আপনার যদি কোন প্রশ্ন থাকে এবং এ ব্যাপারে আপনার নিজের ভাষায় কারো সাথে আলাপ করতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে এই নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন: **331780 (Bengali)**

如果你對這本小冊的內容有任何疑問，且想與會說你的語言的某人談話，請打這個電話號碼 **331781 (Chinese)**

જો તમને આ પત્રિકા વિશે કોઈ પ્રશ્નો હોય અને તમે તમારી માતૃભાષામાં કોઈની સાથે વાત કરવા માગતા હો તો કૃપા કરીને આ નંબર ઉપર કોન કરો **331782 (Gujarati)**

यदि आपने इस लीफलेट के बारे में कुछ पूछना है और उस व्यक्ति के साथ आप अपनी भाषा में बात करना चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नंबर पर टेलीफोन करने करें: **331783 (Hindi)**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਪੁੱਛਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਅਪਣੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: **331784 (Punjabi)**

اگر آپ اس کتابچے کے بارے میں کوئی سوال پوچھنا چاہتے ہیں اور آپ کسی فرد سے اپنی زبان میں بات کرنے کے خواہشمند ہیں تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے۔ **331785 (Urdu)**

Elinizdeki bu yazılı duyuru ile ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz varsa ve dilinizi bilen birisi ile konuşmak istiyorsanız, lütfen 331786 numaraya telefon edin. **331786 (Turkish)**

If you want a copy of this booklet in larger print, please phone 01634 331705. (minicom: 01634 331300).

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Design and Conservation
Compass Centre
Chatham Maritime
Chatham
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